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It's the season for city breaks

Now restrictions are easing, it's time for an urban adventure, says Sarah Marshall

TRADITIONALLY, spring has always been a season focused around nature. But as days lengthen and the air grows warmer, cities also shine in a new light.

After two years of closures and restrictions, museums and galleries have reopened and streets are once again full of life.

Fully vaccinated travellers will no longer need a PCR or antigen test to enter many European countries, and restrictions on using the Green Pass are also easing, making it much easier to enter restaurants and attractions.

These are some of the cities worth checking out in the next few months, along with information on their Covid requirements.

Paris

Some of the world's greatest masterpieces were painted in France, inspired by beautiful surroundings and a vibrant arts scene. Paris is home to many of Europe's top galleries, and spring is an excellent time to catch new exhibitions.

Newly opened at the Musée de l'Orangerie, and running until July 11, new show *Impressionist decorations: Tracing The Roots of Monet's Water Lilies* features work by Cezanne, Degas and Monet. Combine a trip to the gallery with a stroll along the Seine, and boulevards filled with tress in full blossom.

How: Kirker Holidays (020 7593 2288; kirkerholidays.com) offers a three-night B&B stay at the Pavillon de la Reine from £858pp (two sharing), saving £225pp,

including a return with the Eurostar and a two-day Museum Pass. Offer valid on stays to May 15.

Covid requirements: Only non-vaccinated travellers are required to provide proof of a negative

Covid test and may also be asked to test on arrival. Everyone will need to fill in a sworn statement (media.interieur.gouv.fr/attestation-honneur-ue-plus-onze-ans-covid-19/) and PLF form (app.euplf.eu).

Rome

The world's most impressive open-air museum deserves to be explored on foot. Wander along ancient streets, take rest breaks at famous fountains and gaze up at dramatic ruins, such as the Colosseum and the Forum.

To savour every detail – including hidden spots that might easily be missed – join an escorted tour with Ramblers Walking Holidays. Stroll along the Via della Conciliazione to the Vatican City to explore the Sistine Chapel and take in Michelangelo's Pieta at St Peter's Basilica, or stop for a gelato at the Spanish Steps. The trip also includes walks further afield in the water gardens of Villa d'Este and by the sea at Ostia Antica.

How: Ramblers Holidays (01707 331 133; ramblersholidays.co.uk) offers a seven-night escorted Roman Holiday tour from £1,579pp including flights, breakfasts and five dinners. Departs April 16, September 24 and October 29.

Covid requirements: Only non-vaccinated travellers will be asked for proof of a negative Covid test. But everyone will need to fill out a PLF (app.euplf.eu). From May 1, masks will no longer be required in indoor venues or on public transport, and the Green Pass will no longer be needed to enter museums or restaurants.

Copenhagen

Looped by 382km of bike trails and bridges, the Danish capital is easy to explore on two wheels.

In July, the Tour de France will

start in these streets, but since 2022 has been declared a Year Of The Bike, there is good reason to visit much sooner. Of all the bike tours on offer, an itinerary with Green Bikes is one of the most interesting. Led by experts with a background in sustainability, a three-hour tour visits buildings and projects designed to help Copenhagen become the first carbon neutral capital by 2025. From £34; greenbiketours.org/copenhagen_public.

How: British Airways Holidays (britishairways.com) offers a two-night B&B stay at the Tivoli Hotel, including flights from London, from £228. Based on a May departure.

Covid requirements: Denmark was the first EU country to scrap all Covid requirements.

Amsterdam

Following two years of closure, the Keukenhof tulip and flower park will finally reopen for its spring season from March 24 to May 15. Walk around the Garden of Europe in Lisse, a 35-minute drive from Amsterdam, and return via the Zomerbloemenpluktuin, where it's possible to pick your own blooms along the Amstel River. But even within the city limits, it's possible to enjoy the great outdoors. Amsterdam's Museumplein comes alive every third Sunday of the month for Museum Market, decked out with colourful stalls for all kinds of locally-made goods, food stands and live music.

How: Located on the picturesque Keizersgracht canal in the heart of the Nine Streets shopping area, 17th century hotel The Dylan has 40 rooms and suites over two canal-side buildings. Doubles from £350 (£295) per night, including breakfast; dylanamsterdam.com. Eurostar (eurostar.com/uk-en)



operate direct services from London to Amsterdam from £40 one way.

Covid requirements: Fully vaccinated travellers no longer need to provide proof of a negative Covid test. Restrictions still apply to non-vaccinated travellers from outside the EU.

St Helier, Jersey

It's not an obvious choice for a classic city break, but Jersey's capital offers all the finesse of a European sojourn without having to travel too far. Packed with excellent restaurants and opportunities for tax-free shopping, it's an easy weekend break. Embark on a Jersey Seafari (RIB boat ride (jerseyseafaris.com; from £30pp), with a hop over to

France for lunch.

How: Channel Escapes (channelescapes.com) offers a three-night B&B stay at The Royal Yacht Hotel start from £398pp, including flights and transfers.

Covid requirements: There are currently no entry requirements or Covid restrictions in place for Jersey.



Cyclists in Copenhagen

Pic: PA Photo/Visit Copenhagen



Liberation Square, St Helier, Jersey

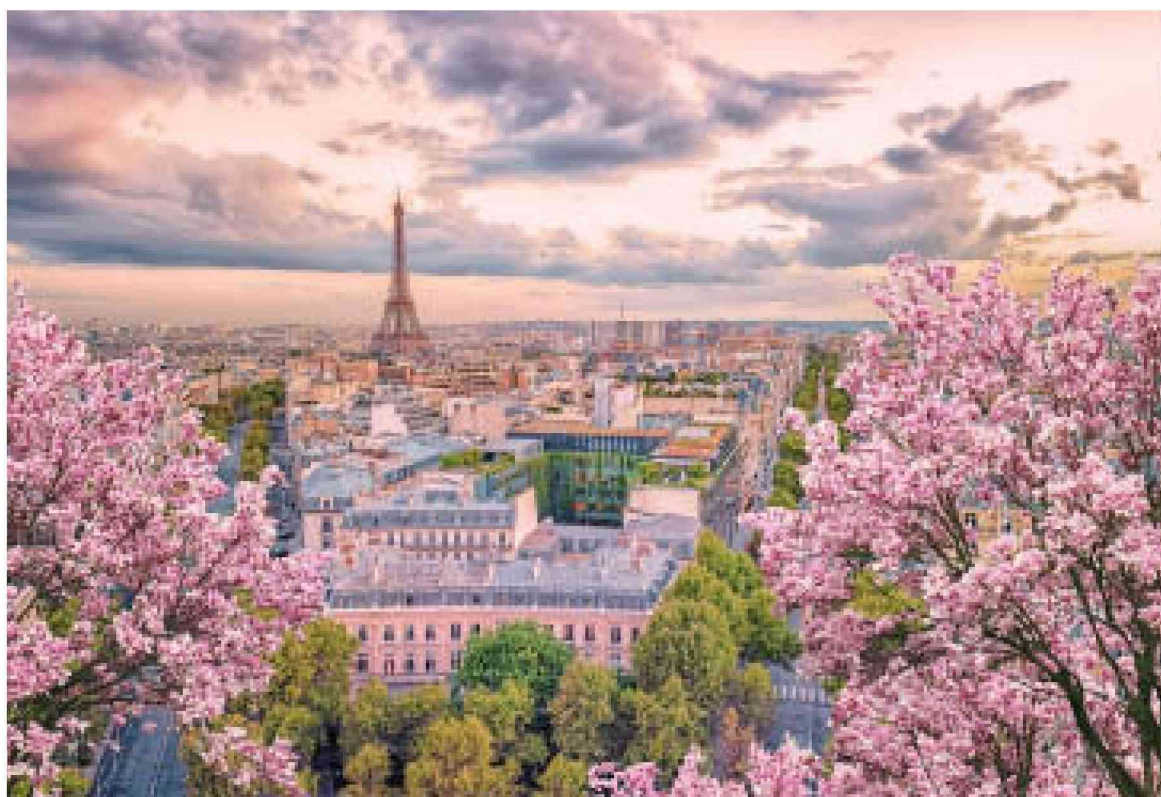
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St Peter's Basilica in Rome at night

Pic: PA Photo/Alamy



Paris in spring

Pic: PA Photo/Alamy

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