

BARBADOS TEST BOOST AS CANARIES EXTENDS COVER

BARBADOS has removed the need for fully vaccinated travellers to take a second PCR test on their arrival to the island.

But a negative PCR test must be uploaded within three days prior to touching down.

Elsewhere, the Canary Islands has extended its offer of free Covid insurance to tourists until 2022.

Travellers can take advantage of the offer for the rest of 2021 and the beginning of 2022.

The policy covers medical costs, repatriation and an extension of stay in the event of a positive Covid test while on the islands.

● MORE than 47 per cent of British families are taking a short break over half-term, according to

research from budget hotel giant Travelodge. A survey of 2,000 families found the average household would spend £495 on their half-term break.

The data also found the average staycation would last four days and cost £363, with parents spending a further £131 entertaining the kids on the break.

● EASYJET has opened its first airport lounge at Gatwick Airport's North Terminal. The Gateway offers complimentary hot and cold food brought to your table, a range of self-serve side dishes and hot and cold drinks.

As well as free wifi, there are areas to work in with charging points plus a TV den and games room.

Travellers can book one, two or three hours in advance from just £18.50 at parking.easyjet.com/easyjet-lounges.html or on the day by showing your boarding pass.

FAMILY TRIP TO CANARIES' VOLCANIC ISLE

Kids lava holiday in Lanzarote



● LEGOLAND will host a huge fireworks display to celebrate its 25th anniversary.

After a two-year break, the colour, light and Lego show will return to Windsor for three days on November 5, 6 and 7 for Bonfire night.

Families will meet Lego creatures such as Ollie the Dragon and watch through 3D glasses as the sky explodes with thousands of Lego bricks.

All of the rides will be open after dark too, including the park's new flying theatre ride, the Flight of the Sky Lion. Tickets are from £35pp and include access to the park and fireworks display. See legoland.co.uk.

MALTA: Five nights' half-board at the 4★ db Seabank Resort & Spa is from £218pp, including flights from Manchester on November 20. See onthebeach.co.uk.

LAKE DISTRICT: One night's self-catering in a Hobbit Hole in Ullswater Valley is from £70 in total. Anyone who books before Tuesday for stays from October 30 onwards gets a free pizza. See thequietest.co.uk.

ITALY: Five nights' self-catering at the 3★ Wiesenheim Apartments in Selva Val Gardena is from

£285pp, based on two people sharing and including flights from Birmingham with transfers on January 3. See crystalski.co.uk or call 020 8610 3123.

DERBYSHIRE: Seven nights' all-inclusive at the Willow Cottage in Bolsterstone is from £439 in total, based on six sharing. See sykescottages.co.uk.

TURKEY: Seven nights' all-inclusive at the 5★ Side Star Elegance in Antalya is from £359pp, including flights from Birmingham on November 28. See jet2holidays.com or call 0800 408 5594.

lates

essential



The Stubble & Co Adventure Bag, £185, stubbleandco.com
WHETHER trekking through the wilderness or jetting off on a city break, this sturdy backpack is durable enough to survive all kinds of adventures.

It has lots of little compartments – a water bottle pocket, laptop section, credit card pouch and even a shoe pocket – so you can cram it full while keeping all your holiday gear organised.

Made from recycled, waterproof materials, its cushioned back panel and adjustable straps make it a useful companion on hikes.

And once you arrive at your destination, it

can be folded neatly for storage. Best of all, it fits within most airlines' hand-luggage restrictions and if you are travelling with a suitcase, there is a nifty trolley sleeve that means you can slot it over the handle.

JET2 REVEALS SUMMER DEALS

BUDGET airline Jet2 has released its summer sun programme for 2023 – with getaways to the Canary Islands, Spain and Greece.

Holidaymakers will be able to fly from six UK bases, including Belfast International and Manchester, to 14 Greek destinations, among other beach hotspots.

Trips include seven nights' all-inclusive to the 4★ Belair Beach Hotel in Rhodes from £745pp, as well as all-inclusive getaways to Gran Canaria, Tenerife and Lanzarote.

Jet2 CEO Steve Heap says: "This is the earliest we have ever put our summer sun programme on sale because we know that customers want something to look forward to more than ever before."

For more information, see jet2.com.

WHEN the dramatic eruption on the Canary Island of La Palma hit the headlines, I vowed it wouldn't ruin my visit to a neighbouring volcanic gem.

Lanzarote is known as "the island of the 1,000 volcanoes" because eruptions took place there for six years from 1730 and lava covered a quarter of the island's surface.

But the last big bang was in 1824, meaning it is now classed as dormant and perfectly safe.

And with year-round balmy temperatures, dramatic landscapes and unique architecture, it served up just the right ingredients for our first family holiday with our two-year-old son Alexander.

Home for the week was the Los Jameos resort in Puerto del Carmen on the southeast coast of the island. Its vast lobby is a riot of colour with rustic beams, wooden balconies and abundant plants recreating the feel of a typical Canarian inner courtyard.

The hotel is inspired by César Manrique, the Lanzarote-born artist and architect who transformed the island with his signature style.

In line with his philosophy, the hotel is made up of Spanish hacienda-style blocks no

more than four storeys high, set in sub-tropical gardens.

A renovation in lockdown has transformed the pools, bars and many of the bedrooms. Our family room was spacious and beautifully decorated in the traditional blues and whites with a roomy en suite featuring bath, shower and double sinks.

Colourful

The fancy coffee machine and mini bar meant we could take full advantage of our balcony. Overlooking the pool, it came complete with two comfy sun loungers, table and chairs.

But all Alexander wanted to do was explore.

My previous holidays have been spent relaxing with a book but I quickly realised this

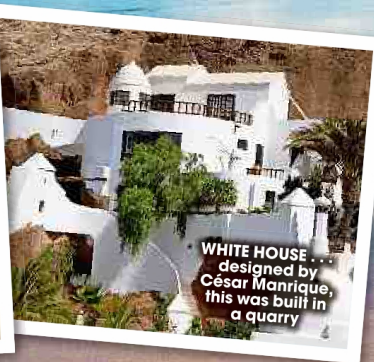
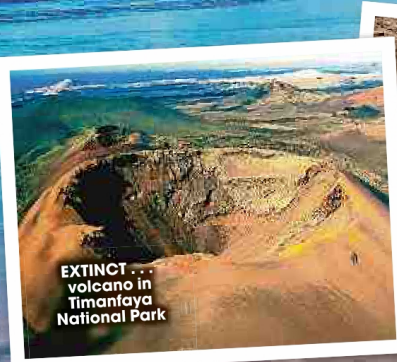
break was going to be very different. Los Jameos is geared up for it.

They have a children's club with a climbing frame, slide, swings and a sand pit. There is free childcare for over-fours but Alexander could still join in the activities with us.

The hotel is centered around four pools, including two for kids and one that is heated in the colder months.

Lanzarote has 300 days of sunshine a year but it was lovely to be in the heated one – because we spent A LOT of time in it. Alexander only agreed to emerge to eat and drink.

The hotel offers various meal plans and we had opted for all-inclusive. The main restaurant, with its colourful interior



● **Puzzles** ● **Deidre** ● **Travel**

● **VISITORS** to Jersey will be able to help Ben Fogle save an endangered species. Red squirrels are on the brink of extinction in the British Isles. But the Channel island is one of the few places where they can still be seen.

You can join the Little Red Squirrel Count, which launches this half-term, and submit sightings of the animals online or record them on the iRecord app.

Spotters are also encouraged to share their images on social media using the hashtag #LittleRedSquirrelCount. See jersey.com/squirrel.



RED ALERT . . . Ben and young helpers

TURKEY'S CHEAP THIS CHRISTMAS

WANT more bang for your buck abroad? Eurochange has revealed the best-value destinations that don't require you to pay for a negative Covid test if you are double-jabbed.

Turkey came out on top, with the study showing the Pound has risen by 23 per cent against the Turkish lira since the beginning of the year.

This means travellers will get an

extra £189 worth of lira for every £1,000. Anyone wanting some budget winter sun should head to Cape Verde, which ranked third best-value spot.

The Pound has risen seven per cent against the Cape Verdean escudo since the start of the year. Other top-value countries from the study include the European hotspots of Romania, Croatia, Poland, Portugal and Greece.



OUT FOR A DRIVE . . . mini jeeps at theme park

(BUT DON'T WORRY, THIS ONE'S DORMANT)



HAPPY DAYS . . . two-year-old Alexander enjoys his very first holiday

RELAX . . . the resort's beautiful pool is a serene spot for a dip

and palm tree-lined terrace, was faultless. It offered a variety of theme nights plus tapas, paella, salads and vegan specialities.

What really impressed me was the local fresh fish and meat cooked to order. We ate tuna steaks, squid, prawns, lamb cutlets and pork chops.

Moon-like

Drinks were top-notch name-brand spirits and good wines, with sangria and beer on tap.

I am not a fan of cheesy holiday entertainment. But they got this spot-on with varied performances – from local and traditional guitarists to impressive magicians, singers and dancers – at venues throughout the hotel. So you can pick and choose what you see. Car hire

is fairly priced and it would be a crime to visit Lanzarote and not explore beyond the hotel.

The landscape is rugged and evidence of the historic volcanoes is everywhere, giving the island a dramatic, moon-like appearance.

Head to Timanfaya National Park to experience it in full.

Manrique, who died in 1992, loved the lava so much he built his wacky home in Tahiche in five volcanic bubbles connected by tunnels. It's now a museum.

The nutrient-rich volcanic soil is good for wine too. The vineyards are breathtaking, the green vines in stark contrast to the pitch-black earth.

The oldest winery in the Canary Islands is El Grifo, in the centre of Lanzarote. You can visit, see its museum and

have a 40-minute tour for 15 euros. And, obviously, buy some of the excellent wine.

The Lanzarote Aquarium, also 15 euros for adults, was a big hit with Alexander, especially the touch pools where you could feel (but thankfully not squish) small species such as sea urchins.

And he was equally pleased splashing about in the shallows on the sandy beach at Playa Matagorda.

Just seconds from the hotel, it is backed by palm trees and more of that dramatic black volcanic rock.

While La Palma may be a bit too hot to visit right now, its volcanic neighbour Lanzarote is the perfect winter-sun destination.

JANE ATKINSON

GO: LANZAROTE

GETTING THERE: EasyJet flies to Lanzarote from Gatwick, Manchester, Luton, Liverpool and Bristol with fares from £24.99 one way. See easyjet.com.

STAYING THERE: Seven nights' all-inclusive at Seaside Los Jameos starts at £504pp, based on two adults and one child (under 12) sharing a family room, arriving December 9, 2021. Free cancellation up to one day before arrival. See los-jameos.com.

OUT & ABOUT: See aquariumlanzarote.com and for Manrique's house, see fcmarique.org and elgrifo.com.

WAKE UP TO JOYS OF NORTH

HALF-TERM is just around the corner – and after a summer of staycations, it could prove a struggle to think of a way to entertain the kids that do not involve a beach and sunshine.

But after our autumn weekend break, I can guarantee Wakefield in rural West Yorkshire is a Northern gem that will keep children amused and parents happy.

It is easy to get to, there is lots to do and you will never get anything other than a proper cup of builder's tea.

First stop was Diggerland – and with two boys aged six and nine, it provided the perfect start to a busy weekend.

An early start meant we were among the first in and were able to go on our pick of the rides at this adventure park, which is inspired by JCBs.

On Spindizzy, we were strapped into a bucket and hoisted into the air before being spun around at breakneck speed. The blurb for the ride says it "shows no mercy and takes no prisoners". Having been forced on to it twice, I can confirm that is entirely accurate.

My youngest, Barney, squealed in delight . . . but sucked his thumb a bit afterwards.

While I recovered my digger legs, the boys went on some more sedate mini-adventures, using the scoops to play skittles and a version of catching a duck.

Go-karts, mini tractors and riding a digger train were also big hits, while scooping dirt and moving it to another pile of dirt offered perfect relaxation for young and old alike.

After digging Diggerland, we drove a few miles to nearby Farmer Copley's (farmercopleys.co.uk) between Pontefract and Featherstone.

Year-round there is an excellent farm shop to grab provisions and tasty, simple treats at its Moo cafe. But right now the kids can get in the Halloween spirit by picking one of the 130,000 pumpkins the farm has grown this year with 27 varieties on offer.

There are also bird-of-prey shows, archery, vintage rides, face painting, crafts and fancy dress competitions.

Our base for the weekend was the King's Croft Hotel a mile down the road (kingscrofthotel.com). Sleeping up to five, the spacious and modern bungalow rooms are ideal for families and offer views of the hotel gardens.

In the evening, we ventured into Wakefield and treated the kids to some great Asian-fusion food at Robatary (robatary.co.uk).

Launching on November 17, the Light Up festival will illuminate buildings across the city with bright colours to kick off the festive season. It includes STILL, a light and sound artwork projected on to the exterior of the city's cathedral between November 19 and 21.

After a good night's sleep, we rounded off the weekend with a day of fun at Xscape (xscapeyorkshire.co.uk), the huge entertainment complex in Castleford.

There is easily enough to keep kids of all ages and interests amused all day. For a warm-up to winter, book a lesson on the indoor real-snow ski slope, which offers skiing, snowboarding and even tobogganing.

Or head to 4D Golf, the UK's first glow-in-the-dark adventure golf, with special effects on every hole. Adrenaline junkies can try their hand at the ropes courses and climbing walls or use up some energy on in the trampolining park.

With bowling, laser fun and a cinema, it is one destination the British weather can't spoil.

And with the kids amused, the adults were able to relax with the paper and a very nice cup of Yorkshire tea.

RIGHTS: MORIARTY

● For more info, see experiencewakefield.co.uk



HOLED UP . . . Diggerland