

GET PUMPED UP

HOLIDAY driving is rarely a joy – but at least the fuel is getting cheaper. Annual Post Office report Motoring on the Continent shows pump prices are down by as much as 24p on last year. Biggest fall is in France, where unleaded and diesel fell 23p and 24p. That means 1,000 miles of motoring is nearly £50 cheaper than last year. Tax havens Andorra and Luxembourg are cheapest in the report – both less than £1 a litre for diesel. But prices in mainstream destinations including Spain and Ireland are down too. On the Continent, diesel is generally cheaper than petrol at the pumps – by up to 27p a litre – and lasts longer. So if you're hiring a vehicle, go diesel. See postoffice.co.uk/holidaymotoring2014.

TODAY'S WEATHER



sky NEWS HD WEATHER with NAZANEEN GHAFAR

TODAY: Warm across the UK with sunny spells and scattered showers. Rain will be mainly in northern and western parts, locally heavy.

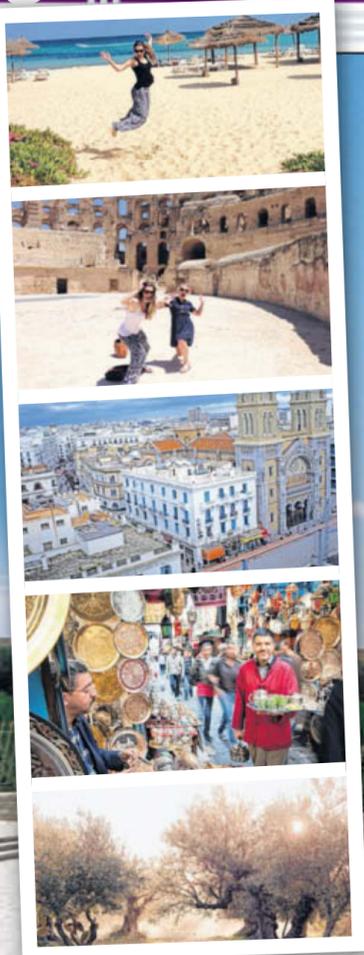
TONIGHT: Once the evening showers have faded it will be dry for most, with lengthy clear periods and a few patches of mist or fog. Southeast England could see heavy showers developing with thunderstorms a possibility.

OUTLOOK: Areas of cloud and heavy showers will spread northwards on Monday with the risk of thunder, especially across western areas. Some sunny spells, scattered showers in the north and west on Tuesday, again with the chance of thunder.

TAXICODE (free on iPhone, Android and Windows Phone)

APP of the WEEK

There are plenty of taxi-booking apps but they tend to work in just one town. Taxicode is nationwide, so it's great for travellers who like getting out and about all over the UK. The app doesn't just search for the closest cab company, it looks for and displays prices from any approved firms within your journey's boundaries. This means you can pick the cheapest and/or most highly rated firm. You can also track your bookings and there's a money-back guarantee for unsatisfactory service.



Jem is a jewel

LIVING HISTORY . . . above, the amphitheatre in El Jems. Opposite, from top, fun by the Med, re-enacting Gladiator, the bustling capital Tunis, in the souk, and olive groves

IT'S ten o'clock in the morning and I can almost hear the chariot wheels rattling.

Standing in the amphitheatre in the Tunisian town of El Jem, I'm relieved the clocks haven't gone back to the third century, when this ancient place first opened. Gladiators' swords would be clashing all around as 35,000 Romans bayed for my blood. This was the largest colosseum in North Africa, and is better preserved than its more famous cousin in Rome. Unlike most amphitheatres, even the tunnels remain, where animals, prisoners and gladiators waited to meet their fate. It's so impressive that Ridley Scott chose to shoot parts of his Oscar-winning movie *Gladiator* here in 2000. Alas, my biceps are no match for Russell Crowe's as Maximus Decimus Meridius. Mine would have been a quick and gruesome death when the lions were released through openings in the floor. But if this was the stuff of nightmares, my trip was the dreamy opposite. With the blue of the Med meeting the heat of North Africa, Tunisia has long been a favourite for sun worshippers. I was among the first to fly a new route

MAXIM-ISE TUNISIA TIME

to Enfidha, on the Hammamet coast, with Monarch Airlines. Positioned between the capital Tunis in the north and coastal resorts further south, it means you can explore both without having to drive too far. With such rich history at hand, I knew I had to skip the beach lounge in favour of some cultural exploration. But my hotel was making that difficult. Hasdrubal Thalassa and Spa in Yasmine Hammamet was a lesson in luxury from the minute I stepped through its grand entrance. I quickly found myself sprawled on a sofa with a glass of lemon and almond juice in hand. My enormous suite – with a lounge, marble dressing table and fresh rose petals down the loo – overlooked the hotel's impressive pool complex and the sea. The place is so deluxe, both Mariah Carey and Colonel Gaddafi have stayed in its most expensive suite. Not at the same time, obviously. While the diva and her entourage slept in the five-bedroom pad, "Mad Dog" Gaddafi camped outside with his camels – assuring staff it was the safest option. Livestock, on the other hand, has a

WITH GLADIATOR CROWE

less peaceful resting place – cows' heads hang outside butchers as a kind of warning to other beasts. Some locals boil it, take the brain out and make cow head soup to feed the whole family for around £10. We spent the morning wandering the twisting passages of old Tunis and its souks. Hasan led us through a cobbled square that was a slave market until 1863. It's a gold souk today, and Hasan insisted we must haggle – the shop owners expect it. Simply ask how much, halve it and work your way up from there. Slowly! Patience brings better bargains. A bottle of a bright red potion with a label "Fleur d'Amour" caught my eye at a perfume stall. "It's Tunisian Viagra", the shopkeeper told me, seeing my puzzled expression. "Always good to carry a small bottle around. Want some?" Tempting. . . but I settled instead for a small bottle of "Cactus" – which smells exactly like Chanel No5 and cost just £2.50. Stinking like a cheap Marilyn Monroe, I headed for some fresh air at the hilltop village of Sidi Bou Said. The town is picture postcard pretty – with blue-and-white painted houses that would be right at home on a Greek island. It's worth queuing at the doughnut stand – just follow the crowds – for the freshly made Tunisian treat which cost just 20p. They are hot, deliciously greasy and crisp on the outside – a bigger, knobblier version of the American variety – and best served with sugar. I devoured mine admiring the glittering blue sea below. As the sun began to set, I felt I'd died and gone to heaven. And all without taking on a gladiator or lion.

ROAD RAVE

"DON'T stop me now, I'm having such a good time. . ." is what we like to sing most behind the wheel. The 1978 Queen classic, *Don't Stop Me Now*, has been voted the nation's No1 driving song in a poll by car maker Mini. The Brit rockers were the No2 act, too, with *Bohemian Rhapsody* – confirming our love of golden oldies. Nine of the ten faves were recorded in the 1970s and 80s. The Kings Of Leon are the only modern act on the playlist, with *Sex On Fire* at No7. Holly Willoughby and David Beckham were the folk we most wanted to share a car with and America's Route 66 highway was top journey. ● **THERE'S** no finer fit than fashion and hols – so online clothes giant Asos has teamed up with British Airways to give globetrotting fashionistas a few tips. Pick your fave five summer fashion buys from the Asos holiday collection at microsite.asos.com/baholidays and it will suggest a travel destination suited – and booted – to you. The site also features itinerary suggestions, dream hotels and the chance to buy the clothes AND British Airways flights to the destination chosen. ● **WANT** to holiday without the dog but cannot face confining your pup to kennels? Great new online firm mydogbudly.co.uk matches dog owners with experienced, vetted and insured dog sitters who will care for your pet in their own home. The website allows you to browse sitters in your local area, read their profiles and reviews then book and pay securely online.

Live like a local... DEVON

MANAGING director of holidaycottages.co.uk, James Morris, has lived in the Appledore area of Devon all his life. **START THE DAY:** With a fry up at a great local pub, The Seagate. Then stroll along the quayside to walk it all off. **SEE THIS FIRST:** Before you do anything else, take a walk along Irsha Street. This is the oldest part of the village, with colourful houses on both sides and stunning views out to sea. Definitely worth stretching your legs for. **BUT DON'T MISS THIS:** Depending on the time of year, go to the Appledore Pirates Fireworks Night held on the West Quay. The Appledore Book Festival in early October is very popular too, with many famous authors coming from around the country to talk through their books and meet budding young authors. **MUST TRY:** A Hockings ice cream – straight from their factory in Appledore and sold from their yellow-and-red vans on the quay. A family favourite. A small passenger ferry also runs from Appledore to Instow during the summer months so you can explore the opposite side of the river too. **MUST BUY:** A crabbing line and bait to have a go at catching your own dinner off the quay. **LOCALS DO:** Take part in the Appledore and Instow annual regatta. It's a fiercely fought contest with local pride at stake. **LOCALS DON'T:** Buy their fish from anywhere else. With so many local fishermen and independent shops selling their catch, why would we?

Hols for under..

£100: Rome from home with Low Cost Holidays. Two nights' B&B in the Eternal City is from £98 per person next month, staying at the 4★ Hotel Executive. Departs East Midlands on July 1. See lowcostholidays.com or call 0800 111 6271. Or host your own Tour de Yorks – four-night pitches at the Blue Dolphin holiday park in Filey are from £44, using your own touring van. See havent.com or call 0871 230 1900. **£200:** Get three nights in Porto from £179. Qwerty Travel has B&B at the 5★ Hotel Melia Braga this week and next, flying on select days from Stansted. See qwertytravel.com. Or save up to 41 per cent on a week in Rhodes. All-inclusive at the Thalia Hotel in Pezkos is from £199 with Directline Holidays. Includes return flights from various UK airports on selected dates this month. See directline-holidays.co.uk. **£500:** Go back to nature in the Black Forest. Shearings has nine-day, all-inclusive tours to Bavaria this month from £429, saving up to £260. Includes excursions and coach travel from the UK. Departs June 28. See shearings.com or call 0844 209 7143. **£750:** Save up to £604 in Jamaica. Seven nights' all-inclusive at the 4★ ClubHotel Riu Jalisco is from £651 with Thomson this month. Departs Manchester on June 12. See thomson.co.uk or call 0871 230 2555. **£1,000:** SAVE up to 38 per cent on a week in Barbados. Seven nights' all-inclusive at the 3★ Savanna Beach resort in Hastings is from £544 with Virgin Holidays. Departs Manchester on June 23. See virginholidays.co.uk or call 0844 557 3870.

JOIN IN THE TOWIE PARTY

WE can guarantee that the Towie cast, currently filming in Spain, will be heading for the Nikki Beach Marbella this month – and it's been spruced up for the occasion. This year sees the launch of a new beach club and pool area as the party destination celebrates its tenth birthday. Think plush beach sunbeds, chic drapery and cool tepees. Open daily from 10am, the club comprises a new swimming pool with beds on a raised deck – perfect for the Towie crew to make sure they're seen – a large outdoor restaurant and bar, and a VIP terrace and spa area on the beach with views of the Med. If you fancy mixing with the stars, you'll have to start saving. Although entry is free, the sunbeds and restaurant prices are definitely in celebrity territory. See nikkibeach.com. ● **NOTHING** beats a free feed – even if you have to catch a ferry to get it. P&O passengers receive a £20 food voucher this summer when booking a Dover-Calais crossing. It's available for return car trips of five days or more, for travel between June 23 and September 30. Fares are from £35 each way for a car and up to nine passengers. For more information see poferry.com.

GADGET of the WEEK

ION Air Pro 3 Action Camera (£299.99, surfdome.com)

THIS action camera is perfect for recording holiday antics. Unlike similar models, it comes in its own rugged housing, so you can take it underwater to 49ft with the kids' first steps in the sea. The wide-angle lens captures all the action in impressive 1080p definition. But best of all it's easy to use. Just slide the switch forward to record and back to stop. It comes with a helmet mount but extras can be bought separately.

BARGAIN of the WEEK

GETTING active on holiday usually means getting your wallet out. Not so this month with Mark Warner. The sporty brand has up to 50 per cent off its resorts in the Med – so you can get a week's half board for less than £500, including kids' club and use of the tennis courts, bikes and sailing boats. The Levante Beach resort in Rhodes is from £479 for departures this week, flying from Heathrow, Gatwick or Manchester. Check out markwarner.co.uk or call 0844 273 6572.

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