

POSH PACKAGE HOLIDAYS: INTRODUCING AN UNLIKELY NEW TRAVEL TREND

The package holiday is given a luxury makeover



By Ella Alexander 14 June 2017



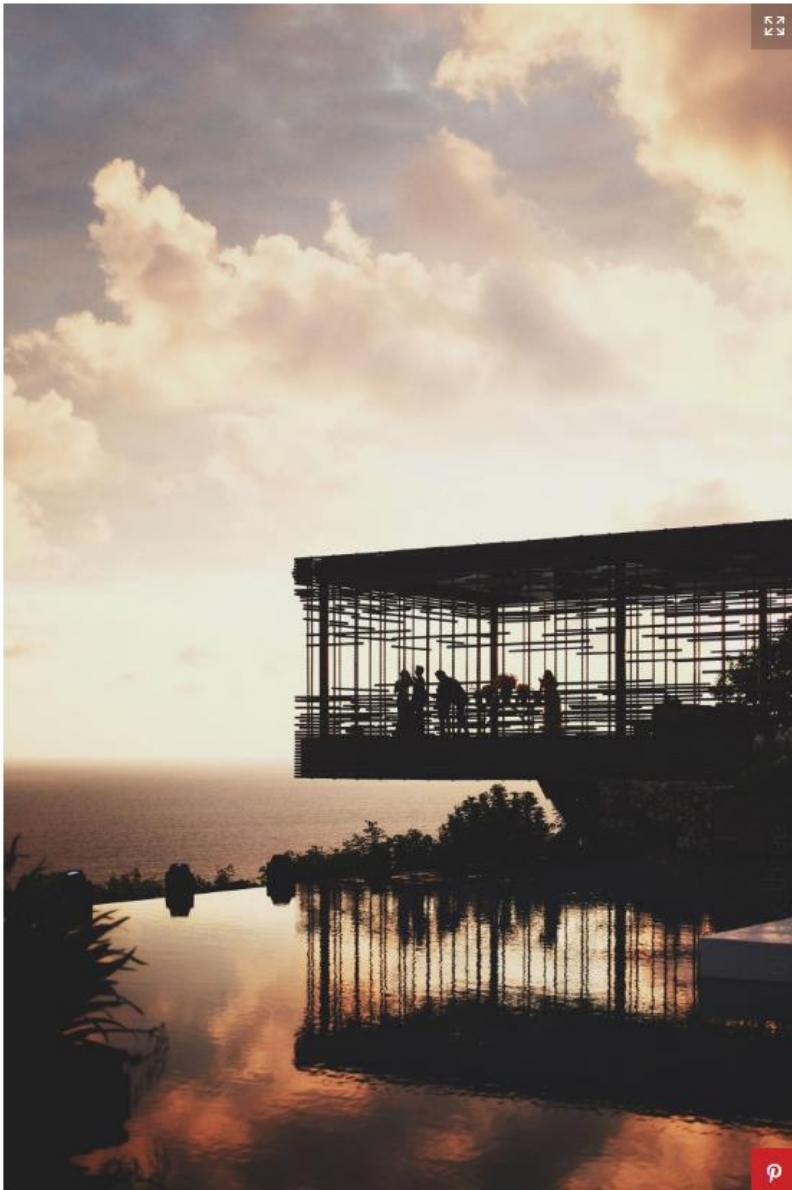
Imbarc

For most, the notion of package holidays and tours have not aged well. When Thomas Cook first introduced the idea back in the 60s, all-inclusive trips overseas revolutionised travel. No longer was international holiday-making the sole preserve of the upper classes – having a few days abroad in the sunshine was finally something the masses could enjoy. The Spanish Costas thrived, Thomas Cook prospered and the Brits were reassured because there were always chips available.

But then the internet boom happened – budget airlines arrived and the web allowed us to find our own economical holidays without having to consult a tour operator. Sadly, the

'Brits abroad' reputation was born, prompting cosmopolitan, independent travellers to develop a hearty snobbery to package holidays.

But times are changing. In 2016, package holidays were up six percent based on the year before. Interestingly, almost two thirds of people (62 percent) from the most affluent households took a package holiday abroad, a significant increase of 23 percent compared to 2015. One woman taking advantage of this demand is entrepreneur Julie-Anne Ugglá, who noticed a gap in the market for holidays that aren't stressful to plan, but that also offer cultural experiences and adventure; in short, posh package tours. And so travel company **Imbarc** was conceived, where holiday-makers can choose between a mix of short haul and long haul travel itineraries – from the Cotswolds to The Balkans.



Allila Uluwatu in Indonesia - Imbarc

"After having trekked across Europe when I was 18, I was instilled with a lust to see the world," said Uggla. "When I was planning holidays, I found myself categorising them – will this trip be a relaxing luxury retreat? Or do I want something that's going to challenge me and experience something totally new. With Imbarc, you won't need to make the choice between these two 'types' of holiday."

Uggla chooses the destinations of her tours based on personal experience and recommendations from friends and family. Each itinerary can be altered according to personal preferences – whether seal-spotting in the Isle of Skye or exploring a sacred monkey forest in Bali. The trips follow the standard package holiday formula, with travel, flights and accommodation included in the price.

Imbarc isn't the only company that's recognised potential in this arena. Others similar tour operators include Kuoni, Zicasso and Cox and Kings, all of which specialise in bespoke, luxe travel packages.

"Imbarc is a trusted voice to take the stress out of planning an incredible, unique holiday," said Uggla. "You can trust that with these itineraries, you'll be led to sites and local hot spots that will allow you to experience what it is that makes your destination truly special."



Essentially, these are package tours for wealthy adults that want something experiential and enlightening from their holidays, but don't have the time to organise it for themselves. Replace the word 'package' with 'concierge' and you've got yourself a very desirable proposition.

"People are looking to get more out of their holidays – whether that's retreating from a busy work life, embarking on a life-changing adventure, delving into a new culture or experiencing all the culinary treasures that a place has to offer," she said. "These are all places that I'd love to go to, guiding people to destinations that are yet to be widely explored, or if they have, to encourage new ways of exploring them."

*For more information visit **Imbarc.co.uk**.*