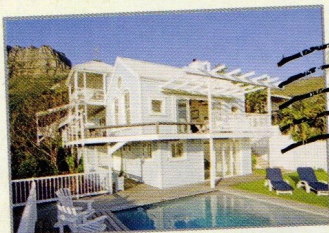


BUNKING OFF

Other places to hide away with your brood for old-school bucket-and-spade escapades



Nantucket House

A family winner. This is rugged, unspoilt South Africa, where wild grasses grow, crazy flowers bloom and birds swoop. The house, a classic beauty, is all white clapboard and whirring ceiling fans, standing isolated on the clean sands, looking out at the crashing ocean and the majestic 12 Apostles peaks. Five minutes away is Hout Bay, where the fishermen potter about; buy chubby crayfish tails to

THE KITCHEN, ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE.

*2182



throw on the braai back at home – perfect with a bottle of sauvignon blanc from nearby Constantia. A whitewashed, big-kitchen, lime-green-grassed slice of fresh-air brilliance.

BOOK IT Africa Travel (africatravel.co.uk or 020 7843 3587) offers a month at Nantucket House from £18,490 for a family of two adults and two children, including British Airways flights.

Callistephus chinensis
Sommeraster - Eume Marguerite
China Aster - Aster

Liss Ard

A clean page for children to write their own story, part *Swallows and Amazons*, part Famous Five. There are 200 acres of magical Irish bog and bracken here in which to roam unfettered. Liss Ard provides the waxed jackets and hats, the rubber boots, fishing rods, canoes and bicycles – and everyone, including the tiniest of little ones, tumbles about like happy hedgehogs. There's a boys' toys den with pool table and stereo system; a daily children's club for make-and-bake mornings, and walks among the wildlife, discovering sweet puffins, funny lizards and fatty toads. There's even a private, 50-acre lake for racing kayaks and fishing for brown trout – gut them and then cook and tuck into while snuggling up in the sweet and simple, cosy Lake Lodge as the fire roars and the inevitable rain drums on the windows.

BOOK IT A month at Liss Ard (lissardestate.com or 00 353 28 40 000) costs from £9,950 for a four-bedroom cottage, including daily maid service.

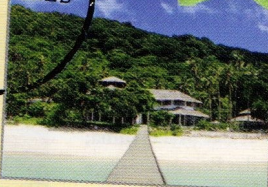


Ariara

There's a new wave of private islands available to rent and this one, in a miles-away-but-deeply-intriguing waterworld, has everyone a-twitter. Created by a British couple, the McCullochs, Ariara is their love letter to the ultimate exotic location. An admittedly pumped-up version of a Robinson Crusoe escape, it has 125 acres and sleeps 18 in eight different cottages and lodges. This is big-kid heaven – there are a mass of jet skis and eight vessels, including a gorgeous 100-foot converted fishing boat. The staff are adorable, and will remember which essential oil you like to burn in your villa and that your favourite shampoo is banana. The chef cooks up the best lobster you've ever tasted (but also burgers and pizzas). Dive expert Florian will take adrenaline junkies wreck-diving. Fun, fun, fun and weirdly good value for what it is.

BOOK IT Black Tomato (blacktomato.com or 020 7426 9888) offers one month's all-inclusive stay on Ariara, including drinks and dives, from £11,995 a person, based on six people sharing, including a staff of 30 and flights.

PHILIPPINES



Lansiya

Many of the villas on the island are built by foreigners, but this is different. Owned by a leading Sri Lankan family, originally built as a one-room love nest, it has expanded over time, providing niches for toddlers and crannies for teens. You feel the heartbeat of the place immediately. The villa is all about local art and architecture. Yes, as a beach house it has a sophistication about it, with its gorgeous infinity pool, but it's also a place for children to flop on sofas in wet trunks and for adults to swing in hammocks and listen to the waves. Outside, through the coconut

plantation, is the utterly deserted Sugar Beach. There are staff on hand, sunsets to see and chef Sylvester's sticky date cake to relish in the quiet of the afternoon. Don't miss out on the local food markets either. Sylvester will take you along if you ask nicely.

BOOK IT Ampersand Travel (ampersandtravel.com or 020 7289 6100) offers a month at Lansiya from £26,000 for eight adults, including flights.



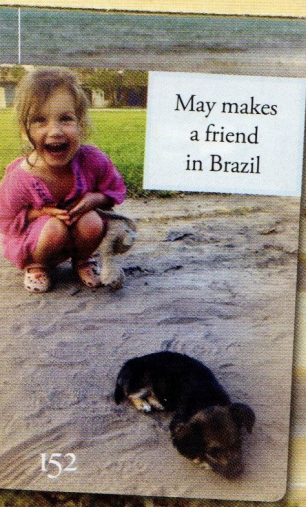
Kaya Mawa

Secretly, quietly, big-time hush-hush, Kaya Mawa has just had a refurb and snuck back onto the scene, becoming the unbeatable insider spot to get busy going low-key. Some of the smartest

people you know have come here and instantly called it their most special place on the planet. The journey may require several planes of diminishing size before feet touch the clear, warm, lapping waters of Lake Malawi, but what an otherworldly thrill when you do. It feels like an Africa from a lifetime ago – nothing but simple lakeside living, bobbing about in dugouts, fishing and listening to the drums from the surrounding villages at night. Cycle around the island, snorkel and teach

the children how to dive in the salt-free water, seeking out a million tiny fish that look like Nemo's colourful cousins. Sail and waterski, feast on chocolate brownies and mojitos. Rooms are open-plan, windowless chalets built into the rocks, with beds that hang from the ceiling. Fall asleep in the all-encompassing African dark. This is a pristine, splashabout place.

BOOK IT Cazenove+Lloyd (cazloyd.com or 020 7384 2332) offers a month at Kaya Mawa in the family villa from £16,735 for two adults and two children, including flights.



May makes a friend in Brazil