

URBAN Romance

Holidays for two don't have to revolve around poolside lounging and walks on the beach. If you're after something with a bit more oomph, take a look at these romantic city breaks, courtesy of Thomson Couples...

MARRAKECH

GEORGIA ANDERSON soaked up the mystery and mayhem of North Africa's most atmospheric city.

There's a definite romanticism attached to the idea of time travel. And, unless you're Marty McFly, Marrakech's medina is about as far from the 21st century as you can get. It's a labyrinth of secret passageways and secluded palaces, with a feverish main square and a maze of spice-scented souks at its heart. We ploughed head-first into the chaos, getting lost in the ancient marketplace and resurfacing for mint tea in the rooftop cafés overlooking Jemaa El-Fna Square. Foodies are sorted here – take a pew on a floor cushion in a candle-lit restaurant, or head for the square's riot of nightly food stalls, which dish up a feast of couscous, spicy sausages and sweet pastries.



MEDINA GARDENS

With a top-to-toe refurb currently in progress, this traditional Arabic hotel is set to be a knockout. It's in an unbeatable spot, right outside the walls of the city's medina, and is surrounded by peaceful gardens that give it a real oasis-like feel.

DUBROVNIK

JENNY CHILDS took her cue from Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor in the loveliest medieval city under the sun.

As a romantic destination à deux, Dubrovnik is starting to give Paris and Rome a run for their money. I challenge any travelling twosome not to be bowled over by it. We made our grand entrance through Pile Gate – the main foyer into the city's UNESCO-crowned old town – and were greeted by a scene I can only compare to a Royal Shakespeare Company set. We oohed over the baroque buildings, green-shuttered shops and pure marble pavements (which look like they've been buffed with gold polish). We trod the chunky walls that halo the city and drank in the views of the twinkling Adriatic and the Dalmatian Coast's moss-green islands. And, after dark, we enjoyed drinks on the cobbles at the legendary open-air Jazz Café Troubadur.



ISLAND RESORT KALAMOTA

Hide away at this exclusive Karisma hotel on the tiny traffic-free island of Kolocep and you can look forward to unlimited à la carte dining, a private beach, and Bali beds by the pool.

FUNCHAL

SARAH HOLT travelled to Funchal in Madeira and discovered the city is best experienced fifty-fifty.

Funchal has a big kitty of sights. When we stayed in Madeira's capital city, we discovered that most of them were made for sharing. We sat in the cable car and inched our way up to the mountain town of Monte, with its maze of botanical gardens. Then we gripped on to each other for dear life as we careened back down to sea level in a wooden toboggan. In the cosmopolitan city centre, meanwhile, we learnt that the Olympic torch-sized ice cream cones served by al fresco vendors were best tackled with two spoons. And it goes without saying that bottles of Madeira's home-grown wine had to be split down the middle.



HOTEL SAVOY GARDENS

This place has a rooftop terrace furnished with couples' loungers, an honesty bar, and a hot tub. And some of the bedrooms come with panoramic sea views.

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