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These festivals really float our boat

HELLO, SAILOR! LOOKING FOR A SUMMER PARTY? TAKE TO THE SEAS WITH ONE OF THESE NAUTICAL BASHES

Fact: everyone loves a boat party, and these days there's no shortage of them, but most of the time they scream "CHEAP BOOZE AND FREE CAPTAIN'S HATS" while relegating some of the more important stuff – the music and the atmosphere, say – to the background.

It doesn't have to be that way. If you're after a buoyant blast that focuses on cutting-edge DJs and a healthy dose of hedonism, then crack on to one of these festivals, where you'll find lots of fun for the discerning raver-sailor. All aboard!

WATER WAY TO PARTY

Left: Dimensions, Pula.

Right: Sziget, Budapest.

Below: The Ark, Spain

For seasoned sea dogs...

Dimensions, Croatia

If one boat party just isn't enough, try a massive 20 over four days at Dimensions, which is the festival if you give a damn about your electronic music. Boat parties last three sun-drenched hours or start at sunset and go into the night. They're hosted by established labels and party crews, who'll sail you around ludicrously beautiful bits of the Adriatic coast, while the finest underground DJs on the planet pound out the tunes. Look out for: avant-electronics auteur Helena Hauff on the Bassiani boat; a party led by underground label Hessle Audio with Ben UFO, Pearson Sound and Pangaea; plus soulful sounds from Fatima and Steve Spacek on the Eglo Records boat.

29 Aug-2 Sep. Fly to Zadar

For choosy cruisers...

The Ark, Spain

Let vast Spanish party vessel *Vision of the Seas* whisk you away on The Ark's high-end clubbing cruise. The grand voyage takes in four Mediterranean cities – Barcelona, Sète, Ibiza and Palma de Mallorca – stopping at each for revellers to explore or just keep partying. At an impressive 915ft long, the ship itself becomes a floating festival, with a gleaming line-up of house and techno DJs (including Luciano, Booka Shade, Aeroplane and Route 94) playing across multiple stages around the boat. If you need a breather from the 24/7 partying, hit the mind-boggling array of facilities, encompassing everything from a climbing wall to a casino.



"A gleaming line-up of DJs play around the boat"

This is a party boat gone luxe. 30 Aug-3 Sep. Fly to Barcelona

For city centre sailors...

Sziget, Hungary

Can't bear to be away from urban life for too long? Budapest's week long, city-engulfing festival Sziget offers a series of boat parties on the Danube. Each shindig is helmed by a different DJ – including breaks veteran Krafty Kuts, French house maestro Popof and London duo Gorgon City – and gives punters the chance to gawp at Budapest's ever-stunning architecture as they tear up what the organisers claim is "the biggest moving dance floor in central Europe". You can even relax on a bean bag or deckchair while you soak up the sun, but let's be honest – you're there to soak up the premium beats, bass and vibes, so you won't be chilling out for long.

8-15 Aug. Fly to Budapest