



MUMMY TRAVELS

Can you really keep travelling with a child in tow?

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TAKING A FAMILY GULET HOLIDAY IN TURKEY

*6th June
2019*

The only thing that makes me happier than being beside the sea is being on it – as I was reminded during our chilled out boat trip at half-term. Which is why the idea of a whole holiday island hopping, on a family gulet holiday in Turkey has been on my wishlist for a while.



The traditional gulet boats have sailed around the Eastern Mediterranean for years, especially around [Bodrum](#) and Marmaris, cruising along the aptly named Turquoise Coast past ancient cities, fishing villages and some of the most beautiful beaches in Europe.

The original wooden sailing boats with their sails billowing on two masts are incredible romantic – imagine lounging in the sun as the sparkling waves turn every shade of azure and emerald. But these days, taking a family gulet holiday in Turkey has had a more modern upgrade with specialist companies like [Turkey Luxury Gulet](#) and its stylish gulet boats.

And the added bonus? The gulet boats come already crewed – as I've never learned to sail, my options for a cruise with kids have otherwise been a full on ocean cruise, a much smaller option like a narrowboat or [motorboat on a lake](#), or a day trip.

Which means all I need to do is lie back and relax, with Minnie and I swapping our books on board for the deserted sandy beaches, jumping into the clearest water to spy little fish through our snorkels, being wowed by ancient buildings and eating the freshest fish by the water. And every night, watching the sun sink lower behind the horizon as the waves turn gold and flaming orange. Bliss.

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What is a gulet cruise?

There's a wide range of different gulet holidays out there, but at its simplest, it's a chance to sail around the Turkish coastline – as well as around some of the Greek islands – on an updated version of the traditional gulet boats.

Most have two masts, although you'll find three-masted versions, and they have varying degrees of mod cons. You'll get your own crew though, so there's no need for any sailing experience – if you fancy, you can usually brush up a few skills onboard – as well as different options for meals, and the option to tailor menus too.

Some will have a set itinerary, but if you charter your own gulet cruise with kids, you can also tailor the different stops to your family's preferences. Perfect if you want to take things slow with little ones, or head somewhere off the usual routes to explore, or pack in the activities with older kids whether that's kayaking or even a spot of waterskiing.

They come in a variety of sizes too, but there's easily enough room for a family and often space for grandparents, cousins, friends and more. Turkey Luxury Gulet's boats range from the Silver Moon sleeping eight up to the Nevra Queen with space for 20, for example.

And as with big villa holidays, the more people you have aboard, the cheaper it works out. A gulet sleeping eight costs from around £775 per person per week including crew and fuel, while food costs from around £250 per person. If you're blowing the budget, All About U is the top end of the fleet with all the luxuries you might want... and a price tag starting from around £10,000 per person if you've got the full complement of 12 on board.





How to choose a gulet holiday with kids

There's a huge choice of companies offering family gulet holidays in Turkey but without being able to see the boat yourself, it can be hard to know whether you're really getting what you're booking a cruise with kids.

Which is why I like to let the experts do the hard work for me – with 14 years of experience, Turkey Luxury Gulet has inspected 573 luxury gulets and chosen the top 50 to be in their fleet so you know you won't be getting a ramshackle old hulk.

Then there's the itinerary – with a thousand miles of coastline, do you want hidden coves or a chance to visit the bigger towns along the way, fishing villages or ancient ruins, the chance to hop to Greece as well or to discover a less well-known side of Turkey? Or in my case, usually a bit of them all.

With your own gulet charter, it's easy to tailor your itinerary to suit both the ages of your kids and what you'll enjoy most, making sure there's as much chance to chill out and swim as to explore.

Plus with local specialists, you can get advice about the insider secrets you only normally discover on the trip – I love it when companies work with local businesses to get the benefit of their knowledge and support them rather than breezing in and out.

With 54 local partners, from guides to restaurant owners, fishermen and hotels (if you want to extend your holiday), that's all my essentials nicely covered off too.

Where to go on a Turkey gulet cruise

When you charter your own gulet, the sea really is your oyster – especially with experts to help put together a tailor-made itinerary. You could hop between historic sites and spotting wildlife or mix uninhabited islands with some of the area's better-known destinations.

There are direct flights from the UK to both Bodrum and Dalaman, for Marmaris, Fethiye and Olu Deniz so it's easy to get to the main departure points for a Turkey gulet holiday.

If you're struggling to know where to begin, I've got some ideas to inspire your first family gulet holiday though.



Island hopping from Bodrum

Starting in [Bodrum](#), where it's also easy to add a few extra nights to a trip, you can plan a very chilled out itinerary along the beautiful Turquoise Coast. Stopping at some of the smaller islands, this trip is all about relaxing, swimming, lounging on quiet beaches and maybe a few watersports along the way.

There's also Bodrum castle to explore at the start, but if you want another sight to see along the way, the ancient city of [Ephesus](#) was home to one of the seven wonders of the ancient world – while little remains of the Temple of Artemis today, Ephesus is still one of the largest Roman archaeological sites in the eastern Mediterranean with some impressive buildings.

Explore the Bozburun peninsula

Further south than Bodrum, the Bozburun peninsula runs from Marmaris out towards Greece – while Marmaris is perhaps best known for its nightlife, the peninsula is famous for its clear sea and forested mountains, with plenty of places to swim but also walks to take. The Carian Trail is 500 miles long, but it's easy to wander a short stroll of the full path.

You can even find turtles laying eggs on the beaches as well as uninhabited islands off the coast. Stop at smaller local villages along the way, not to mention Bozburun itself – where traditionally some of the best gulets were produced over the centuries.

If you're looking for ancient sites, the historic city of Knidos was once one of the most important in the area. Or if you fancy adding a second country to your trip, the lovely [Greek island of Symi](#) is close enough to visit, along with its bigger, better-known sister, [Rhodes](#).

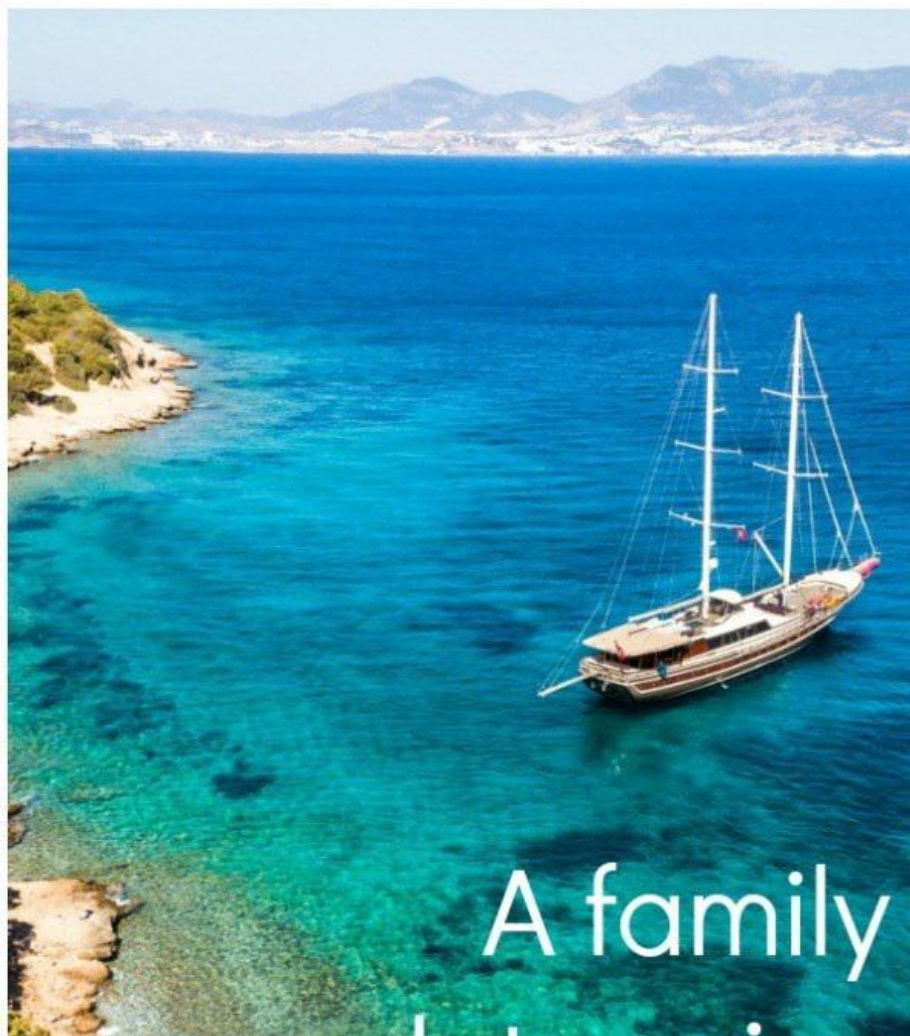
Sail south from Fethiye

Start your trip around Fethiye and Olu Deniz and you'll be sailing along one of the most popular routes of the Turquoise Coast, visiting Turkey's Blue Lagoon and heading to the ancient city of Olympos.

But there are also secrets to be discovered here too, including the gorgeous canyon called Butterfly Valley.

Only accessible by sea, it fills with butterflies for a few weeks during the summer, but is still a lovely spot to anchor and explore at any time of year, including the chance for older kids to walk to a waterfall.

PIN FOR LATER: FAMILY GULET HOLIDAY IN TURKEY





Disclosure: This post is a paid partnership with Turkey Luxury Gulet. All opinions are my own, including a love of having someone else crew the boat while I kick back in the sunshine... Contains some affiliate links: any purchases you make are unaffected but I may receive a small commission.

Images courtesy Turkey Luxury Gulets

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Award-winning family travel blogger and mum to the mini traveller, aka Minnie. Together we've visited Europe, America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, tried a cruise and a road trip, and survived countless long-haul trips. London (UK) based. Serious beach habit.

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I'm Cathy, an [award-winning travel-obsessed writer](#) who's never knowingly underpacked.

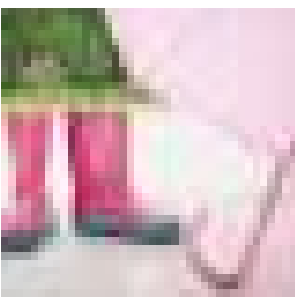
I'm also mum to the mini traveller – aka six-year-old Minnie* – and trying to work out how to cling on to normal life by my fingernails. Don't tell me it's not possible...

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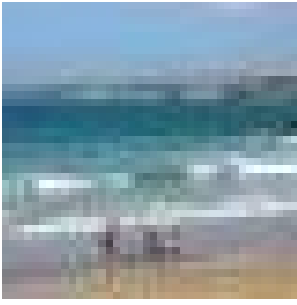
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