

Not Your Average Beach Destinations

Living in Asia, we're lucky to have some of the world's best beaches right on our doorstep – but how about when you fancy spreading your wings just that little bit further? If you're in the mood for a long-haul adventure, here are some recommendations from **Flight Centre Hong Kong** of slightly more far-flung destinations for some stunning sun, sea and sand ... all done in supreme style, of course!

Zanzibar, Tanzania

Known as the "Spice Island", this exquisite archipelago on Africa's east coast delivers the perfect kind of beach break – idyllic white-sand shores and crystal-clear azure waves, with a side serving of rich history and cultural delights too. **Nungwi** is probably the island's most famous beach – and for good reason, as its swaying palm trees and powdery white sands are postcard-perfect stuff – but **Kendwa** and **Kiwengwa** are every bit as beautiful.

Dust the sand from your soles for a **spice tour** around some of Zanzibar's working plantations – you'll never see cloves, vanilla and cinnamon in the same light again! It's all too easy to lose an entire day to UNESCO World Heritage Site, **Stone Town**; with its uniquely mesmerising mix of African, Arabic, Indian and European influences, new wonders lie in every alleyway. Another must-visit is **The Rock** restaurant; perched on a stone seemingly dropped into the middle of the Indian Ocean, incredible views and delicious seafood get an extra sprinkling of Zanzibar magic here.



Tulum, Mexico

This Mayan city might well be Instagram's favourite beach destination *du jour* – but once you clap eyes on its pristine sweeping sands and sparkling turquoise seas, you'll soon understand why. Factor in balmy breezes and a gloriously laid-back vibe and you've got the perfect location to soak up the rays with a trashy novel, perfect your downward dog with a spot of beachside yoga or simply stuff your face with fresh fish tacos as the sun goes down.

No trip to Tulum would be complete without a visit to its **famous ruins**; perched on the edge of dramatic limestone cliffs with the Caribbean Sea's crashing waves below, these awe-inspiring pyramids and temples could have come straight out of *Indiana Jones*. Be sure to cool off at a *cenote* – **Gran Cenotes** and **Cenotes Dos Ojos** are our top picks; these spectacular sinkholes provide unforgettable scuba diving opportunities.



Hawaii, USA

Soak up the spirit of aloha in Hawaii, where beach life is the only life worth living! This Pacific Ocean archipelago might technically be part of the United States, but it has a distinctive vibe all of its own – lush, laidback and rather lovely. **Oahu** is one of Hawaii's most popular islands, with beaches so beautiful they have to be seen to be believed. If the sun-drenched shores of **Waikiki** are too touristy for you, head to the **North Shore**. Make sure to stop at **Banzai Pipeline** where surfing flick *Blue Crush* was filmed ... and if there's anywhere to hang ten with the best of them, it has to be Hawaii!

Kauai, Hawaii's oldest island, has plenty of treasures to explore too. Hike the **Napali Coast** to take in its famous coastline, with emerald-green cliffs, cascading waterfalls and awe-inspiring Pacific Ocean panoramas all part of the deal; take a helicopter tour to really bask in the beauty of the place. *EL*



Zakynthos, Greece

While everyone else suns themselves in Santorini and Mykonos, those in the know head to Zakynthos for blissed-out beach days galore. Known as the "Flower of the East" thanks to the 7,000 species of flora that grow there, this gorgeous Greek island has more beaches than even the most dedicated sunbather could dream of. The most iconic is **Navagio**, with its white sands, turquoise waves and surrounding limestone cliffs – make sure to check it out from above as well to get the ultimate Zakynthos snapshot.

For those wanting some sandy serenity, **Gerakas** is a good bet, while the likes of **St Nicholas** and **Alykes** boast adrenaline-pumping water sports. A **Blue Caves** tour – so-called because of the incredible, shimmering colour of the seas there – is another essential, with some great diving opportunities to be had. Don't forget a stroll around **Solomos Square**, where the Museum of Post-Byzantine Art and Agios Dionysios Church make for some equally impressive explorations on dry land.

If you're planning to stay in one of these properties, or you need more recommendations on design hotels elsewhere, contact the experts at Flight Centre Hong Kong at 2830 2730, or visit flightcentre.com.hk.