

Ranking: Europe's 25 most searched islands for water sports, according to TUI Musement

- The study analyses more than 500 islands and seven water sports: surfing, diving, kayaking, sailing, snorkelling, windsurfing and kitesurfing
- Malta tops the ranking, followed by Tenerife and Madeira

Palma de Mallorca, 9 July 2026 – For many travellers, choosing a destination is no longer just about the weather, the scenery or the beach. Increasingly, holiday decisions are also shaped by the experiences available in-destination and the opportunity to enjoy personal passions while travelling.

This trend is part of the wider growth of sports and active tourism, a segment that accounts for around 10% of global tourism expenditure and is expected to grow by 17.5% between 2023 and 2030, according to UN Tourism*. Likewise, TUI Musement's Travel Trends show that travellers are increasingly planning their getaways around the sports and hobbies they love**.

To further investigate this trend, [TUI Musement](#), a leading tours and activities provider, has analysed Google search volumes for seven water sports (surfing, diving, kayaking, sailing, snorkelling, windsurfing and kitesurfing) across more than 500 European islands, to identify which destinations are generating the greatest interest among water sports enthusiasts***. The result is a ranking of 25 islands, with Malta taking the top spot.

The top 10

1. [Malta](#), Malta

With more than 157,000 searches, Malta leads the ranking and stands out particularly for diving. Thanks to its many dive sites, with depths ranging from 5 to 60 metres, its crystal-clear waters offer the chance to explore shipwrecks, caves and natural rock formations. Ċirkewwa is one of the island's most popular diving areas.

Recommended experience: [introductory scuba diving experience](#)

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2. [Tenerife, Spain](#)

Year-round good weather and a wide variety of spots, with different seabeds and wave conditions, attract surfers of all levels. The island's volcanic landscapes and rich marine biodiversity also make it a highly appealing choice for snorkelling, with standout locations including Abades Bay and Montaña Amarilla.

Recommended experience: [diving in Abades Bay](#)

3. [Madeira, Portugal](#)

Located in the heart of the Atlantic, Madeira offers excellent surfing conditions for much of the year, with water temperatures ranging between 18°C and 24°C.

Snorkelling enthusiasts will also find exceptional spots, such as the Ponta de São Lourenço Nature Reserve, where the area's geology has helped create a habitat for unique species.

Recommended experience: [snorkelling tour in Ponta de São Lourenço](#)

4. [Lanzarote, Spain](#)

Its exposure to Atlantic winds makes Lanzarote a favourite for surfing, especially around Famara beach, one of the island's top spots for both beginners and those looking to improve their technique. The waters of Papagayo and the cliffs of Los Ajaches attract kayaking enthusiasts, while the Museo Atlántico, one of the few underwater museums in the world, offers the chance to dive among more than 300 life-size sculptures.

Recommended experience: [kayaking and snorkelling in Lanzarote](#)

5. [Mallorca, Spain](#)

Its Mediterranean landscapes, cultural heritage and rich gastronomy attract all types of travellers every year. Alongside this offer, the island also provides a wide range of water sports, with snorkelling and kayaking playing a particularly prominent role. These activities allow visitors to explore sea caves and hidden coves, such as those in La Victoria Natural Park, or discover areas including the coast of Sant Elm and Dragonera Island.

Recommended experience: [multi-adventure tour with kayaking and snorkelling](#)

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6. [Fuerteventura](#), Spain

The third Canary Island in the ranking confirms the archipelago's strong appeal for these types of experiences. Fuerteventura is one of Europe's leading destinations for kitesurfing and windsurfing, topping both categories in TUI Musement's analysis. Its steady winds and wide beaches, such as Sotavento and Flag Beach, are complemented by a landscape of dunes and unspoilt coastline, giving the island its distinctive character.

Recommended experience: [windsurfing lessons in southern Fuerteventura](#)

7. [Crete](#), Greece

With more than 1,000 km of coastline, the first Greek island in the ranking combines an extensive water sports offer with a remarkable variety of landscapes. Natural highlights such as the Samaria Gorge, together with its rich cultural heritage and remains of the Minoan civilisation, make Crete an especially well-rounded destination. Travellers can also dive around Dia Island, where Jacques Cousteau carried out some of his underwater explorations.

Recommended experience: [Dia Island cruise](#)

8. [Sardinia](#), Italy

Its transparent waters invite visitors to discover the marine life of the Mediterranean. The Gulf of Orosei, known for its cliffs, sea caves and coves that are mainly accessible by boat, such as Cala Luna and Cala Goloritzé, is one of the most attractive areas for snorkelling. The Tavolara Marine Protected Area is also highly popular among those looking for sea-based activities.

Recommended experience: [snorkelling experience in Tavolara](#)

9. [Ibiza](#), Spain

Internationally known for its vibrant nightlife, Ibiza is also a privileged destination for enjoying the sea. Its turquoise waters and Posidonia meadows, recognised for their ecological value as part of the UNESCO World Heritage site "Ibiza, Biodiversity and Culture", create an exceptional setting for diving and snorkelling. Must-visit spots include Ses Salines Natural Park and the area around the islet of Es Vedrà.

Recommended experience: [kayaking and snorkelling tour from Es Figuerà beach](#)

10. [Cyprus](#), Cyprus

With more than 57,000 searches, Cyprus completes the top 10 and stands out particularly for diving. One of its best-known dive sites is the Zenobia shipwreck, off the coast of Larnaca, considered one of the leading wreck diving spots in the Mediterranean.

Recommended experience: [small-group diving experience from Ayia Napa and Protaras](#)

The top 25

Beyond the top 10, the ranking features a total of 25 European islands and provides a broader picture of the destinations generating the greatest interest among travellers looking to practise water sports. From Atlantic islands associated with surfing, windsurfing and kitesurfing, to Mediterranean destinations known for their clear waters and seabeds, the ranking reflects the diversity of experiences Europe offers to those who want to combine the sea, nature and active adventures.

In addition to the overall ranking, based on the combined search volume for the seven water sports analysed, the study also identifies the leading islands in each category:

- **Surfing:** Madeira, Tenerife and Lanzarote
- **Diving:** Malta, Madeira and Gran Canaria
- **Kayaking:** Menorca, Tenerife and Malta
- **Sailing:** Milos, Santorini and Rhodes
- **Snorkelling:** Tenerife, Mallorca and Crete
- **Windsurfing:** Fuerteventura, Naxos and Kos
- **Kitesurfing:** Fuerteventura, Paros and Kos

View the full ranking table on the TUI Musement blog:

<https://blog.tuimusement.com/uk/best-european-islands-for-water-sports/>

Notes to editors:

This announcement can be found in the press section on www.tuigroup.com (images for online use only)

* [Sports tourism data according to UN Tourism](#)

** [TUI Musement Travel Trends](#)

*****Methodology:** the ranking was created based on Google search volumes for seven water sports-related terms: “surfing [island]”, “diving [island]”, “kayaking [island]”, “sailing [island]”, “snorkelling [island]”, “windsurfing [island]” and “kitesurfing [island]”, between May 2025 and April 2026. More than 500 European islands were analysed, and the 25 islands with the highest combined search volume were selected. The analysis was carried out in May 2026.

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Ranking:

1. Malta: 157 800 searches
2. Tenerife: 153 390 searches
3. Madeira: 134 620 searches
4. Lanzarote: 130 610 searches
5. Mallorca: 111 010 searches
6. Fuerteventura: 102 540 searches
7. Crete: 95 690 searches
8. Sardinia: 70 470 searches
9. Ibiza: 58 960 searches
10. Cyprus: 57 620 searches

About TUI Musement

TUI Musement is a global Tours & Activities business that combines a highly curated product portfolio, scalable digital platforms and in-destination service by local teams, to source, develop, distribute and deliver products in three categories:

- Experiences: Excursions, activities & attraction tickets
- Transfers: Between airports, hotels and ports
- Tours: Multi-day itineraries encompassing hotels, experiences, guides and transportation

Available in all major beach and city destinations, products are sourced from leading travel businesses or developed in-house by TUI teams, including the TUI Collection, the flagship experiences portfolio of TUI Group. Products are distributed to customers, including the 34.7+ million TUI customers, through TUI websites and apps – such as the Tours & Activities dedicated TUI Musement app, as well as in-destination local teams and B2B partners, including some of the world's leading OTAs, tour operators, airlines, hotels, travel agencies and cruise lines. TUI Musement is one of the major growth areas of the TUI Group and employs approximately 7,000 people worldwide.

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The TUI Group is a leading global tourism group. The group is headquartered in Germany. TUI shares are listed on the MDAX index of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange and on the regulated market of the Lower Saxony Stock Exchange in Hanover. The TUI Group offers its more than 34.7 million customers integrated services from a single source and covers the entire tourism value chain under one roof. The Group owns more than 460 hotels and resorts with premium brands such as RIU, TUI Blue, and Robinson, as well as 18 cruise ships, ranging from the luxury class MS Europa and MS Europa 2 and the HANSEATIC class expedition ships to the Mein Schiff fleet of TUI Cruises and cruise ships at Marella Cruises in the UK. The group also includes leading European tour operator brands and online marketing platforms, for example for hotel-only or flight-only offers, five airlines with 125 modern medium- and long-haul aircraft, and around 1,200 travel agencies. In addition to expanding its core business with hotels and cruises through successful joint ventures and activities in holiday destinations, TUI is increasingly focusing on the expansion of digital platforms. The group is transforming itself into a global tourism platform company.

Global responsibility for sustainable economic, environmental, and social action is at the heart of our corporate culture. The TUI Care Foundation, initiated by TUI, focuses on the positive effects of tourism, education and training, and the strengthening of environmental and social standards with projects in 25 countries. In this way, it supports the development of holiday destinations. The globally active TUI Care Foundation initiates projects that create new opportunities for the next generation.

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