

# TOP TEES FOR ONE... OR TWO

Golfers travelling on their own or as a couple often want very different things from a golf holiday. **Peter Swain** makes some suggestions



## BEST FOR... SOLOS

### ST MORITZ, SWITZERLAND

High in the Swiss Alps, St Moritz is more usually associated with skiing and the Cresta Run toboggan track. But the town's two fine courses, ritzy five-star hotels, deluxe shopping and exciting nightlife make it perfect for a summer singleton golfing break.

Founded by Brits in 1893, the 6,800-yard Samedan course is relatively flat and criss-crossed by Alpine brooks. The clubhouse is apres-golf rather than apres-ski, but the same frothy beer and cheesy comestibles create an equally convivial atmosphere.

Ten miles down the Engadin valley, Zuoz is a hillier prospect, with crampons useful on the back nine. At an elevation of 6,000ft, balls fly up to 10% further, so driving from the elevated tees is a blast. Badrutt's Palace Hotel is especially golf-friendly, with Engadin Golf Hotels ideally placed to organise packages.

[www.badruttspalace.com](http://www.badruttspalace.com) [www.engadin-golfhotels.ch](http://www.engadin-golfhotels.ch)

### KIAWAH ISLAND, USA

One of five resort courses on South Carolina's fabled Kiawah Island, Tom Fazio's immaculate 6,932-yard Osprey Point was rated No. 10 in a recent *Golf for Women* list of 'The Best Golf Courses for Women'.

Its more famous neighbour, the Ocean Course, hosted the 1991 Ryder Cup and 2012 PGA Championship, but at 6,932 yards, Osprey Point is no slouch. The course meanders through dense maritime forest, beside classic Lowcountry saltmarshes, and has a lovely plantation-style clubhouse.

But what makes Kiawah good for solo golfers is the Sanctuary spa. Dripping with Southern charm, the 225-room hotel has two magnificent curving staircases for budding Scarlett O'Haras to sashay down, great steaks in the Ocean Room, and mighty fine shrimp 'n' grits for breakfast.

[www.kiawahresort.com](http://www.kiawahresort.com)

From left: Funicular in the St Moritz region; Doonbeg; Temple in Phuket, Thailand



### DOONBEG, IRELAND

On the far west coast, an hour's drive from Shannon airport, Doonbeg is Irish hospitality personified. Designed to look 100 years old but actually only eight, the five-star Lodge provides 185 rooms and suites, fine dining, a spa and, best of all, several bars in which to enjoy the *craic*.

The golfing heart of the enterprise is Greg Norman's 6,885-yard links, finished in 2002 and now playing beautifully. Players unfamiliar with the course are advised to take a caddy, the better to negotiate the towering fescue-covered dunes. For a single golfer, it's also a more sociable round.

Two of Ireland's best courses, Ballybunion and Lahinch, are within easy driving distance, so Doonbeg is the ideal base for a golfing break. After a trip to the world-renowned Cliffs of Moher, a night of traditional Irish music at one of Doonbeg village's bars is an entertaining way to meet the gregarious neighbours.

[www.doonbeglodge.com](http://www.doonbeglodge.com)

### PHUKET, THAILAND

With seven good 18-hole courses, two of which are truly magnificent, the stunning island off Thailand's west coast is something of a golfing paradise.

Tiger Woods put Blue Canyon on the golfing map when he won the Johnnie Walker Classic there in 1998. The championship course is long, undulating and extremely tough, making the expertise of the smiling caddies — obligatory and invariably female — quite invaluable. The other must-play set-up is Red Mountain, carved through an old tin mine. It's one of the most scenic courses in South-east Asia, playing through colourful jungle and around red granite outcrops and water-lily clad lakes.

Most Phuket clubs have a spa, so a post-game massage followed by a bowl of spicy Thai soup, with a Singha beer or three, is the order of the day. The island's nightlife is always entertaining. Golfasian.com is the local specialist. [www.bluecanyonclub.com](http://www.bluecanyonclub.com) [www.redmountainphuket.com](http://www.redmountainphuket.com) ►



### Best for... COUPLES

#### NEVIS, CARIBBEAN

On one of the most exclusive islands in the Caribbean, the Four Seasons is quite an exceptional golf resort based around a fine Robert Trent Jones II course. Families are welcome, but this is a very romantic destination aimed squarely at couples.

Most courses in the region are relatively flat, but this one has dramatic elevation changes. With the azure ocean below and the 3,500ft Peak above, the demanding set-up wanders between rainforests and deep ravines, so accuracy is at a premium. The pro, Bruce Wilson, is a fine teacher — useful when one partner is less experienced than the other. There are other clubs across the Narrows on St Kitts.

Right on the beach, the outstanding hotel includes opulent suites and luxury villas, a typically lavish Four Seasons spa, superb tennis centre, and dreamy restaurants from which to watch the setting sun.

[www.fourseasons.com/nevis](http://www.fourseasons.com/nevis)

#### VENICE, ITALY

Few realise that Venice has one of the best golf courses in Italy. Out on the Lido, the seven-mile-long sandy island just across the lagoon from San Marco, the Circolo del Golf di Venezia has been wowing visitors since 1928. Ironically, there isn't a single water hazard on this tricky, heavily wooded course.

As a romantic destination for couples, La Serenissima needs no introduction, but it's reassuring to know that if only one partner is playing, the other has plenty of entertainment, both cultural and culinary, to keep them occupied.

A short train ride north sits Treviso, where the Benetton family started their eponymous fashion empire. In the 1990s, the company built a scenic 27-hole club just under the nearby medieval hilltop town of Asolo. The golf is great, but the clubhouse's fresh pumpkin ravioli is simply scrumptious.

[www.circologolfvenezia.it](http://www.circologolfvenezia.it) [www.asologolf.it](http://www.asologolf.it)



From left: Nevis Four Seasons; Gondola, Venice; Torrey Pines, San Diego (top and below); Castillo Hotel Son Vida course



## SAN DIEGO, USA

Travellers to California know about Los Angeles and San Francisco, but San Diego is arguably a better golf destination than both, and with the reborn art deco Gaslamp Quarter full of modish new eateries and live music venues, a more romantic one as well.

The star of the local golf scene is Torrey Pines in La Jolla, where Tiger won his last Major in 2008. The two courses running along the Pacific coast clifftop are long and, as you might expect, very challenging in windy conditions. Overlooking the 18th, the Scottish-themed Lodge at Torrey Pines is one of the best-appointed golf hotels in North America and perfect for a couple looking to explore the area.

Other outstanding local clubs include the Arnold Palmer-designed Aviara in Carlsbad, now part of a Park Hyatt, and Johnny Miller's Maderas, a public course in Rancho Bernado, just north of downtown. [www.lodgetorreyepines.com](http://www.lodgetorreyepines.com) [www.golfaviara.com](http://www.golfaviara.com)



## MAJORCA, SPAIN

Starwood's recently refurbished Arabella Golf & Spa Resort, together with its upmarket neighbour, the five-star Castillo Hotel Son Vida, are perfect for a couples break. The three 18-hole courses and one nine-holer are beautifully presented and for all abilities.

Ideal for a first morning's play, the broad fairways of the 6,125-yard, par-71 Son Vida course, which twice staged the Open de Baleares in the 1990s, invite ambitious driving. The hilly, 6,780-yard Son Quint course is ideal for day two. It has great views over Palma, particularly from the eighth, where the line off the tee is straight at the cathedral.

Played through carob, almond and olive groves, the 70 pristine bunkers, four lakes and undulating 6,941 yards of the Son Muntaner course provide a stern final-day challenge. The 'Golf Inclusive Hotel' concept bundles green fees with accommodation costs. [sheraton.com/mallorca](http://sheraton.com/mallorca) ■

