H as it always been your dream to sail around remote islands, rest in warm, turquoise waters and anchor in peaceful coves at night? Or do you fancy stepping aboard an island sail ship to navigate between beautiful coves at night? — at the ultimate adventure, sail across the Drake Passage to Antarctica! The good news is that you don’t have to win the lottery to get out on the water. Here’s my pick of the world’s best sailing holidays — all using wind-power (rather than gasoline) to navigate around coasts, islands, lakes and fjords, and all guaranteed to give you a memorable adventure.

Sailing holidays

Top 10

1. SAIL THE SPICE ISLANDS IN ZANZIBAR

Sail around this Tanzanian archipelago of more than 1,100 small islands, which were an important Indian Ocean trading post for centuries, and you’ll experience pristine nature and a mix of cultures and cuisines. You will get to rest and relax on coral reefs where you might spot turtles and tropical fish, hike to jungles and rainforests and enjoy colourful villages, all while awaking the island atmosphere at a gentle pace and enjoying amazing sunsets.

2. EXPLORE THE GALAPAGOS BY BOAT

Step on board the Mary Anne, a three-masted sailing ship, to explore the Galapagos Islands in a unique way. The boat takes just 27 passengers, and you’ll enjoy visits to the islands, plus kayaking, snorkeling and other activities, getting the chance to see turtles, penguins, flamingos, sea lions, iguanas and giant tortoises. On board, there are lessons in navigation and safety, and opportunities to take a basic course in navigation. The trip takes in some of the best wildlife and landscape sites in the archipelago, and you’ll have the chance to see turtles, penguins, flamingos and many more species.

3. A GREEK ODYSSEY IN THE CYCLADES

Take off on a sailing and hiking adventure in the Greek Islands of the Cyclades, exploring the steep cliffs, coves at night and remote islands, swim in warm, turquoise waters and rest in remote islands, swim in pristine wilderness to yourselves, plus you’ll be able to see turtles, penguins, flamingos, sea lions, iguanas and giant tortoises.

4. SAIL TO ANTARCTICA ON A YACHT

You’ll find a more exhilarating way to experience Antarctica than sailing on a small vessel. You’ll start and end in Buenos Aires, and you’ll have the chance to see penguins, seals, whales and more on board a three-masted, 75-foot yacht, with all meals (including all meals on board) and shared accommodation. You will get to see penguins, seals, whales and more on board a three-masted, 75-foot yacht, with all meals (including all meals on board) and shared accommodation.

5. GO TO SAILING SCHOOL ON LAKE MAGGIORE

Engineers can learn sailing or experienced sailors can hone their racing skills on this lake, which benefits from afternoon thermal winds. Sailing school Academia di Vela Lidia Roc in Como, Switzerland, provides sailing courses to help improve your skills, including training in spinnaker to spinnaker and rogata for coaching. Kids can learn to sail too.

6. CRUISE IN COMPANY IN MALLORCA, SPAIN

If you have sailing experience and want to charter your own yacht but with

7. ADVENTURES IN MONTENEGRO

See dramatic scenery and impressive Balkan landscapes as you sail around the Adriatic coast from Dubrovnik, exploring reefs and unspoilt beaches for swimming, sailing and snorkeling, visiting the ancient sailing village of Bigovo, seeing a World Heritage site at Ulcinj and finding in the regional capital of Herceg Novi.

8. ISLAND HOPPING: A WEEK AROUND THE SPANISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

If you like that, try this: A week around the Spanish Virgin Islands, from €2,646pp (spanishislands.com).

9. DO IT:

- rainy day: Gill Foreman, 01234 567890
- sunny day: John Smith, 12345 678901

10. CRUISE FOR THE WEEKEND:

- calm sea: John Smith, 12345 678901
- rough sea: Jane Doe, 09876 543210

FOR MORE TRAVEL TIPS, DEALS AND INSPIRATION, SEE INDEPENDENT.IE/ TRAVEL
8 SAIL THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY IN WEST CORK
Set out along the Wild Atlantic Way on board the yacht Merlin, starting from Ahakista on the Sheep's Head Peninsula and enjoying the stunning Atlantic sea- scapes and coastal scenery. You will sail close around the landmark Fastnet Rock, and pass West Cork’s seven inhabited islands, experiencing the stunning natural habitats on Sherkin and Bere islands as well as the islands of Roaringwater and Bantry Bays, during your leisurely voyage.
DO IT: Two-day cruises from €390pp (trips resume in 2018) and there’s also courses and half-day sailing trips. See carbersailing.com.
IF YOU LIKE THAT, TRY THIS: Learn to sail from €350 for a two-night weekend, (sailkork.com) or, if you’ve an experienced sailor, charter a yacht and set sail from Kinsale from €2,299 per week (sleeps 6/8). See sovereignsailing.com.

9 SEE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS FROM A TALL SHIP
Set sail on the beautiful tall ship S/V Noordelicht in northern Norway and follow the path of orcas and humpback whales through the fjords of Tromso, north of the Arctic Circle, on a whale safari. The long Norway nights also offer passengers the chance to take in the Northern Lights. Trips include all excursions, meals and on-board lectures by naturalists.
DO IT: Seven-night trips start from €1,760pp (oceanwide-expeditions.com).

10 EXPLORE THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS ON A TRADITIONAL CUTTER
Explore Knoydart, Skye and the Small Isles, some of the most beautiful Scottish Isles, aboard the traditional 70-foot gaff cutter yacht Eda Frandsen where you might spot whales, dolphins and birdlife. You’ll sail from the remote peninsula of Knoydart to the rocky ridges of the Isles of Skye and Rum, and enjoy walking rarely trodden routes from the yacht, hiking from white sandy beaches to hidden vantage points on the islands.
DO IT: Six nights, including all meals, skipper and walking guide (friendshiptravel.com) from €1,560pp. See also wildernessscotland.com.
IF YOU LIKE THAT, TRY THIS: A week on a traditional gulet in the Greek Islands for solo travellers (single cabins) from €1,899pp including all meals and flights from Dublin (friendshiptravel.com).

NB: Prices subject to availability.