

PEOPLE
PLACES

DOCUMENTARY
30 MIN.



VERSIONS

Arabic, English, Spanish:
13 x 30 min.

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Life's a Beach! The World's Finest Seaside Towns

These are some of the world's most famous places, their names inextricably associated with a yearning for the sea, sand and sunshine. People have been drawn to these locations on the shores of the world's oceans for generations: Initially, well-heeled visitors came for the health benefits and to stroll along the promenade. But nowadays, people come to coastal resorts for other reasons – many of them of a sporting nature. Places that began life as simple fishing villages have now become prime real estate with grand villas, exclusive restaurants and chic hotels. But despite the rapid pace of development, much of the old charm still remains.

01 Biarritz – French Sophistication and Sporting Style HD

Biarritz is undoubtedly stylish and sophisticated, but it also has a wild side. The luxury hotels and pretty villas lining the clifftops overlook the tempestuous waters of the Atlantic Ocean. French Emperor Napoleon III spent his honeymoon here. These days Biarritz is more relaxed and mellow: it has become a paradise for surfers.

02 Hua Hin – Preferred Destination of Thai Kings HD

Hua Hin is Thailand's oldest seaside resort. The royal family came here to escape the heat of Bangkok in the 1920s, injecting Hua Hin with international flair. The town now hosts a well-known jazz festival every year in June. Local people who used to earn their living fishing or farming now run hotels and restaurants.

03 Usedom – Welcome Escape from the German Capital HD

Its proximity to the German capital earned Usedom the nickname "Berlin's Bathtub". For more than 100 years, holidaymakers have been drawn to the island's long sandy beaches. While restored villas and quirky wicker beach chairs are a feature of the resorts on the German side of the Baltic island, beaches on the Polish side are the domain of kite surfers.

04 Forte dei Marmi – Bathing Culture and Italian Dolce Vita HD

For generations, Italian aristocrats, tycoons and intellectuals have flocked to Forte dei Marmi in Tuscany. The waterfront is lined with bagni, private beach clubs or bathing establishments complete with bar and changing cubicles, sunloungers and parasols. The atmosphere is relaxed, and guests often remain loyal to "their" bagno throughout their lives.

05 Sochi – The Russians' Number One Spa VoD HD

Sochi is a Black Sea resort many Russians dream of visiting. It has everything: Sun, palm trees and invitingly warm sea water. Sochi enjoys a long tradition as a health spa resort offering a range of treatments and massage; its beaches are always full during the high season.

06 Western Cape – South Africa's Natural Paradise HD

Surfers and adventurers have always been drawn to the coastline of South Africa's Western Cape province, a region characterized by rough winds and rugged landscapes. It all began in Muizenberg, a fishing village discovered by wealthy residents of Cape Town in the late 19th century. Many of their villas and brightly-colored beach huts remain to this day.

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07 Copacabana – Bossa Nova and the Body Beautiful VoD HD

It is said that for many Brazilians, beauty is the key to happiness. In Copacabana, bodies are tanned, honed and presented for all to admire. Whether you live in a favela or an exclusive neighborhood, on Rio's most famous beach, everyone is the same. Out of this cultural mix there emerged a musical genre that took the world by storm: Bossa Nova.

08 Brighton – England's Seaside Party Destination HD

Brighton's reputation as a town devoted to the pursuit of pleasure was firmly established more than two centuries ago. It was frequented by the wealthy, by aristocrats and by members of the British royal family. The future King George IV built its most exotic landmark, the Royal Pavilion, as a venue for his extravagant parties. The railway brought millions of daytrippers, drawn by the town's magnificent piers and many entertainments. Brighton has retained its popularity to this day.

09 Opatija – A Breath of Fresh Air on Croatia's Adriatic Coast HD

In the late 19th century, Opatija was a favorite health resort for European aristocrats. Many rich families built opulent villas here. But two world wars, the Socialist era in what was then Yugoslavia and the wars of the 1990s have left deep scars. Now Opatija is being restored to its former glory.

10 Long Island – A Playground for America's Upper Class HD

With their miles of sandy beaches within easy reach of New York City, the Hamptons on Long Island are among the world's most expensive and exclusive communities. You need to be a multi-millionaire to be able to afford a house here. On their estates, golf courses and polo fields, the rich and beautiful like to keep to themselves.

11 Deauville – Little Paris on the northern coast of France HD

The modern resort of Deauville was planned 150 years ago as an escape for wealthy Parisians. The railway made it easy to reach the Normandy coast. Deauville has retained much of its 19th-century charm and still attracts Paris high society.

12 Essaouira – Morocco's Windy City HD

Essaouira is a relaxed, cosmopolitan place with an exotic flair – and cool winds the year round. The port city used to be associated with the hippy era, having played host in the 1960s to the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley and the Rolling Stones. These days, people are attracted by the sandy beaches and the great surf.

13 Ischia – Italy's Thermal Spring Island HD

Ischia has more thermal springs than anywhere else in the Mediterranean region. People have been taking to the waters here for more than 2,000 years, and not just in the sea: Its mud and thermal waters are used to treat a number of complaints. The ancient Greeks and Romans came to this island in the Gulf of Naples two millennia and more ago, in the Middle Ages it was the Spanish. Today, Ischia attracts tourists from all over the world.