

DRIFT VISTAS

THE UNDERRATED ATLAS

Go Here Instead

PHOTO: ADEM BILEK / PEXELS

*Twelve famous trips, and the quieter place
next door*

FIRST EDITION · 2026

The view is the same. The bill is not.

Every famous place has a neighbour. Same sea, same mountains, same stone, sometimes the same view from the other side of a border. The neighbour has a fraction of the visitors and prices from a different decade, for one reason only: fewer people have heard of it.

This is a book of twelve of those neighbours. For each one we make the case, say what you gain, and say plainly what you give up, because there is always something. A swap is not a trick. Montenegro does not have Croatia's islands. Chefchaouen does not have the sea. If the thing you would lose is the thing you wanted, go to the famous one, and we tell you when that is the right call.

Where we talk about money, we talk in proportions: about half, a third less, a fraction of. Exact prices move with the season and the year, and the proportions hold. They are drawn from public listings for the same standard of room, meal and car in both places.

Same trip. Fewer people. More left over.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

INSTEAD OF

The famous trip this one replaces, and what the two have in common.

YOU GAIN / YOU GIVE UP

Both columns are honest. Read the second one first.

THE FAMOUS ONE STILL WINS IF

The case for not taking our advice.

THE MONTH STRIP

Filled circles are the best months. Rings are fine. Empty means too hot, too cold, too wet or shut.

A NOTE ON LINKS

Underlined links open booking sites. Some are partner links: if you book through them we may earn a small commission, at no cost to you. It never decides what we recommend.

THE TWELVE SWAPS



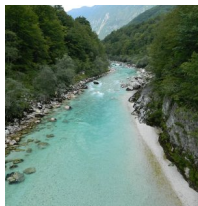
01

Montenegro



02

The Albanian Riviera



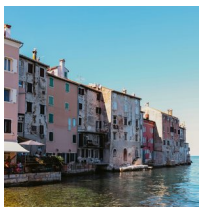
03

Slovenia



04

Georgia



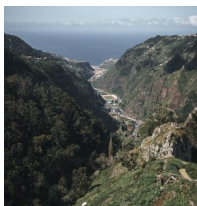
05

Istria



06

Sardinia



07

Madeira



08

Chefchaouen



09

Northern Vietnam



10

Bali



11

The Algarve



12

Kraków

GO HERE INSTEAD

WHEN TO GO, AT A GLANCE

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Montenegro	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	●	○	○	○
The Albanian Riviera	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	○	○	○
Slovenia	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	○
Georgia	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	○
Istria	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	○
Sardinia	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	○	○	○
Madeira	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○
Chefchaouen	○	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	○
Northern Vietnam	○	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	○
Bali	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	●	○	○	○
The Algarve	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	○
Kraków	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	●	○	○	○

Filled: the best months. Ring: fine. Empty: too hot, too cold, too wet or shut.

SWAP

01

INSTEAD OF
*Dubrovnik and the
Croatian coast*

PHOTO: ADEM BILEK / PEXELS

THE BAY OF KOTOR · MONTENEGRO

Montenegro

*The same Venetian walls, two hours
down the road.*

THE CASE

Dubrovnik and Kotor were built by the same world: Adriatic trading towns under Venetian influence, walled in pale stone, with a fortress on the hill behind. They are less than a hundred kilometres apart. One of them is on every list.

Kotor sits at the far end of a bay that winds inland between mountains like a fjord. Around its shore are smaller stone villages, a pair of island churches off Perast, and water flat enough to swim in from any jetty. Three hours inland the country turns alpine: Durmitor's lakes and the Tara canyon, the deepest in Europe.



Climb the fortress steps before eight, or after five.

YOU GAIN

A walled old town you can cross without queuing

Mountains and coast in the same short trip

Rooms and meals that usually cost 30 to 50 percent less

YOU GIVE UP

Island-hopping. Montenegro has almost no islands and few ferries

Sandy beaches. The bay is jetties and pebbles

Total quiet. Cruise ships call at Kotor too, around the middle of the day

Like for like, usually 30 to 50 percent less than the Croatian coast, with the gap widest on hotels.

THE FAMOUS ONE STILL WINS IF

Go to Croatia if the dream is ferries between islands, or a week on a sailing boat.

WHEN



Mid-May to June, and September. Warm sea, open mountain roads, a fraction of the August crowd.

BASE Perast or Dobrota on the bay, plus a night or two in Žabljak for the mountains

DAYS Five to seven

GETTING THERE Fly to Tivat, fifteen minutes from Kotor, or to Podgorica. Dubrovnik airport also works, with a border crossing that can be slow in summer. Rent a car.

THE MISTAKE

Do not base yourself in Budva unless you want nightlife. The bay is where the quiet is.

[TOURS AND TICKETS ↗](#)[PLACES TO STAY ↗](#)

SWAP

02

INSTEAD OF
The Greek islands

PHOTO: G. CICONNETO / PEXELS



HIMARË, DHËRMI AND KSAMIL · ALBANIA

The Albanian Riviera

*The same Ionian water. You can see
Corfu from the beach.*

THE CASE

The south coast of Albania faces Corfu across a strait a few kilometres wide. It is the same sea, the same light, the same olive trees. For decades in the last century the country was closed to visitors, and the coast is still catching up with its own reputation.

A single road runs the length of it, over a mountain pass and down past a string of white-pebble bays. Behind the coast are two UNESCO towns, Gjirokastër and Berat, and the ruined city of Butrint, which is Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Venetian all at once.



Drive the Llogara Pass in daylight. The view is the point.

YOU GAIN

Beaches of the same colour at roughly half the cost

Ottoman stone towns and ancient ruins within a day's drive

A coast that still feels like somewhere being discovered

YOU GIVE UP

Polish. Roads, signage and service are rougher than in Greece

Whitewashed island villages. The look here is different

Easy arrivals. The coast is a long drive from Tirana's airport

Typically 50 to 60 percent cheaper than the Greek islands at the same standard.

THE FAMOUS ONE STILL WINS IF

Go to Greece if you want to hop between islands, or you want everything to work first time.

WHEN



June and September. In August the small beaches at Ksamil are full and sunbeds cover the sand.

BASE

Himarë for a quiet week. Ksamil for the famous beaches, outside August

DAYS

Seven

GETTING
THERE

Fly to Tirana and drive south, about four hours to the coast. Or fly to Corfu and take the short ferry to Sarandë, which is often quicker.

THE MISTAKE

Do not judge it by Ksamil in August. Go a month either side, or stay further north.

[TOURS AND TICKETS ↗](#)[PLACES TO STAY ↗](#)

The second-best-known place is usually the better trip.

That is the whole argument of this book. The famous place is famous because it was first, or closest to an airport, or in a film. The place next door has the same rock and the same water, and it will treat you better because it is not tired of you yet.

Pick the trip you were already planning. Turn to its page. Read the column that says what you give up. If you can live with it, you have your answer, and a good part of your budget back.

TICK THEM OFF

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Montenegro | ☐ Madeira |
| ☐ The Albanian Riviera | ☐ Chefchaouen |
| ☐ Slovenia | ☐ Northern Vietnam |
| ☐ Georgia | ☐ Bali |
| ☐ Istria | ☐ The Algarve |
| ☐ Sardinia | ☐ Kraków |

THIS IS A FREE SAMPLE

The full guide has all of them.

Twelve famous trips, and the quieter place next door. Every place gets the same treatment you have just read: why it looks like that, where to stand, which months, and the mistake to avoid.

GET THE FULL GUIDE

[COMPARE CAR RENTALS ↗](#)

[TRAVEL INSURANCE ↗](#)

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Researched and written by Drift Vistas. Details change: check opening rules, closures and entry requirements with the official source before you travel. No exact prices are given because they go out of date; comparisons are drawn from public listings.

Corrections: hello@driftvistas.com

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