

Edited by  
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# What's new... <sup>ESTravel</sup>

**Green dream:** Fair Oak Farm eco-lodge treehouses come with mod cons



## SLEEP AMONG THE TREES

### DESTINATION EAST SUSSEX

NOW that spring is finally in the air sleeping in a treehouse seems a more appealing prospect. Two new luxury eco-lodge treehouses at Fair Oak

Farm in Mayfield, East Sussex, come with central heating, hot water and crisp white linen.

Hidden among mature trees, including Scots pines, each of the lodges, sleeping two, are clad with sustainable timber and are fully insulated. Inside each curved lodge is

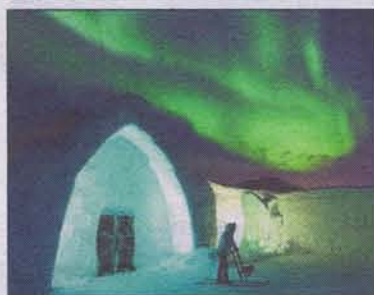
a queen-sized bed, ensuite wet room, living/dining area with digital television, DVD and film library, wi-fi and well-equipped kitchen with dishwasher and washing machine.

A sheltered balcony with both ramped and stepped access looks out across the countryside. The farm has

peacocks and alpacas, and locally arranged activities include cycling and fishing at Lakedown Fisheries, designed and owned by The Who's Roger Daltrey.

■ *Three-night weekend breaks from £255 (seven nights £340), fairoakfarm.co.uk*

### WEEKEND IDEA



Discover The World has a three-night break to see the Northern Lights in Sweden for £1,195pp B&B with return flights to Kiruna, three nights at the Icehotel, a chairlift excursion to the Sky Station, all transfers and taxes. Departs Heathrow March 10 and 17. ■ [discover-the-world.co.uk](http://discover-the-world.co.uk)

### WHAT'S GOING ON IN...

#### MOROCCO FEB 29-MAR 5

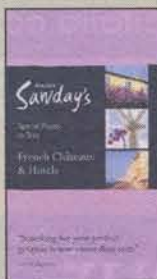
The Marrakech Biennale features key figures in film, literature and visual arts including Dominic West with talks, screenings and performances. ■ [marrakechbiennale.org](http://marrakechbiennale.org) ■ BA flies from Gatwick to Marrakech, returns from £281, [ba.com](http://ba.com)

### LAST MINUTE HOTEL NEWS

■ The 483-room Hotel Arts in Barcelona has new slow-life treatments at its Six Senses Spa with candlelit treatments including lavender and chocolate hot stone massages. Doubles from €295 room only, [hotelartsbarcelona.com](http://hotelartsbarcelona.com) ■ The 95-room Malmaison Hotel Oxford, formerly H.M. Prison Oxford, has a "February 29 Lock Up" on Wednesday. Doubles £185 half-board with a "Great Escape" cocktail and The Great Escape DVD, [malmaison.com/oxford](http://malmaison.com/oxford)

### AHEAD OF THE PACK

Alastair Sawday's latest edition of Special Places to Stay French Châteaux and Hotels is out in good time for booking spring and summer breaks.



new entries. Although less pricey hotels are balanced up with the breathtakingly lavish, such as the fairytale turreted Château de Prye in Burgundy.

Of the 380 places included in the collection, 150 cost €100 or less per double room including the chic new Hôtel 202 in surf-mecca Hossegor, one of 60

As ever, there are useful maps and observations on the owners, an ethical collection and a wheelchair-friendly index. ■ Published on March 5, £15.99, [sawdays.co.uk](http://sawdays.co.uk)

**ROUTE NEWS**  
Ryanair launches a new route from Stansted to Budapest, returns from £18.98, [ryanair.com](http://ryanair.com)



**Czech first:** some dodgy foreign exchange outlets operate in the capital

## WHY IT PAYS TO ASK FOR 'BUY' RATE IN PRAGUE

Simon **says** 

**SIMON CALDER**

I am travelling to Prague. What currency should I take? – Floyd Duke, Croydon

TRAVELLERS to the Czech Republic's beautiful capital need to be highly aware about money: financial affairs are not always what they seem.

My advice is simply to take clean Bank of England notes in denominations of £20 or less (fifties are regarded with suspicion), and guard them carefully against pickpockets.

Change £20 at the airport when you arrive to get into town. The rate won't be brilliant, but it'll be better than you get at a UK airport. Then shop around a few bureaux de change in the city centre.

By "shopping around", I don't mean comparing the rates advertised outside, because these are often deliberately misleading. Typically the "buy" rate (the one aimed at people changing sterling) will be 30 Czech crowns or less to the pound, with the "sell" rate perhaps 32 to £1.

In tourist areas, some unscrupulous foreign-exchange outlets advertise the latter, even though they know that, for the vast majority of customers, the "buy" rate is the one that counts. In addition, some deduct an extortionate amount in commission. Instead ask at the counter: "How many crowns will you give me for £100?" At today's tourist rates, you should be looking for a figure of 2,900 or more.

Some dodgy characters on the street will promise you far more. While in the communist era there was a definite financial advantage in indulging in black-market dealings, today there is none. Last time I was in the Old Town, someone tried to pass off Yugoslav dinars from the 1990s as Czech crowns.

■ Email your travel queries to [simon.calder@standard.co.uk](mailto:simon.calder@standard.co.uk)