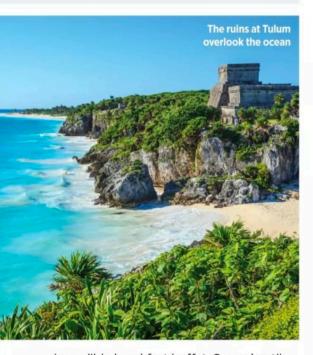


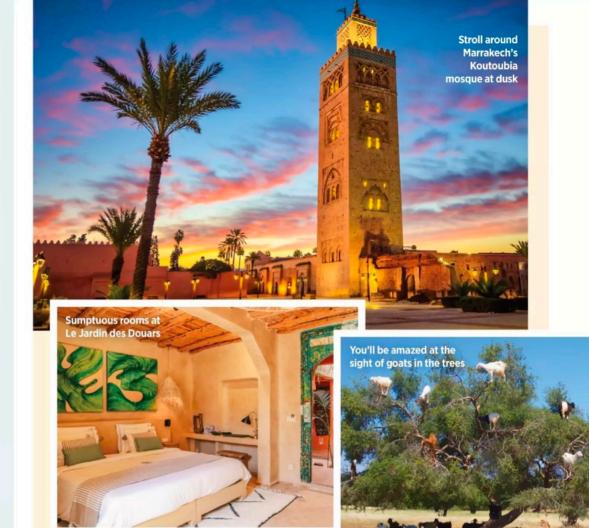
It's an adrenaline-filled ride that requires a glass of fortified Madeiran wine to calm your nerves once you get to the bottom.

GET TO THE SUN: Jet2CityBreaks (jet2holidays.com/city-breaks) offers a three-night B&B stay at Barceló Funchal OldTown from £474pp, including return flights from London Stansted, in March.



incredible breakfast buffet. Served until midday, it includes delicious Mexican specialities such as Chilaquiles (eggs on crispy corn tortillas in a red or green salsa). And after a refreshing dip in the sea, you'll be ready to do it all again – as far from the winter blues as it's possible to be.

GET TO THE SUN: Azure Collection (azurecollection.com) offers seven nights at Nizuc Resort and Spa (nizuc.com) from £2,200pp, including return flights with Virgin Atlantic (between 2 January and 6 April).



CAMEL RIDES & GOAT TREES IN MOROCCO



Souk shopping & wildlife

It's hard to imagine a herd of goats sitting

in a tree until you see them in Morocco. On the 100-mile stretch of dusty road between the medinas of Marrakech and wind-swept beaches of Essaouira, you'll rub your eyes in disbelief and stop to take a closer look. Goats instinctively like to climb and (with a little help from their owners) scramble up the gnarled branches of the local argan trees to feed on the nuts. This region of Morocco is blissfully mild in winter and you can easily spend a few days sightseeing and shopping in Marrakech before relaxing on the coast. The country is keen to encourage tourists back after the earthquake last year (centred in the Atlas mountains, so away from most tourist areas) and cheap accommodation, flights and food make for an affordable getaway. Essaouira, a port city on the Atlantic coast, is where Jimi Hendrix went to relax after performing at Woodstock

in 1969 and the boho laid-back vibe remains. He'd have loved the chic feel of Le Jardin des Douars, a peaceful boutique retreat, just 12 minutes from the walled medina. Hidden inside its own botanical garden, there are two heated outdoor pools, a sunset bar. traditional hammam and delicious alfresco lunches served on a terrace under the palms. For something similar in the centre of Marrakech, Dar Zaman is a gem of a riad in the quieter reaches of the capital's northern medina. Built around an enchanting courtyard, it's an oasis of calm, complete with palm, lemon, orange and banana trees - not to mention pretty pink bougainvillea. Dar Zaman's British owner describes the riad he's lovingly restored as an 'old house, of happy memories', where guests feel totally at home.

GET TO THE SUN: Ryanair (ryanair. com) flies to Marrakech and Essaouira from £37pp one-way. Double rooms at Le Jardin des Douars (jardindesdouars. com) start from £160 a night and at Riad Dar Zaman (darzaman.co.uk) from around £90 a night.