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On Island Time

Islands often figure in our dreams and fantasies. We are drawn to the idea of white sandy beaches and clear blue water, remoteness and tranquility. Real islands can be tiny coral reefs or huge expanses of land, nation states with large cities and millions of inhabitants; they can be located in tropical climes or in the icy waters of the Arctic. Many secluded islands have developed their own distinctive flora and fauna.

As for their human inhabitants, there is often talk of an island mentality. Many islanders are closely bound up with the ocean, are involved in maritime trade or fishing, and maintain local traditions. We tell of South Sea islands, natural paradises, islands of fire and ice as well as the lives of island dwellers.

01 Hainan – China's Tropical Paradise VoD HD

With its palm-fringed white sand beaches, Hainan is China's tropical holiday paradise. In the past, the island in the South China Sea was a place of exile for disgraced state officials. But today it's visited by around 13 million holidaymakers a year – virtually all of them Chinese.

02 Usedom – Germany's Sunshine Island in the Baltic VoD HD

Usedom, off the German-Polish Baltic coast, is Germany's sunniest island. Already more than 100 years ago emperors, royalty and aristocrats spent their holidays here. Usedom is best known for its three 'imperial spa towns' – Ahlbeck, Bansin and Heringsdorf. They boast magnificent 19th century villas. The beach promenade extends for a total of 12 kilometres, from the German imperial spa towns to the Polish town of Świnoujście – part of the island has been Polish since 1945.

03 Cape Verde – Creole Culture off the West Coast of Africa VoD HD

Green mountains, bare rocks and long beaches: Cape Verde is a beautiful island world in the middle of the Atlantic. The fifteen islands, nine of them inhabited, are located off the coast of West Africa.

04 Elba, Montecristo and Gorgona – Italy's Tuscan Islands VoD HD

Tuscany is considered one of Italy's most beautiful regions. The islands just off its coasts are just as diverse and picturesque as the mainland region itself. They combine many of the region's attractive features in a small space. Mountains, rocky coastlines and sandy beaches make the main island, Elba, seem like a small continent and yet it's only thirty kilometres long. The islands of the Tuscan Archipelago have been a popular holiday destination since the 1960s.

05 Saint Lucia – Caribbean Zest for Life Under the British Crown VoD HD

There are better-known Caribbean islands, but there are few that could compete with the beauty of Saint Lucia. The island measures a mere six hundred and sixteen square kilometres, but it is brimming with a lavish tropical flora and fauna and Creole joie de vivre. Saint Lucia has an eventful colonial history: the island changed hands between the British and the French fourteen times. Today it is a member of the British Commonwealth.

06 Dalmatia's Island Garden – Off the Coast of Croatia VoD HD

Croatia has one of Europe's most beautiful and wild coastlines, with more than twelve hundred offshore islands. Some are several hundred square kilometres in size. Others are tiny and uninhabited. The Adriatic is a paradise for sailors, while the islands themselves have picturesque landscapes and are home to many historic towns and fishing villages.

PEOPLE PLACES

DOCUMENTARY
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07 Big Island – Hawaii and the Ring of Fire VoD HD

Hawaii is the 50th federal state of the USA. Lying in the middle of the Pacific, the islands are a world of their own. With about 10,000 square kilometers of surface Big Island is by far the biggest island of Hawaii. With the variety of its sceneries, at the same time it shows an oddity: The island represents almost all of the earth's climate zones. Two of the five volcanoes on Big Island are active till this day: Mauna Loa and Kilauea.

08 Capri, Ischia and Procida – In Italy's Gulf of Naples VoD HD

The three islands in the Gulf of Naples – Capri, Ischia, and Procida – could scarcely be more different. Capri is a popular destination for day tourists who come to see the famous Blue Grotto or hope to get a glimpse on the "celebrity island" of some famous face from the silver screen. Procida is the smallest of the three islands in the Gulf of Naples and to a certain extent can still be regarded as a secret tip.

09 Lofoten and Iceland – Islands in the Arctic Ocean VoD HD

Lofoten, a Norwegian archipelago, is located in the far north of Europe. The sea, fishing and the tides set the rhythm of the people's lives here. In the winter, when the islands are covered in snow and battered by strong winds, it's the peak season. Between January and April, large schools of cod pass through the archipelago's coastal waters.

10 The Canaries – Spain's Volcanic Archipelago VoD HD

With their subtropical climate and year-round bathing temperatures, the Canary Islands have been attracting large numbers of tourists for over half a century. Today, nine million foreign visitors come to the archipelago every year. Ever since it became known that the Canaries also have a lot to offer mountain bikers, hikers, and divers, more and more young people have been coming to the islands. With turtles and numerous species of ray and shark, as well as vast numbers of fish, marine diversity around the islands makes them a diver's paradise.

11 Rodrigues – In the Shadow of Mauritius HD

The small island of Rodrigues in the Indian Ocean is surrounded by the bottle-green water of a gigantic lagoon that's rich in fish. Time seems to have stood still here. Because unlike the neighbouring islands of Mauritius and La Réunion, Rodrigues has no mass tourism. Travellers can only get to the island via a small airport on flights from Mauritius or via a ferry that docks in Port Mathurin three times a month.

12 Mallorca and Menorca – Spanish Mediterranean Sisters VoD HD

The Spanish Mediterranean islands of Mallorca and Menorca are popular with northern and central Europeans looking for beach holidays. Accessible after just a short flight, the islands offer lots of sand and a pleasant beach climate. That's why tourism here has developed since the 1960s to become the most important economic factor, and it's brought prosperity to the islands. But off the beaten track of mass tourism and all-inclusive deals, both Mallorca and Menorca have held on to their original character – in remote and lonely mountain regions, in medieval towns in the interior, at village fetes and most recently in a few places along the coast where old traditions are being rediscovered.

13 The Maldives – Island Realm in the Indian Ocean HD

White sand, extensive coral reefs, and water as warm as a bath – for many travelers from all over the world, the Maldives are the epitome of a romantic beach holiday. Comprised of over a thousand islands, the archipelago was only discovered as a tourist destination some forty years ago. Since then, the tourism sector has grown at a tremendous pace, and is now the country's main source of income.