

Pitch perfect

Check out our expert **Michael Stoneman's** tips for which golf courses to play in Berlin, Fort Lauderdale, Kota Kinabalu and Ras Al Khaimah – plus where to stay while you're there



BERLIN

With major championship winners such as Bernhard Langer and Martin Kaymer, Germany boasts a strong golfing pedigree – and the Sporting Club Berlin, on the banks of the beautiful Lake Scharmützel, exemplifies that like no other facility in the country.

With three 18-hole courses – plus a nine-hole layout – golfers are certainly spoilt for choice, but the Faldo Course, which opened for play in 1997, is the undoubted highlight.

Designed by six-time major winner Nick Faldo, it looks and plays remarkably like a traditional Scottish links course and is widely recognised as one of continental Europe's finest championship layouts. So much so, in fact, that the course is currently bidding to host the 2022 Ryder Cup, with a decision

due to be made later this year.

While resort accommodation is available at the Sporting Club Berlin, those wanting to stay closer to the city should look no further than the historic Hotel Adlon Kempinski. Perfectly positioned next to Berlin's famous Brandenburg Gate, the hotel commands stunning views of the city and offers the largest variety of suites in the country, as well as a spa, fitness centre, shopping arcade and exclusive wine store. The hotel also boasts a fine-dining restaurant headed by two-Michelin-starred chef Hendrik Otto.

WHERE TO STAY AND PLAY

Sporting Club Berlin

Tel: +49 33 631-63-300
www.sporting-club-berlin.de

Hotel Adlon Kempinski

Tel: +49 30 2261 0
www.kempinski.com/adlon

FORT LAUDERDALE

With superb year-round weather and an incredible array of world-class golf courses, it's little wonder that so many PGA Tour golfers choose Florida as their base. Indeed, few destinations in the world can match the Sunshine State when it comes to golf, with esteemed layouts such as Seminole, TPC Sawgrass and Doral all to be found among the more than 1,250 Floridian courses.

Visitors to Fort Lauderdale – 30 miles north of Miami on the state's east coast – won't be short of options when looking to hit the fairways, with The Club at Emerald Hills among the many highlights. The course opened in 1969 and was originally designed by Bruce Devlin and Robert von Hagge, with architect Charles Ankrum overseeing an

extensive redesign in 1989. Emerald Hills is noted for hosting qualifying for the nearby Doral and Honda tournaments on the PGA Tour, as well as U.S. Open, U.S. Senior Open, U.S. Amateur, U.S. Mid-Amateur, and U.S. Public Links qualifiers. With that pedigree, it's not surprising to find a challenging course, with undulating greens, contoured bunkers and water coming into play on 13 of the 18 holes. Those seeking for a similarly high-end boutique experience from their accommodation should look no further than The Pillars Hotel, overlooking Fort Lauderdale's intra-coastal waterway. This sophisticated haven offers a selection of spacious rooms and suites, all set in a stunning plantation-style house. As well as beautiful water views, The Pillars also boasts an inviting outdoor pool and a 51-foot luxury yacht that guests can charter. ➤

WHERE TO STAY AND PLAY

The Club at Emerald Hills

Tel: +1 954-961-4000
www.theclubatemeraldhills.com

The Pillars Hotel

Tel: +1 954-467-9639
www.pillarshotel.com

Main: Play like a pro at Berlin's Faldo course, one of Europe's finest championship courses and potential host for the 2022 Ryder Cup **Inset:** Those seeking sunshine should head to Fort Lauderdale, where they can kick back after a hard day's golfing at The Pillars Hotel



KOTA KINABALU

Kota Kinabalu, situated on the tropical island of Borneo, is the capital of the Malaysian state Sabah and provides an excellent base for exploring all that the region has to offer, including climbing Mount Kinabalu, diving in Sipadan and exploring the depths of the Borneo jungle. Golfers will also have plenty to keep them occupied, with the superb Dalit Bay Golf & Country Club providing an unforgettable experience. Set within a 400-acre tropical estate approximately 30km north of Kota Kinabalu, the course meanders between the Tambalang and Mengkabong rivers, with the peaks of the Mount Kinabalu National Park in the distance.

The challenging layout makes the most of its jungle setting, with water featuring prominently on all but two of the holes, although the fairways are wide and forgiving. The signature hole is undoubtedly the par-3 11th, which sees players teeing off over the Tambalang river mouth to a green surrounded by the South China Sea, with the imposing sight of Mount Kinabalu in the background.

The nearby Shangri-La Rasa Ria Resort & Spa, overlooking Pantai Dalit Beach, offers an equally

spectacular setting for your stay. As well as offering luxury rooms with private balconies, providing spectacular beach or jungle views, the resort also boasts a tree-top canopy walkway, jungle-trekking adventures, a variety of water sports and its own Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, where guests are able to meet Sabah's iconic and majestic icon.

WHERE TO PLAY

Dalit Bay Golf & Country Club

Tel: +60 88 791 333
www.dalitbaygolf.com.my

WHERE TO STAY

Shangri-La Rasa Ria Resort & Spa

Tel: +60 88 797 888
www.shangri-la.com/kotakinabalu/rasariaresort

RAS AL KHAIMAH

Just like nearby Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah – which stretches along the coast of the Persian Gulf for approximately 64 kilometres and shares mountainous borders with Oman – is reinventing itself as a major tourism destination. Often described as the most scenic of emirate in the UAE, thanks to its diverse landscape, Ras Al



Top: Enjoy jungle views while playing at the Dalit Bay Golf & Country Club, or relaxing at the Shangri-La resort in Kota Kinabalu (top right)

Above: Score a hole in one at Al Hamra Golf Club, Ras Al Khaimah

Khaimah has a rich history and was renowned for its prosperous port and its exquisite pearls, which were famous for being the whitest and roundest in the world. Today, many visitors to Ras Al Khaimah are more concerned by other small, white and round objects – namely golf balls.

While not as well established as a golfing destination as Abu Dhabi and Dubai, Ras Al Khaimah already has much to offer golfers, including the Al Hamra Golf Club. Set around four inter-connected open-water lagoons, a mind-boggling five million cubic meters of sand and soil were moved during construction to convert

these former salt flats into a waterside course that features gentle elevation changes as the holes meander around the lagoons. Unsurprisingly, the water comes into play on many of the holes, including the intimidating par-five 18th, with the lagoon bordering the entire right-hand side of the hole, and a three-tiered green surrounded by bunkers. The course is overlooked by the luxurious Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah, which offers palatial rooms and stylish dining in a relaxing beachside setting. ■

WHERE TO PLAY

Al Hamra Golf Club

Tel: +971 7 2447474
www.alhamragolf.com

WHERE TO STAY

Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah

Tel: +971-7-2035555
waldorfastoria.hilton.com