

OK! Lifestyle • Travel

'I dived into Croatia's all-in activity holiday head first – you don't need to be an athlete to enjoy it'

I visited Neilson's Alana Beach Club in Croatia to try my hand at an all-in activity holiday - and it was the perfect holiday for those who want to do a bit of everything

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Neilson's Alana Beach Club is the perfect destination for anyone wanting a holiday that has it all (Image: Harper PR/Neilson Beach Club)

If you've ever found yourself on a holiday where one of you wants nothing more than to lie by the pool while other members of your family are itching to be doing something at all times, then **Neilson's Alana Beach Club in Croatia** should be top of your holiday hit list. Situated on the Adriatic Sea's beautiful coastline, with the impressive mountains of Paklenica National Park behind it, this is a resort that will please everyone from sunbathers to adrenaline junkies.

Neilson may be touted as a watersports-based and activity-filled holiday company, but you don't need to be a pro athlete – or even a casual gym goer – to make the most of it. Take it from me, with my long-standing fear of open water and an aversion to anything that might fall into cardio territory, because during my short visit I tried everything from **paddleboarding to sailing** (plus an obligatory trip to the spa, to balance things out) – and I loved it all.

What activities are at Neilson's Alana Beach Club?



There are plenty of amazing activities to try (Image: Harper PR/Neilson Beach Club)

The better question here might be what isn't there to do at **Alana Beach Club**, as you're spoilt for choice on how to fill your days. Each activity can be catered to any level, whether you're a beginner or a pro, and the staff genuinely delivered on the company's 'spod energy' mantra, giving you just the right amount of encouragement and enthusiasm without ever veering into intense or pushy.

Despite my distrust of any body of water where I can't see the bottom, I felt safe and comfortable enough to give paddleboarding a whirl for the first time, taking a **guided paddle along the coastline** to a nearby cafe, which is well worth doing for the views alone.

The hotel's waterfront is in a bay, which means calm water that's perfect for watersports, and the rocky shore means the water is so clear we could see the bottom throughout the entire session. If you're too nervous to join in with a group activity or simply want some extra pointers, you can **book private lessons** for a small additional charge. My partner and I opted for a one-to-one sailing lesson, spending an hour on the water quite literally learning the ropes from a guide aptly named Safety Sam. It was a real highlight of the trip.

When it was time for some relaxation, we enjoyed a swim in the **Olympic-sized pool** and an afternoon in the spa. Access to the spa facilities are included in your holiday package, but you will have to pay for any treatments. Our hot stone massage was one of the best luxury massages we've ever had, and well worth the extra money. If you're more into sundowner drinks than sunrise yoga, there's a rooftop bar offering breathtaking views across the water and the national park.

What are Alana Beach Club's rooms like?

The hotel offers an **impressive range of rooms**, with the option of staying either in the main building or in one of 34 cabins. Five of the cabins open up right onto the beachfront – ideal if you love waking up to the sound of the waves rolling in. Some of the rooms are a little on the basic side, but considering how little time you spend in them it isn't an issue. You'll still be able to rest before your next adventure.

What to eat in Croatia



We recommend the truffle tagliatelle at The Taste restaurant in Zadar (Image: Pam Richardson)

The resort offers **all-inclusive breakfast and lunch** buffers every day, with a focus on classic Mediterranean dishes like grilled meat, pasta and veggies, but evening meals are only included on set days. On the days when there's no dinner buffet, you can either opt for a poolside barbecue at €30 a head or venture into one of the nearby towns. The hotel does this to encourage guests to check out the local culture and to boost tourism in lesser-travelled areas, which was a lovely concept.

On our non-inclusive night we **took a trip to Zadar**, which is about 40 minutes by taxi. Alana Beach Club will help you organise your transport there and back, and we were so pleased we ventured out. Zadar is truly beautiful with a classic Mediterranean vibe. We ate at a restaurant called **The Taste**, and if you're a truffle fan you'll be in heaven. I highly recommend the truffle tagliatelle, which was one of the best meals I've ever eaten. Even now, I'm still thinking fondly about it at least once a week.

How to book

Prices start from £653 per person for a seven-night stay, including flights, transfers and activities. To find out more and to book, visit neilson.co.uk