



THE BLOG TRAVEL

# How to Holiday With Teenagers

"Whaaa?"... "Huurgh?" The language barrier's always one of the first obstacles to overcome on holiday in a foreign country. Even more challenging when the tongue you're trying to understand is your teenager's.

By Caroline Phillips, Contributor

Award-winning freelance journalist who has contributed to most of the British nationals.

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"Whaaa?"... "Huurgh?" The language barrier's always one of the first obstacles to overcome on holiday in a foreign country. Even more challenging when the tongue you're trying to understand is your teenager's. As a starter, try practising your response to these common teenage phrases: "Dinna wanna come on this stoopid holiday inna firrsplace!" or, and this is a biggy, "Wassha mean there's no 4G/Sky TV in this stoopid villa!?"

Yes, just as your kids' teenage years are a prolonged enforced holiday from sanity and the space-time continuum (for "In a minute!" read "In an aeon!"), an actual holiday with teenagers takes the teen-parent tinder-box (And I don't mean the App) to a whole new level of flammability.

So here we are: August, Sicily, at Casalnuovo in Tindari -- a beautiful villa with majestic 360-degree views and a massive pool. Plus five teens; two with my DNA.



CASALNUOVO IN TINDARI, SICILY

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LET'S LOOK AT THIS AS SCIENCE HEADWORK. THIS MAY JUST BE A HUNCH, BUT I DID ON MY "How With Teens" article to you, but for me, it's my contribution to mankind's anthropological understanding. After all, today's teen population is the biggest the world has ever seen. The UN reports that 1 in 5 is between the ages of 10 and 19, a total of over 1.2 billion people. An unimaginable quantity of pants and wet towels dumped on the bedroom floors of the world.

The teenager is a uniquely human phenomenon: there's no teen panda. Even apes go straight from infancy to adulthood without being given 120-quid Nike Roshe Run fly-knit trainers or use of Dad's credit-card.

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**SOME OF THE TEENS**

Back at Casalnuovo, we're in a magnificent 15-acre organic estate -- the glory of which pales into insignificance compared to whether it's a 4G zone. As the teens register the absence of industrial-strength Wi-Fi, their behaviour becomes twitchy. Their eyes -- generally following an "OMG!" arc -- shift rapidly. In horror. I point out the stunning Nebrodi Mountains and Aeolian islands. "Hnurggh!" responds my youngest.

My pathetic parental enthusiasm falls on deaf ears as the teens are already inside, engaged in the crucially important task of divvying-up the bedrooms:

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"Just 'cos Savannah's\* my sister, doesn't mean I have to be in the same room as her!"

"Of course it's ok for me to share with Tarquin! Yes, he's a boy, but I've practically grown up with him. Honestly Mum, what d'you think's going to happen? Oh my god, Mum, you're so diemetal!"



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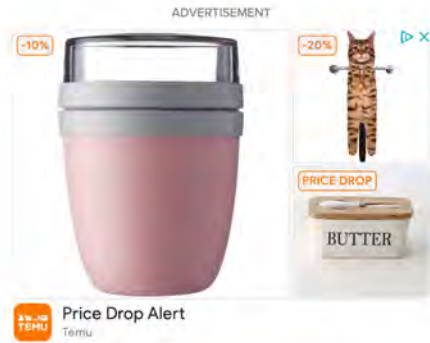
The villa owners have left us delicious local cheeses, ambrosial wine, their home- produced olive oil and home-grown tomatoes. That's to say, nothing from which you could make anything a teenager would consider a proper meal.

Ambrosia: "I'm on the Dukkan, so I can only eat protein... oh, and Nutella of course. Well, it is local produce."

Antonia: "I don't do wheat. Must be easy to find spelt and buckwheat in Sicily." (Off-the-beaten-volcanic track, that is.)

"We'll do a big shop tomorrow" we promise the teenage gannets, corralling them into our two hire-cars. Ah! hired holiday transportation. On this teenagers also have strong views linked to their ever-present awareness of status.

"Oh Daddy a Volvo? How BORING, Spirulina's parents had a four-wheel drive Mercedes in Puerta Banus last year!" says Antonia. "Has it got Blue-Tooth for my Apple Music?!"



TEEN AND CAROLINE PHILLIPS

The thinking, such it was, behind this trip, was this:

The teens would form a sort of self-entertaining gang, leaving the two adult couples to enjoy quality reading, conversation and daylight-snoozing.

And such, for a good part of the time, proves to be the case. The younger birds of a feather do indeed flock together -- commiserating with one another over the lack of social media. The grey-feathered buzzards veg out and smile knowingly at one another over the teens' Snapchat withdrawal symptoms.

But then something happens. Their skin starts to turn gold. 14-year-old Max arrives poolside to see Savannah and Ambrosia sunbathing topless (he waits five minutes before



coughing to announce his presence; there are no CD9 -- internet teen speak for 'parents are around'), and Tarquin's rampant acne fades as his tan increases.

The older teens finally accept that there are no 'bangin' clubs' in the vicinity and start enjoying the company of the younger teens.

The 18-year-olds turn into 14-year-olds when they're splashing about in the pool, and the 14-year-olds giggle with the 18-year-olds over the good-looking local farm boy (Tarquin: "He's not that bloody good-looking!").



It's at that point that they realize that Casalnuovo has a games room, an American pool table, a "sick" Football table, and horseback riding in the grounds. They even get to do a hilarious on-site pizza-making lesson.

The teen sulking of the arrival day is forgotten. Soon to be replaced by the teen groaning at the prospect of going home.

\*Some names have been changed

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