

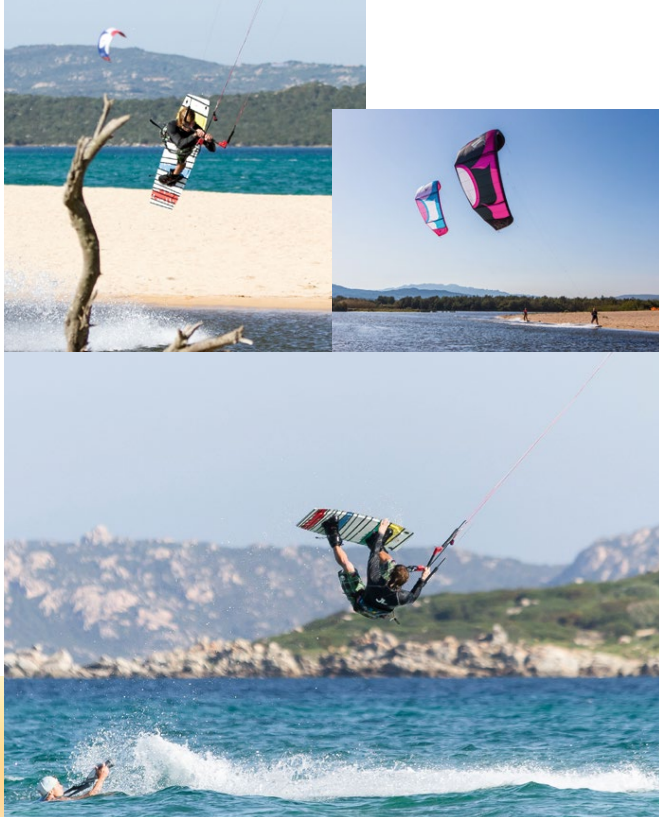
NORTHERN SARDINIA

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We hear a lot about kiting in far flung places – Brazil, South Africa, Australia, Egypt, the Caribbean and so on, but closer to home we only tend to hear about Tarifa or Fuerteventura. Yet the Mediterranean has plenty of good spots just a short flight (or even a drive) away. Last autumn I travelled to northern Sardinia for a photo-shoot and testing with the JN team. The boss drove all the kit down through Italy and across on the ferry, while the rest of us hopped on a direct Easyjet flight to Olbia. We picked up hire cars from the airport and an hour's drive along winding mountain roads brought us to the beautiful spot of Porto Pollo. This is a large sweeping bay surrounded by granite rocks straight out of the Flintstones.

For most of spring to autumn, the wind whistles through the 15 kilometre gap between Sardinia and Corsica to the north. Even in October we got out most days, though obviously I can't guarantee anything! I'd probably avoid August if you can as being European holiday season it gets pretty busy. Any wind direction is generally fine as the bay curves so you'll eventually be blown back to shore. On an easterly a spit of land to the east gives you flat water just inside the spit, otherwise the water state is generally light chop. It would be fairly obvious in season, but do note that to the east of the spit is a bay for windsurfers only.



Its flat water on a westerly wind looks very inviting but do not kite here, or the police will turn up and you will be fined heavily! We nearly found out the hard way, a tip off had us sprinting to the correct kiting area just before the police arrived, phew.

Next to the bay is a tiny lagoon that we kited in, there was just room for two kites! I wouldn't recommend this to beginners as there are trees downwind, but we had fun doing some freestyle there.

If you fancy trying different spots, an hour to two driving west or east will bring you to more good spots. It's worth checking the wind forecast to decide where to drive. We went west following the coastal road south of Santa Teresa, and found a beautiful bay with consistent surf for wave riding if the wind swings north or south to give side shore down the line conditions. Another day we went south of Olbia on a southerly forecast and found stunning turquoise beaches, as well as a lot of flamingos. Those pink leggy birds get everywhere.

We stayed at "Windsurf Village", two minutes' drive or ten minutes' walk from the beach, as it meant we could do self-catering. But there are other options nearby or in the town of Palau, a ten minute drive. Food-wise there was a café on the bay, a fantastic pizzeria just inland from the beach, or there are plenty of restaurants in Palau. Who doesn't love Italian food, I'd go back for the pizzas and ice-cream alone. All in all, a great trip to a beautiful spot with varied conditions, offering plenty of tourist opportunities for the non-kiter, so don't be afraid to take the family.