

Nine golf courses all fans should play

by Nic Brook, Daily Mirror [13/08/2011 \(http://www.mirror.co.uk/advice/travel/2011/08/13/\)](http://www.mirror.co.uk/advice/travel/2011/08/13/)

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THE UK's golfers are to the fore this summer with Majors bagged at The Open and US Open.

This weekend our stars are after the last Major of the season – the US PGA in Atlanta, with the final round played tomorrow.

If all this is inspiring you to play a round, here are nine top courses for the perfect golf break.

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FRIENDLIEST Tee up on Ireland's north and west coasts to savour the atmosphere that nurtured champions McIlroy, McDowell and Clarke. Don't miss the toughest links in the world at Royal Portrush in Co Antrim or Ballyliffin across the border in Co Donegal.

www.northandwestcoastlinks.com

COOLEST TOURNAMENT Play under the midnight sun at the Arctic Circle on the coast of Iceland. Join the midsummer tournament at Akureyri, the most northerly 18-hole course, and you could become the Arctic Open Champion. www.arcticopen.is

BEST VALUE The overlooked links of Wales are wonderful. More than 200 courses, sensible greens fees and great family value. Ryder Cup fever is strong following last October's triumph at Celtic Manor and family seaside golf is superb at Newport Links, Pembrokeshire, and at Trefloyne, near Tenby. www.golfasitshouldbe.com

FINEST APRES GOLF "Play hard and play hard". Nightlife is great on the Aquitaine coast and the Basque region of France. Base yourselves at Biarritz. The climate ensures a perfect game year round. www.golfpassbiarritz.com

STAG-TASTIC Dublin and Belfast are always near the top of any list, but for a great final hurrah with the lads visit the North West of England and play the finest courses on the Wirral and Lancashire coast. Three Open Championship venues at Hoylake, Birkdale and Lytham St Annes will give a great weekend itinerary. www.englandsgolfcoast.com

PEACE & QUIET Connemara on the west coast of Ireland is like the edge of the world (www.connemaragolfinks.com), but for real timeless atmosphere get to Brancaster on the Norfolk coast.

With luck you'll play the Royal West Norfolk course when the tide is in. You can try to carry the world's only inland tidal bunker with your approach at the 9th. www.rwngc.org

PLEASINGLY PAMPERED For a relaxing time visit Golf du Medoc Hotel & Spa, near Bordeaux. Step out of your room on to the 18th green, or stay in and relax. Wine buffs will enjoy the tours to nearby vineyards. www.hotel-golf-du-medoc.com

SPIRITUAL SURPRISE Iceland is home to more than 60 courses, mainly nine-hole gems. The courses are in amazing landscapes. Play from May to September and you'll feel refreshed and on top of the world. www.golficeland.org

THE AULD GREY TOON Every golf pilgrim must play The Old Course at St Andrews, the home of golf. Walk the fairways on a Sunday when it is closed and get a feel for it before your game and you'll enjoy it all the more. golf.visitscotland.com

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