

Books: Get lost in translation on exotic holidays in the sun

Try fiction in different tongues if you're travelling abroad this summer

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Crime: South American crime writer Claudia Pineiro is often referred to as Argentina's Patricia Highsmith, who was considered the original queen of suspense fiction

Irish literature is arguably experiencing something of a boom at the moment, but there's also an increasing wealth of translated fiction available in English, which is great news for adventurous book aficionados. Whether your tastes run to the more contemplative or more thrilling ends of the scale, we may have something for you.

Considering that a staggering 400 million people worldwide speak Spanish as a first language, it's no surprise that there are multiple intriguing names from Spanish language literature in translation to explore.

One name to start with would be Argentine crime writer Claudia Pineiro. Her new novel *Betty Boo* (Bitter Lemon Press, January 2016), involves a murder that goes to the heart of the establishment, as five members of the Argentine industrial and political elite have died in seemingly-innocent-but-not-quite circumstances.

Pineiro has been billed as the Argentine Patricia Highsmith, who was considered the original queen of suspense fiction for novels such as *Strangers on a Train* (immortalised on screen by Hitchcock and now being remade by the team behind *Gone Girl* and *The Talented Mr Ripley*), so anyone who can't wait for January can catch up on Pineiro's backlist in the meantime, including titles such as *A Crack in the Wall*, *All Yours* and *Thursday Night Widows*.

The Sound of Things Falling (Bloomsbury), by Colombian author Juan Gabriel Vasquez, won the Dublin Impac Award in 2014. The €100,000 prize, organised by Dublin City Council, is the world's largest prize for a single novel published in English. Highly recommended, this novel is a literary thriller set in Bogota and was the eighth novel in translation to scoop this prestigious award.

If you're lucky enough to be heading to Italy this summer, try pseudonymous cult Italian author Elena Ferrante's first three novels in the Neapolitan series: *My Brilliant Friend*, *The Story of a New Name* and *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay*. The fourth instalment in the series, *The Story of the Lost Child* (Europa Editions) will be published in English in September. Ferrante is the author of several novels, her most recent of which, the Neapolitan series, are about two girls from Naples, Elena and Lila, and their unwavering friendship. Fans of Italian mystery writer Andrea Camilleri's internationally best selling Inspector Montalbano series, which is set in the fictional town of Vigata, in Sicily, can look forward to a new collection of short stories in February 2016, entitled *Montalbano's First Case and Other Stories* (Mantle). This features a series of tales spanning the fractious policeman's career, a must-read for established fans and newbies alike.

In the meantime, there's lots to catch up on, including *The Potter's Field*, which won the Crime Writers' Association International Dagger in 2012. To date, over 10 million copies of Camilleri's books have been sold.

Portugal was among the most booked flight destination for Irish holiday-makers in 2014. So if you have an affinity with this beautiful country, familiarise yourself with a giant of Portuguese literature by reading a modern classic, *Act of the Damned*, by Antonio Lobo Antunes (Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd), which is about a once wealthy Lisbon family and their frailties. Antunes is considered by many to be Portugal's greatest living writer.

Further afield, but staying with authors writing in Portuguese, Patricia Melo is one of Brazil's most celebrated writers, and was named among 50 Latin American Leaders for the New Millennium by Time magazine. Melo has a new novel available in English in September, called *The Body Snatcher* (Bitter Lemon Press). Set in Pantanal, the Brazilian lowlands bordering Bolivia, it involves a busted cocaine deal, a wealthy family and a dead pilot. So far, so intriguing.

Ireland and France's literary friendship has been celebrated over the last few years by the Franco-Irish literary festival, held in Dublin in April. This year's festival focused on crime writing, evidencing the fact that there is much to enjoy of the genre in the French language and in translation.

The popular French crime novelist Fred (short for Frederique) Vargas released a new book in English earlier this year called *Dog will have his Day* (Vintage). Vargas has been hailed as a quirky writer, famous for introducing the hugely popular fictional detective Commissaire Adamsberg. Vargas is far removed from the by-numbers school of crime fiction, so if you like your thrillers imaginative, clever and original, she is the author for you. And if you prefer your crime uncompromising, it's also worth checking out Pierre Lemaitre's *Camille Verhoeven* trilogy (MacLehose Press). Lemaitre's first novel, *Alex*, won the CWA International Crime Fiction Dagger in 2013 and was followed by the sequel, *Irene*.

His last in the trilogy, *Camille*, was published in English earlier this year and follows Anne Forestier, who is trapped in the middle of a heist at a jewellers on the Champs-Élysées. She is lucky to survive, but is now in danger as she remembers her assailant. Watch out for the movie.

If you're looking for something a bit more retro and less contemporary in French crime fiction, then try the newly reissued translation in paperback of *Cecile is Dead* (Penguin Classics), by Georges Simenon, famous for the fictional policeman Maigret, which was made well known by the 1960s TV series.

Here you can explore a fantastic Parisian setting by the prolific Simenon - he wrote over 400 novels and

short stories and his work has been praised by John Banville as being "extraordinary masterpieces of the Twentieth Century." Simenon was justly renowned for inhabiting his characters with empathy and style and getting under their skin in depth. It's worth checking out Penguin Classics' other reissued title, including *The Judge's House* and *The Cellars of the Majestic*.

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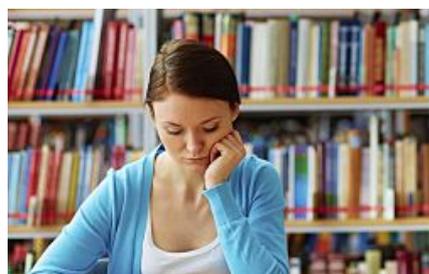
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