

# 12 of the best new UK cottages for summer

A riverside cottage in Pembrokeshire, a private-island retreat in the Highlands and a Georgian pile in the Midlands — these are our picks for this year



I am a fan of British hotels, I really am. But if a summer holiday means the promise of doing what you want when you want, then a hotel stay can slightly cramp your style, with its set meal times and just one room of your own.

By contrast, a self-catering stay offers holiday freedom. Fancy eating dinner dressed only in shorts? Go right ahead. Breakfast at 11am? Be my guest. And, as these dozen stays new to the rental market prove, you'll no longer be missing out on much of the good stuff that you get at hotels.

From rural retreats to historic townhouses and beach shacks, these come with beautiful design and the sort of bells and whistles that you used to find only at hotels — saunas, hot tubs, fire pits, cinemas, pizza ovens, yoga studios ...





100 miles



A final thought: the more time you spend together with family and friends, the more you reconnect and the more memories you create. Book one of these self-catering stays and you’ve struck the holiday jackpot.

### 1. The Dovecote at Reedsford, Wooler, Northumberland



Here’s a romantic stay for lovebirds: a newly converted, grade II listed dovecote on a farm estate within Northumberland National Park. See it as a micro-home hideaway of soft minimalism. Smart wood panelling, slate floors and brushed brass taps? Check. Views of fields lapping against the Cheviot Hills? Check, including from your double bed. Eighteenth-century character? Check again. Who knew pigeonholes made such good shelves? It’s a lovely stay where you can walk, cycle or just escape the world for a wee while. Lindisfarne, Bamburgh and Beadnell are easy day trips along the stonking Northumberland coast. Detail Two nights for two from £373 ([crabtreeandcrabtree.com](http://crabtreeandcrabtree.com))

### 2. Bluebell Farm, Kingsbridge, Devon







There are many glass-walled designer stays near Salcombe. This is not one of those, though Salcombe and the beaches of Bigbury-on-Sea and Soar Mill Cove are about five miles away. Instead, this handsome stone house, behind the church in the hamlet of Woodleigh, in the quiet inland section of the South Devon National Landscape, is somewhere to live out fantasies of a rural #bestlife. Its pale interiors are stylishly understated, with a nicely scuffed cabinet here, a claw-foot bath there. On warm evenings a private paddock becomes the venue for a miniature family festival, with meals outside a studio strung with fairy lights and a fire pit crackling. Just add guitars.

Details Seven nights for eight from £2,200 ([sandandstoneescapes.com](http://sandandstoneescapes.com))

### 3. Three Mile Beach, Gwithian, Cornwall



You may not think that you fancy a resort until you realise how much effort you're still putting in on holiday. What might change your mind are the new two-bedroom luxury shacks — good for couples and smaller families — at this colourful resort among the dunes of Gwithian beach. The airy accommodation is pleasingly simple, with its white panelling, surf posters, barbecue and hot tub. Plus it is closer to the epic beach than the pricier house rentals in these parts (don't let on). What more do you need? To pack off the kids, actually, and the resort offers a giddy whirlwind of fun on sea and land for just that purpose. For you there are food trucks and a pizza oven, as well as housekeeping (£50 extra). It's Cornish holidays made easy.

Details [Seven nights for four](http://threemilebeach.co.uk) from £1,558 ([threemilebeach.co.uk](http://threemilebeach.co.uk))



#### 4. Rivercroft, Llangwm, Pembrokeshire



You've probably heard that Pembrokeshire is the new Cornwall. Yes, both have stellar coasts and promote the sense of being joyously at the edge of things. Equally, no — if you can find a Cornish rental at this price I want you as my travel agent. It's a bright cottage in Llangwm village, updated with smart slate floors and a new kitchen. The bedrooms and bathrooms are homely, but in truth you come for what's outside. The Cleddau estuary glints through the upstairs windows — paddleboarders and birders take note — while the best beaches in Wales, at Marloes and the Dale peninsula, are 30 minutes' drive west; Tenby is a 30-minute drive in the opposite direction.

Details Seven nights for six from £550 ([coastalcottages.co.uk](http://coastalcottages.co.uk))

#### 5. Ammonite House, Screveton, Nottinghamshire





Don't think of Ammonite House as a rental — it's more a private hotel for large (or multiple) families. The six-bedroom Georgian pile in the village of Screveton certainly looks the part. But the feel really comes from things such as the tasteful living spaces restored over two years — wood-burners in two living rooms, a pair of tables in the dining room (one each for you and the youngsters) — plus a heated outdoor pool, two acres of lawn in which to kick a ball around, a hot tub and good outdoor kitchen. There's some traffic noise outside, but you won't hear it above the joyous shrieks from the kids. The catch? If this is a private hotel, parents are the staff.

Details [Seven nights for 12](#) from £3,870 (oliverstravels.com)

## 6. Mae Cottage, Arkengarthdale, North Yorkshire



The owners might tempt you in by pointing out that they've freshly renovated their stone semi in Arkengarthdale. But the real reason you'll book is for the muscular hills that ripple behind the garden, luring you outside with your morning cuppa. God's Own Country? By 'eck, is it ever? It's a walkers' stay, so interiors are intended for relaxation after a day in the dales, with comfy sofas in soft greens and taupes, a new wood-burner crackling in the inglenook. Sensibly, there's a utility room for boots and cleaning the dog. The CB Inn is a short walk away, while Reeth town is five minutes' drive if dinner seems like a faff.

Details [Seven nights for six](#) from £733 (yorkshirehideaways.co.uk)

## 7. Sail Loft, Eilean Shona, Highland





Cottages on Vanessa Branson's private island get booked a year in advance, such is the loyalty of repeat guests to a destination where treasured memories are made. That makes Branson's new place in the former sail loft a find. For couples it's pure romantic escapism. Transported across by Rib, you're left in a secluded, bosky bay with a lodge that has high ceilings of off-white panelling and awesome views of Loch Moidart just outside; the views from the master bedroom are tremendous. Add in a designer wood-burner and it's rather like a smart Scandinavian retreat. That may explain the sauna.

Details Seven nights for four from £3,000 (eileanshona.com)

**8. Willingcott, Woolacombe, Devon**



How do you guarantee jolly family hols on the north Devon coast? First, book yourself a smart eco-lodge with crisp design in lofty open-plan living spaces, featuring a hot tub and barbecue on the terrace. Next, make sure that the lodge is one among the eight on a 100-acre estate in the North Devon National Landscape, where the children can make new pals in the play areas. Finally, ensure that the South West Coast Path runs past it to Morteheo for cream teas and that the awesome surf beach at Woolacombe is five minutes' drive away. I reckon that covers it.

Details Seven nights for eight from £978 (luxurycoastal.co.uk)

**9. The West End, Hawarden, Flintshire**





William Gladstone wouldn't recognise his old home, an 18th-century castle on a private estate in the fold of the map between England and Wales, near the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape. They've pepped up the former prime minister's West Wing to create a bold, brassy party pad. There's art by Damien Hirst and Ai Weiwei on the walls, plus a library of vinyl and a turntable on which to play it. A chef can prepare dinner, though you should also fire up the outside pizza oven; the estate's farm shop (and pub) is excellent. And since it's summer, the sauna and wood-fired hot tub are obligatory. Details [Seven nights for ten](#) from £5,600 ([hawardenestateholidays.co.uk](#))

#### 10. Dryhill Cottage, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire



It's the views that you notice first on this vineyard stay at the end of a dirt track — a kaleidoscope of fields and copses stretching to infinity. Expect to hum *Jerusalem* on repeat while in a hammock or sitting in a hot tub with a glass of estate fizz. It's only when you've finished gawping that you notice how the clever open-plan design and glass walls maximise those conversation-killing views from within, or how the stone walls, bold wallpaper and oak floors are like a hug. Walks abound: the Cotswold Way passes by; Cheltenham, Gloucester and Stroud are nearby — bet you don't make it to any, though. Details One night for two from £235 ([sawdays.co.uk](#))

#### 11. Nyssa, Colton, Norfolk





It's a private wellness stay for Wallpaper\* magazine addicts, a former stable block just west of Norwich that has been immaculately scrubbed up into a boho-luxe retreat. There's an on-trend ice bath and a Swedish hot tub; there's also a barrel sauna and a beautiful yoga studio with equipment and a bronze chau gong for meditation. Elsewhere the place is a symphony of whitewashed brick walls, cream and calico fabrics, wicker and parquet, with dens where you can retreat to read and barbecues and a film projector for evenings. Good luck returning to the real world.

Details Seven nights for eight from £2,995 (uniquehomestays.com)

## 12. Landgate House, Rye, East Sussex



A cheerful children's bedroom at Landgate House in Rye

Rye may be the sort of town that film directors dream of, with its wonky timber, cobbles, cool craft shops and antiques, all with the zesty tang of a medieval port. However, despite the in-character pubs with rooms and guesthouses, it has few large historic rentals. Meet Landgate House, a 700-year-old, grade II listed, five-bed gaff beside the old town wall, and it's been sympathetically restored with a keen design eye. So while the flagstone floors remain, the decor is vintage loveliness — Windsor and mid-century dining chairs, art and a reclaimed glass bar from the Dorchester. Even better for families, it has a garden, which is rare in central Rye.

Details [Three nights for nine](#) from £1,115 (camberholidaycottages.co.uk)

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