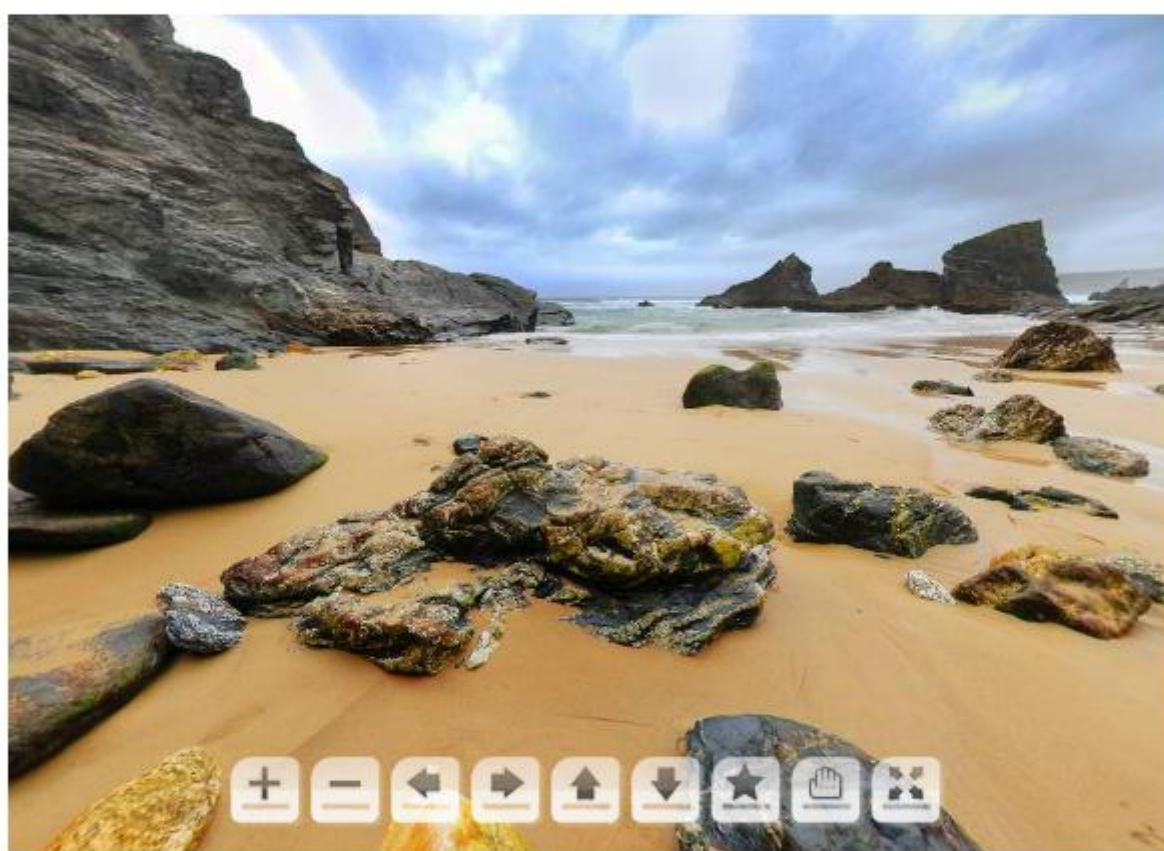


The best of Cornwall: booking now

It's the county with a summer holiday for everyone. And the good news is, there's still room at some of its finest places to stay

Sean Newsom Published: 31 March 2013

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The beach at Bedruthan Steps, Cornwall (Richard Hart/360cities.net)

Nowhere else does seaside holidays quite like Cornwall. Nowhere else does such a tempting mix of accommodation, either. Beautifully restored cottages, relaxed and sophisticated hotels, camp sites with stunning ocean views: if anyone knows of a place that offers the same choice, in such gobsmacking, soul-nourishing surroundings, then please tell me about it.

The question is, what kind of Cornish accommodation is going to work best for you? And the answer isn't always obvious. After the birth of our son, my wife and I assumed our future lay in cottages. Then — briefly — we flirted with hotels. But last summer, in the pouring rain, we discovered we were a family of campers, after all. Here, to get you thinking, are the three main options.

All prices are for August; cottage prices are for the property for a week; hotel prices are per room per night; unless stated, camping prices are per night

Cottages

Cottages are the default option for many families when they head to Cornwall. Flexible and private, they're usually spacious, relaxing places. If it's raining, you can fire up the ebook reader or bang in a DVD and let the morning go by in a daze of utter sloth. Cottages are perfect for independent souls, anyone with lots of clobber, extended families and — especially — young children.

But... you will spend a lot of time in the local supermarket. You'll spend a fair amount of time cooking, too — so unless everyone pulls their weight in the kitchen, at least one of the group is going to feel they didn't have much of a holiday. It won't have been a cheap one, either. In the school holidays, you can easily spend £2,000 or more a week on a place that sleeps six.

Availability is also an issue. The most stylish cottages, and those with sea views, are already booked up, but if you get your skates on, you can bag one a short drive from the sea — especially on the south coast, rather than the north. New properties are always coming onto the market, too, so call the big rental specialists and ask if anything's about to be released.

Here are six of the best...

1 Cassben, Mullion

From the outside, it looks like a nondescript bungalow, but inside Cassben has been given a modern makeover, with a double-height kitchen-cum-living room. Parents with toddlers will love the single-storey layout, and there are several sheltered beaches nearby.

Sleeps 6; £1,248; 01326 555555, classic.co.uk; ref 2673

2 Frenchman's Creek, Helford

Landmark Trust properties are light on mod cons and heavy on character and location. Frenchman's Creek is a little granite cottage set in one of those lush Cornish valleys that are choked with trees and utterly secret. The creek is on the south side of the Helford estuary, with the Lizard peninsula beyond.

Sleeps 4; £1,854; 01628 825925, landmarktrust.org.uk

3 Bosoljack, Port Navas

Got any boaties in the family? Then they're going to love this place on the Helford estuary, set over the first floor of a boathouse, right on the water's edge. Hiring your own boat (from helford-river-boats.co.uk, based at Helford Passage) for puttering up and down the many creeks is essential.

Sleeps 4; £1,258; 01647 433593, www.helpfulholidays.com; ref S416

4 Swallowtails, Mawnan Smith

Newly refurbished and set in 54 acres of farmland, Swallowtails is a swanky rural retreat with easy access to the sea. The nearest beach is at Maenporth, but you may not be able to tear the kids — and yourself — away from the wonderful woodlands that surround the property, or from the spectacular freshwater pool, which is part rockery, part reed bed, part playground.

Sleeps 6; £3,250; 01637 881183, uniquehomestays.com

5 The Blue House, Portloe

Set in a classic Cornish cove on the Roseland peninsula, Portloe is little more than a quay and a huddle of stone-built cottages. The boutiquey Lugger Hotel is here — good for evenings when you don't want to cook — as well as the impeccably mannered Blue House. Expect artful displays of seashells and lashings of Farrow & Ball.

Sleeps 4; £1,197; 01872 553491, boutique-retreats.co.uk

6 Trewollack House, near Newquay

A handsome stone-built house surrounded by lawns, Trewollack has had a posh neo-Georgian makeover and is a short drive from several superb surfing beaches. There's a working farm on site, too, so the atmosphere is thoroughly rural, even though you're less than a mile from Newquay.

Sleeps 8; £2,750; 01579 346473, duchyofcornwallholidaycottages.co.uk