

Last-minute Christmas holidays in 2019

From a cosy cottage in Cornwall to a beach retreat in Sri Lanka, it's not too late to book a festive getaway. Richard Mellor knows where to go



Walden Lakehouse, Lough Ree, Ireland (12)

12. Idyllic Irish cottage

Fancy a rural Christmas in seclusion? Walden Lakehouse fits the bill, lining the shores of Lough Ree, halfway along the River Shannon in Ireland, and hunkered down amid high hazel, oak and beech trees. There's holly, too, to add a dose of Christmas. The self-catering cottage has Sixties furniture and an open-plan layout, rendered snug by rugs and throws. Its log burner keeps the air toasty, and a modern, marble kitchen and four-person dining table enable intimate Christmas feasts. In the bathroom, a tub faces the lake, as do most windows — ideal for meditation, or to watch for the mystical Nessie-type monster that supposedly swims these waters.

Details Seven nights for four starting December 20 costs £2,550 (01637 881183, uniquehomestays.com)