

The race to book a 2022 staycation has begun

With doubts over when holidays will return to normal and fears of missing out, many are already booking self-catering stays for next year

The ongoing uncertainty over foreign holidays may have shifted booking patterns six months earlier with many eager to not miss out. Nigel Stengard-Green, of Luxury Cotswolds Rentals, says: “Traditionally the peak months get booked up in January and February for the summer ahead, however there has certainly been a change in booking patterns since Covid.”

He notes that the operator’s smaller properties are already 40 per cent fully booked for next summer but anticipates that there will still be room for last-minute bookings, which conversely also increased this year despite increased competition. Of course this summer, many who held out in the hopes of a foreign holiday were left struggling for plans, after traffic light changes, tests and restrictions proved too challenging. There are only so many holiday cottages in Cornwall, after all.

As well as altering booking patterns, what we are looking for in holiday lets might be changing. Liz Simpson, co-founder of members-only Kip Hideaways, whose top properties are already sold out on most peak summer weekends, says: “There is a clear pattern that Kip’s members are travelling more adventurously (both in terms of location and architecture) – looking for hideaways that are remote and off-grid with unique experiences like alfresco bath tubs and fire pits to cook from.”

Demand has been so high for quirky stays such as treehouses that the company is focusing on adding more of these types of properties to their collection.

Unsurprisingly, across many websites, it seems the more unusual properties are the first to be snapped up.

Meanwhile, Ben Shearer, founder of boutique outfit Sand & Stone Escapes, suggests luxury stays are the most sought after. “We’ve found that in the last year people are less price sensitive – willing to spend more on a staycation and booking much further in advance to past booking patterns,” he says.

Indeed, without forking out on flights and Covid tests and to make a holiday on home soil more special, many may be willing to splurge on the perfect stay. This in turn might be leading to earlier bookings (Sand & Stone Escapes are 46 per cent up on this time last year), with families not wanting to compromise on any element of their trip.

Luxury rental company Unique Homestays, whose properties uniformly look fresh from a magazine shoot, has certainly benefited from the upswing in holidaymakers looking for plush stays. A spokesperson says: “We are already seeing the recent staycation boom continuing into 2022, with the summer months proving most popular with guests booking ahead so far.”

They reveal that summer rentals are already 22 per cent full (a figure that would generally stand at 5 per cent pre-pandemic) and anticipate 2022 to be another “successful year for the UK staycation market.”

So the message is yes, the early birds are out in force, and booking up some of the country’s best properties – but there are still plenty of lovely options available. And with some companies only releasing their 2022 dates over the next couple of months, it’s certainly not too late to bag a booking for next summer. However, if you want to secure your dream UK holiday it may not be a bad idea to start browsing...

Aquila, Brampton, the Lake District

Accessed by a sweeping mountain road, arriving at this secluded luxury lake house is exciting enough. Then there is the uninterrupted view over Haweswater reservoir below, which never gets old. Days can be spent exploring the tarns and fells of the Mardale Valley or even trying some bracing wild swimming. Inside, the feel is stylish – think oak floors and steel beams – but still homely, with battered leather sofas and plenty of throws. Wake up to either lake or mountain views in the three bedrooms and enjoy a morning coffee in the pretty garden, while conspiring to stay longer.

Sleeps six. From £2,750 per week; [uniquehomestays.com](https://www.uniquehomestays.com)



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