

Why every woman should rent a cottage for a weekend by herself

A travel writer's tips for where to go and how to spend your time

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As self-care or 'prescription' holidays quickly become a rising wellbeing trend for 2018, travel writer Millie Kerr shares her advice on why a countryside cottage is the perfect place to start...

Ever since I was little, I've fantasised about living alone in a country cottage. There would be a fire crackling through the night, a dog and cat at my feet, and stacks of books beside my quilted bed. But for a London resident like me — a person who's half countryside introvert, half urban extrovert — the fantasy never became a reality.

My social life and career tether me to London, but life in the Big Smoke can wear me down, so I've learned that solitary trips to the countryside — where I can play house in a cottage like the one from my dreams — are the perfect way to relax and recalibrate. There's something about being alone in nature, in a place where distractions are scant, that quiets the mind.

Here, I share my advice on how to arrange and execute the perfect single-traveller country cottage getaway. You'll never look back...

In my experience, it helps to do a little planning in advance — right down to the details like where you can buy groceries or rent a car — while remaining open to spontaneity.

If you're anything like me, you need to feel comfortable to relax, and there's nothing worse than discovering that your Airbnb or something of the sort is a far cry from the luxury pics you perused online. At least with a hotel, you can complain if things aren't up to snuff, which could lead to a refund or upgrade. With many vacation rentals, you're on the hook.

Millie's tips on using Airbnb:

- **Only book properties with 4-5 stars**
- **Look for ones with 10+ reviews**
- **Use 'Superhosts'**
- **Message owners first to ask questions about the property**

In remote stretches of the English countryside, charming Airbnbs are few and far between, but don't fret: this scarcity isn't all bad. There are endless country hotels and cosy B&Bs, not to mention some of the best vacation rental companies I've come across — some of which cater to solo travellers.

Both Mulberry Cottages and Premier Cottages have petite homes in their collections, but my all-time favourite is Unique Home Stays, whose portfolio includes 163 privately owned homes across the UK. A good many sleep one to two people, making them perfect for solitary holidays. Speak to a travel adviser if you need help deciding on a cottage, and be sure to ask about dog-friendly options if you're bringing your hound.



ESCAPE 1: The Parisian, Rutland

I was midway through a Cambridge Masters programme when I checked into The Parisian to knock out five essays. Within seconds of stepping into the stables-turned-cottage, I knew I was going to have a wonderful stay. The two-story house was light and airy, the perfect size for one, and had a private terrace where I sipped coffee each morning. There were little luxuries, too — a bathroom skylight, an alpaca duvet keeping me warm at night, and a welcome hamper with fresh treats and Prosecco.

The owners of The Parisian recently decided to keep the cottage to themselves but, for a similar property in the same area, see the [Dragonwood Boat House](#).