

COSY retreats

Take a weekend winter break and hunker down in a hygge-style haven to reset and recharge



The world is opening up, and once again we can travel to, more or less, anywhere in the world. But what hasn't gone away is the whole airport hassle thing. In fact, it may have become even worse.

Along with having to remove belts and shoes, the pain of packing cosmetics in a 100ml bottles in see-through bags and negotiating just how much luggage you are allowed under the seas, over head or in the hold, there's added worry that your flight might be cancelled, or there's not enough ground staff to sort out your luggage, makes the popular city break abroad too stressful.

If the aim of your weekend away is to chill and recharge the batteries, would you be better advised to eschew the whole airport hell experience, in favour of a staycation?

I know, we keep banging on about staycations, but staying closer to home does have its advantages, even at this time of year.

'There is a huge selection of amazing luxury cottages, tucked away at the end of country lanes'

Possibly, even more so at this time of year, after all, there's no expectation that the success of the entire weekend is dependent on sunny weather.

Granted, Britain is hardly a "winter wonderland" in the Alpine sense of snow 'n' sleighbells, but the UK's varied landscape offers its own unique take on winter.

OK, those landscapes might well invoke descriptions such as bleak, barren, and windswept, but there's no denying a certain awe-inspiring grandeur.

The weather is going to be unpredictable. We know this, and we pack accordingly,

but the accommodation doesn't have to be unpredictable.

There is a huge selection of amazing luxury cottages, tucked away at the end of country lanes which wind their way through valleys, vales and villages, in all regions of the UK, offering seclusion and privacy.

Bag yourself a romantic bolthole with a log fire, plenty of throws, blankets and cushions and you have a piece of hygge heaven to hunker down in when you return from exploring the Cornish or West Wales coasts or having taken in the majesty of the novel and poetry inspiring countryside of Dartmoor, the Dales or the Lake District.

And not just cosy cottages, either. Buildings of all sorts have been repurposed, from Pottys and lighthouses to sheds and traditional traveller's caravans, while if you are looking for a cosy winter getaway for a larger group and would like to spend the weekend at the manor born, then there are plenty of options for you to play the lord and lady.

FIGGY COURT

A 700-year old rustic grain barn reinterpreted - this charming self-catering couples' retreat affords a slice of country living on modern terms. Honey-hued oak beams and hand-crafted furnishings are a celebration of yesteryear, with little luxuries like the riverside hot tub adding lashings of romance. uniquehomestays.com



LITTLE INKA

Hidden on the northern edge of Bodman Moor, Little Inka's hot tub, roll top and king-size bed beneath a window looking up to the stars make this secluded escape the perfect couples' retreat. uniquehomestays.com

FILLY ISLAND

Blending style with a big dose of ingenuity results in something truly quite magical here at Filly Island. This unique cottage near Cirencester is sat upon a tiny island accessed by a humpback bridge. Pre-loved finds are revived to bring about the unique interior at Filly Island. uniquehomestays.com



OVER LEMON RIVER

Dartmoor is Devon's wild heart; a place where heather cloaks the ground like an over-sized velvet eiderdown and granite tors scramble to meet big open skies. On fine days, ponies wander amidst the mysticism of faeries but when the swirling mists arrive, Over Lemon River is the perfect hideaway. uniquehomestays.com



HINTERLAND CABIN

Perched on a hill overlooking the Conwy valley, this luxury log cabin sits on the border of Snowdonia, enveloped by big skies and soaring mountains. Whether hill hiking or gorge trekking, the hot tub and sauna will be the perfect remedy to the day's adventures. uniquehomestays.com

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