



FAMILY STAYCATIONS

HOTFOOT IT FOR HALF-TERM

Take the kids away but not at the expense of your own R'n'R



❖ COTTON COTTAGE

Combermere Abbey, Shropshire

It's worth the drive for a stay in one of these nine courtyard cottages in a former 19th-century stable yard, which is in the A-star grounds of 900-year-old Combermere Abbey. Cotton Cottage boasts a Jacobean-ish turret and comfy (Indian empire vibe) décor. Enjoy your welcome hamper of the estate's apple juice and homemade windfall marmalade, then wander into your 1,100-acre playground – with parkland walks, ancient trees, and lake for doggie paddling. Get local sausages sizzling on the barbecue while you play a game of tennis, then chill in the Victorian walled garden amid fragrant antique roses.

BOOK IT: Sleeps four. From £400 for three nights. combermereabbey.co.uk



❖ THE FUZZY DUCK

Armscote, Gloucestershire

Adding another string to their already heavy bow, owners of British beauty brand Baylis & Harding, Tania Fossey and Adrian Slater, have created The Fuzzy Duck, a gorgeous family (and dog-friendly) retreat, nestled in the Cotswold valleys. With a 'paddock to plate' food philosophy (kids and dogs are well-catered for with their own special menus of homemade goodies), tucking in guilt-free is all part of the charm. Sit amid the splendid gardens with a glass of wine in hand and watch your offspring gambol freely.

BOOK IT: Rooms from £110. fuzzyduckarmscote.com



❖ LONGLANDS

Iffracombe, Devon

Pack your kids and your dog and hit the motorway to Devon to suck up bounteous amounts of beauty, fresh air and back-to-nature. Famous Five adventuring in one of Longlands' five gorgeous 'safari lodge' stays. Loll on your private deck and gawp at the green rolling hills in front of you (or starry skies above you – Exmoor was the first International Dark Sky Reserve in Europe), take a boat out Swallows and Amazons-style, frolic among the 17 acres of ancient woodland and have a family game of football, netball, table tennis or basketball. Camps come fully stocked with everything you'll need and you can pre-order from the menu or cook your own, plus there's an honesty shop on site so there's no need to panic if you run out of wine.

BOOK IT: Sleeps six. From £495 for two nights. longlandsdevon.co.uk

❖ THE SPYGLASS

Gorran Haven, Cornwall

It would be hard to get closer to the sea without being on a boat. Spyglass is a bijou erstwhile fisherman's cottage which was once part of a fort – all whitewashed outside and shabby chic maritime inside. It's reached along the tiniest, pedestrian-only lane, by iPhone torch if you're late (which the kids love). Definitely don't miss a visit to the nearby Lost Gardens of Heligan – a magical sub-tropical estate hidden for decades under brambles after many of its gardeners were killed in World War One. Once back at base, nab the catch of the day from the fishermen.

BOOK IT: Sleeps four. From £845. uniquehomestays.com