

A Self-Catering Staycay

From cottages to campsites, demand is on the increase for self-catering staycation destinations across the UK. Michelle Flinders rounds up four staycation hotspots.



Above and right: A warm welcome awaits at Newhall Mains; time to indulge at Newhall Mains

The day has finally arrived. We can revive staycation plans and book summer getaways. It's a good opportunity to explore more of the UK. Images of beaches, sunshine, walking and barbecues drift through my head as I start searching for the ideal escape. I'm keen to give myself options should the roadmap not go to plan, so self-catering it is – these venues have had longer to settle into the new normal. Here's what I find.

Newhall Mains – Scotland

Following a three-year restoration, the family-run rural estate of Newhall Mains on Scotland's Black Isle peninsula recently launched as a collection of affordable-luxury cottages and sumptuous suites, available for individual stays. The elegant 18th-century former farm buildings boast a private airfield, ideal for giving public transport a miss or for a tailor-made scenic flight over the Highlands, offered in partnership with the local flight school.

It's hard to believe Newhall Mains was formerly derelict. It now offers sumptuous holiday accommodation for a total of 28 people across five individually themed cottages and four double suites, set around a classic quadrangle. Bespoke furniture and furnishings, from natural sheep wool quilts to velvet sofas, are paired with bold patterned wallpaper and an eclectic paint palette. Even the rugs have been spun using the wool from the estate's own flock of Jacob sheep.



Guests staying in the cottages receive a welcome breakfast hamper bursting with local produce. They can, of course, self-cater, or take advantage of the Meals at the Mains scheme, a partnership with a local chef who delivers three-course restaurant-quality meals using the best Scottish ingredients to your door.

There's plenty to do here, too. Discover the powerful Falls of Shin, one of the best places to see salmon leaping upstream. Moray Firth abounds with bottlenose dolphins that can be viewed from a custom-built wildlife watching boat or directly from Chanonry Point, where the tide-race gap is just half a mile wide. Within a 45-minute drive there are some of the best malt whisky distilleries, and golfers will be happy, with several great courses within easy reach, including Dornoch, one of the country's classic links courses.

Find out more at www.newhall-mains.com

The Belfry's Brabazon Lodge – Warwickshire

Brabazon Lodge, located within The Belfry Hotel & Resort, is a golfer's dream. The Lodge is named after the resort's award-winning Brabazon course, which is recognised as world-class and has a rich golfing history. It has previously hosted significant golf events including the Ryder Cup four times – more than any other venue in the world – and 17 European Tour events, producing some of the most dramatic moments in the history of golf.

This luxury home away from home has space for up to eight guests across four bedrooms, all with en suite bathrooms. It's the perfect size for an intimate family or friends get-together. It is located down a private driveway and overlooks the legendary 10th tee of The Brabazon course. Guests can gather and unwind in the charming lounge area, which overlooks the Lodge's private garden, or enjoy the evening in their private outdoor hot tub.

The Belfry Hotel has a range of facilities guests of all ages can access throughout the stay. Families can enjoy a round of Ryder Legends Mini Golf, 12 holes of competitive fun through The Belfry's miniature versions of some of the most iconic holes in Ryder Cup history, or opt for a game of disc golf. Of course, there are activities besides golf, too. There's extensive outdoor space to explore, including an interactive woodland walk, where little ones can go wildlife spotting and discover bug hotels. There's also a Woodland Adventure Zone, with a zip wire, tree house, climber, puzzlewood and more.

www.thebelfry.com

Blackbird – North Devon

Sleek and black on the outside, bright and white on the inside, Blackbird is the latest addition to the Tregulland & Co holiday accommodation portfolio in the South West and offers the perfect post-lockdown retreat for those looking for something that little bit different. This luxury floating suite is located on a freshwater lake in North Devon and offers a slice of the group's signature interiors



Newhall Mains has been beautifully refurbished



Golfers will love The Belfry's Brabazon Lodge



Brabazon Lodge is the perfect size for an intimate gathering



Blackbird is a luxury on-water accommodation option



Blackbird's open-plan living space is perfect for two



The bankside boudoir bathhouse



Dry Creek House is a unique architect-designed home



Dry Creek House features far-reaching views across the golden sand beach at Polzeath

in the form of a luxury repurposed narrowboat. Blackbird started life as a traditional canal boat and has been totally refitted to offer an open-plan living space perfect for two, with an en suite shower room and a rather cool bankside 'boudoir bathhouse' with an elegant roll-top bath.

Located at the far end of a privately owned three-acre lake teeming with fish and other wildlife, the backdrop of mature oak and beech ensures total privacy for couples looking to escape off-grid to this haven of tranquillity. While there are a couple of other boats moored on the large landlocked lake, each boat is positioned to ensure a private outlook, tucked out of view of neighbours. Blackbird is the first of a duo of boats that will be offered at this location by Tregulland & Co.

On land, there are 20 acres of newly planted woodland to explore and lots of wildlife to spot. Take a walk, dangle a line in the water to catch a rainbow trout for supper, or just sit back and relax and listen to the birdsong. During the summer months, wildflowers flourish, attracting clouds of butterflies and dragonflies. It's a five-minute drive into Holsworthy for provisions – perhaps from the weekly farmers' market – and 20 minutes to the coast for clifftop walks and surfing at the stunning National Trust Sandymouth beach, Bude or Widemouth Bay.

Book through www.tregullandandco.co.uk

Dry Creek House – Cornwall

Carved into the hillside in a spectacular location near Polzeath, Dry Creek House is a unique and exclusive, architect-designed home. This stylish sanctuary is just minutes from the beach, which can be accessed via a private path through the valley. The family who built the property live here, but move out to rent it out for the summer months.

The design is striking, combining glass, cedar wood and a sedum-planted roof. The lofty master bedroom extends over the side of the valley, amongst the evergreen trees. Inside, this pared-back retreat is a contemporary fusion of polished concrete, micro-cement and solid maple. The house sleeps eight in four stylish bedrooms.

Tucked away amongst the trees, this dreamy retreat is perched on the Polzeath hillside and features far-reaching views across the golden sand and rising tide. Dry Creek House enjoys a tranquil position, set back from the main road running down into Polzeath. Here, the best of Polzeath is within easy reach, including the beach, coastal paths, shops and restaurants. With large communal areas within the property, it is ideal for celebrations and get-togethers.

Book via www.latitude50.co.uk