

Marianna Hunt





Britain's best boltholes for under £50 a night

Spring breaks that won't break the bank

📅 14 April 2023, 5:00am / 📄 From Spectator Life



Tahuna Bothies on the Aberdeenshire coast sleep up to four in architect-designed cabins with sea views [Lee Fowlies]

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Whether it's train fares, energy bills or the supermarket shop, prices are rising and belts are tightening. But if you're desperate to get away from it all, it's still possible to have a break on a budget – however many people you're taking with you.

From cosy couples' cabins to beach houses big enough for two families, and from Scotland to Sussex, these seven boltholes offer spring getaways with plenty of wow factor – and all cost no more than £50 per person per night.

For couples

Tahuna Bothies, Aberdeenshire

Sleeps: 2-4

Price: From £100 a night (£50 each for two people)



[Lee Fowlies]

These wooden huts on a corner of Scottish coast are a stargazer's dream. By day, the floor-to-ceiling windows flood them with light and views of seals lounging on Newburgh Beach (a five-minute walk away). By night, you catch wisps of the Milky Way and, if you're lucky, the Northern Lights. The local area is a dedicated 'dark skies' site, so there'll be no disruption from street lights.

A romantic option for couples, the bothies have a double bed on a mezzanine level. Each comes equipped with a kitchen, TV and board games. There is a sofa bed in the main lounge area as well, so it's also workable for a family of four. Some welcome dogs.

The bothies are run by friendly twin sisters and sheep farmers Gail and Tanya Davidson and were designed by their architect brother. Crumbling Slains Castle – thought to have inspired Bram Stoker's *Dracula* – and buzzy Aberdeen are within 20 minutes' drive.



[Lee Fowlies]

Scilly Stack, Cornwall

Sleeps: 2

Price: From £82 a night (£41 each for two people)



[James Ram]

Starting life as a cow shed, this stone building has been turned into a petite but chic hideaway. Stylish furnishings and fittings, including a walk-in rain shower, have hidden any trace of its past function – but the farmyard charm remains.

The breakfast bar looks out over the sea – and you can drink in the view as you sip Cornish coffee with milk and dipped shortbread from your welcome hamper. The property is just a few hundred metres from Cape Cornwall – England's only official cape – and a gorgeous spot for coastal hikes. Ten minutes' walk away is Cot Valley, an underrated part of Cornwall hiding mysterious coves and beaches strewn with dinosaur egg-like boulders.



[James Ram]

[Cotswold Farm Park, Gloucestershire](#)

Sleeps: Up to 5 adults plus 1 infant

Price: From £100 per night (£20 each for 5 people)



One to delight the children, Cotswold Farm Park is home to more than 50 rare breeds of British farm animals – from glossy Suffolk Punch ponies to floppy-eared Boer goats and shaggy Highland cattle. Lambing season is a popular time to visit, when you can bottle-feed the new arrivals or see baby chicks hatch. Guests enjoy unlimited free access to the farm park during their stay.

There's a range of accommodation to suit most group sizes. The Songbird Safari Tent is a good family option, sleeping up to five plus a baby. The safari tents have fully working kitchens with electricity, lighting and USB sockets as well as their own private bathrooms. There's also a larger tent that sleeps seven (plus a baby) and comes with a hot tub and log-burner.

If you're happy with a more back-to-basics approach to camping, there are pods which sleep up to four (from £15 per person per night) and have shared washrooms. Don't forget to pack wellies.

[The Matchbox, East Sussex](#)

Sleeps: Up to 6

Price: £285 per night (£47.50 each for 6 people)



[Unique Homestays]

The suntrap deck of this beach house looks directly on to Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. It's just a five-minute walk from pretty (though pebbly) Winchelsea Beach – a safe swimming spot. Sleeping up to six, the house is ideal for one big family or two small ones. Its exposed wood and whitewashed interiors ooze charm, tempting you to stay inside with the log-burner or in the rolltop bath. But go out you must, as the surroundings are equally gorgeous. Rye, with its cobbled streets and Tudor inns, is less than five minutes away by car.

Surf boards tucked under the stairs ensure hours of entertainment as the younger ones (and the adults) attempt to ride the waves. The wraparound terrace is perfect for barbecues (logs and kindling are provided to get you started) – but if you don't fancy cooking, you're not short of lovely spots for lunch or fish and chips locally either.



[Unique Homestays]

[Fritton Lake, Norfolk](#)

Sleeps: Up to 4

Price: From £160 per night, including breakfast (£40 each for 4 people)



[Edvinas Bruzas]

This 1,000-acre woodland with tennis courts, an outdoor heated swimming pool, running trails and adventure play is the ideal playground for adults and kids alike. While the children splash about on paddleboards and in kayaks, parents can watch from Fritton Lake's floating sauna. The high-end holiday camp also offers experiences for the whole family, including Jeep safaris (where you spot water buffalo and giant black pigs) and foraging excursions.

Tear yourself away from the lake and within 20 minutes in one direction you can be sailing on the Norfolk Broads, while in the other you have popular beaches and coastal walks. Fritton's Mr Kittles family room in the attic sleeps four under its slanted beam ceilings. If you want to be more self-contained, you can also rent a four-person coach house for around the same price. The latter comes with a well-equipped kitchen, Nespresso coffee maker and washing machine (for after those muddy walks).



The slanted ceilings in the Mr Kittles family room

For big groups

[Seabank](#), West Sussex

Sleeps: Up to 8

Price: From £80 per night (£10 each for 8 people)



These two bluebell-coloured railway carriages date back to the 19th century, spending many decades trundling along the line from Brighton to London and back. After the first world war they were converted into holiday homes and now form one large property, Seabank, in the Sussex seaside town of Selsey.

The four bedrooms inside the carriages open out inside a shared hallway and there's a light-filled kitchen with a long picture window that looks straight out on to the beach. The original painted doors and brass handles add to the feeling that you're in a Victorian time warp. The minimum stay is two nights. As for the location, you could hardly be closer to the sea. Selsey itself is famous for its crab (try it at the Crab and Lobster gastropub). A visit to Pagham Harbour nature reserve is also worth fitting in.



[The White House, East Sussex](#)

Sleeps: Up to 10

Price: From £432 per night (£43 each for 10 people)



Arguably the nicest beach in Sussex, Camber Sands stretches for five miles of golden sands and grass-flecked dunes. From the veranda of The White House, an elegant bungalow, you feel like it's your own private playground thanks to a garden gate that acts as a secret door to the beach.

The timber interiors have the shabby chic of a French farmhouse, decked out pretty much solely in whites and pale greys. The four bedrooms sleep ten comfortably and there's a homely sitting area with a log burner. In the south-facing garden a hammock hangs between two apple trees. Kids can play table tennis while grown-ups work the charcoal barbecue. Dogs are welcome.

For shops and pubs, Rye is a ten minute drive away. Camber also provides an ideal base from which to set out on wine-tasting excursions at Sussex's vineyards – fast becoming famous for their top-quality bubbly.



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