

Europe ▾

UK ▾

Worldwide ▾

City breaks ▾

Hotels ▾

Cruise ▾

Ski ▾

Advice ▾

Travel > UK

The greatest long weekends in the UK

Short breaks don't have to be short on anything other than annual leave. Here are the very best Britain has to offer

Sarah Baxter

Related Topics

Europe, United Kingdom

19 July 2025 8:00am BST



3

Gift this article free



Head to Pembrokeshire for 186 miles of varied coastline and over 50 beaches Credit: Visit Pembrokeshire

There's nothing like a holiday for releasing energy, filling your creative well or getting some much-needed R&R. But most of us can't be taking two-week jollies every time we feel depleted or stressed.

Fortunately, often all you need to recharge your batteries is to step away for a few days – especially if you use those days well.

Short breaks don't have to be short on anything but the annual leave they use. Even trips of just three or four nights can be packed with adventure, indulgence and reinvigoration.

They're simpler to organise and easier to do spontaneously. They're also a low-risk way of trying new things. And they tend to be cheaper – for instance, you might not be able to afford a castle, but could splash out on being a lord of the manor for a few days.

Here are some brilliant British long weekends that will make you feel like you've had a much bigger break.

Find the perfect break for you:

- [Best for adventure](#)
- [Best multi-stop breaks](#)
- [Best for luxury](#)
- [Best spa breaks](#)
- [Best for nature](#)

Mini adventures

Cycle around the Isle of Wight



It's possible to cycle around the entirety of the Isle of Wight over the course of a weekend Credit: Visit Isle of Wight

The [Isle of Wight](#) might be England's largest island, but it's small enough to pedal right round in a long weekend. The route is gently undulating rather than terribly taxing, often following quiet, rural inland lanes and trails.

Daily distances are relatively short too, allowing plenty of time for exploring sights such as yachtie Cowes, refreshing Freshwater Bay and Queen Victoria's Osborne House.

How to do it

[Walkers Britain](#) (0800 008 7741) offers a four-night self-guided Isle of Wight Cycle from £590pp including accommodation and bike rental; excludes ferry.

Pick up paddling in the Highlands



Learn essential sea kayaking skills as you explore Scotland's breathtaking coastal scenery Credit: Wilderness Scotland

Sheltered and spectacular, the waters of Upper Loch Torridon are the ideal place for beginners to try out sea paddling. Join a small group of like-minded newbies, enjoy expert tuition in the shadow of the Torridon Mountains, pull up for lunch on sandy bays, kayak over to seal-slobbered-out islands, refuel on pub dinners and enjoy the camaraderie of a cosy bunkhouse each night.

How to do it

[Wilderness Scotland](#) (01479 420020) offers a five-day guided Introduction to Sea Kayaking trip from £1,165pp including accommodation and most meals; set departures May-August.

Take a wee walk in Northern Ireland



Head to the magnificent cliffs of the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland for a four-day self-guided walk Credit: Rob Durston

Amble along Northern Ireland's most iconic stretch of coast on a highlights-packed short walking break. The route runs from Portstewart to Ballintoy; between these two pretty towns lie Royal Portrush golf course (host of the 2025 Open), Bushmills Whiskey Distillery, ruined Dunluce Castle, views to Rathlin Island, cosy inns and the Giant's Causeway – the trail offers views of these Unesco-listed rocks without the crowds.

How to do it

[Away A Wee Walk](#) (078 3770 3643) offers a four-day self-guided Causeway Coast trip from £385pp including B&B accommodation, excluding flights.

Canter with the kids in the New Forest

The whole brood can live out their cowboy/cowgirl fantasies on a weekend in the [New Forest](#). Here you'll find some of England's finest riding country and a family-friendly stables with something for everyone. Choose between beginner lessons, children's pony fun days and varied hacks across the heathlands that cross streams and encounter wild ponies. Accommodation is at a holiday resort within walking distance, complete with pools, spa, zip-wires and resident alpacas.

How to do it

How to do it

[Equestrian Escapes](#) (01829 781123) offers a three-night New Forest Family Riding Adventure from £525pp including self-catering accommodation.

[Our guide to the New Forest →](#)

[Return to index](#)

Big little journeys

Ride with the Romans across Cumbria & Northumberland



A ride along Hadrian's Cycleway is moderately difficult, but there is an option to hire an e-bike Credit: Hadrian's Cycleway

Squeeze 2,000 years of history, 100 miles and a coast-to-coast crossing into just three days on a ride along Hadrian's Cycleway. The route follows country lanes, quiet roads and some traffic-free paths, passing ancient sites (Birdoswald Fort, Walltown Quarry, [Vindolanda](#)) and offering views across the rugged North Pennines. It's a moderate-graded route – mostly manageable, with a few cheeky hills; hire an e-bike for an extra boost.

How to do it

[Saddle Skedaddle](#) (0191 265 1110) offers a four-day self-guided Hadrian's Cycleway trip from £585pp including B&B accommodation; excludes bike hire.

[Our guide to Northumberland →](#)

Take a quick cruise around the Hebrides

Sticking to the sheltered waters around Loch Linnhe and the Sound of Mull, Majestic Line's mini-voyages offer a condensed hit of Scottish splendour – a great way to see if you like cruising or not. Majestic's traditional boats sleep up to 12, serve gourmet meals, anchor at scenic spots and float by ruined castles, colourful ports and playful dolphins.

How to do it

[The Majestic Line](#) (01369 707951) offers three-night cruises from £1,300pp including full-board; set departures March-October. Solos: two double cabins are always reserved for singles, with no supplement to pay.

Plot a fishy escape in Gwynedd



Llety Arall in Caernarfon has eight newly refurbished bedrooms; rest here as you plot a route along one of three Gwynedd Seafood Trails Credit: Llety Aral

Bangor University's School of Ocean Sciences has teamed up with the region's seafood purveyors to create the Gwynedd Seafood Trails, a trio of scenic routes, drivable over a few days, that show where to eat the local catch. For instance, combine Caernarfon's sites with lunch at Llofft and dinner at harbourside Morfarch. Take a walk from Borth-y-Gest before tucking into Bae Borth Deli Bar's seafood chowder. And graze around the lovely Llŷn Peninsula.

How to do it

[Caernarfon's Llety Arall](#) (07721 497283) has doubles from £115pn room-only. See seafoodtrail.cymru.

Catch some great little trains in Norfolk



Sandringham House at the Sandringham Estate is the much-loved country retreat of King Charles III and Queen Camilla Credit: Alamy

Embark on a small-scale, great-value county-roaming rail odyssey, exploring Norfolk via its most charming trains. Ride the steam-hauled Mid-Norfolk and Bure Valley Railways, board the rural Bittern Line from Norwich to Sheringham and pootle along the coast aboard the heritage Poppy Line. There's also time for a Mississippi Paddle Boat cruise on the reed-fringed Broads and a visit to Sandringham, the opulent country retreat of the royals.

How to do it

[Great Rail Journeys](#) (01904 521936) offers a five-day guided Norwich & Norfolk trip from £549pn including half-board accommodation; set

A touch of class

Seek off-season style in Cornwall



Head to 8-bedroom holiday let Chyanna for chic interiors and beach views Credit: Latitude 50

The height of [Cornish](#) cool, Polzeath was once dubbed ‘Britain’s Saint-Tropez’. There are certainly some glitzy places to stay, including Chyanna. Right opposite the enormous sandy beach, it’s almost entirely fronted by windows and comes complete with cocktail bar, sky hammock and outdoor kitchen on the balcony. For glamour at a lower-cost, come off-season: from September to April it can be booked for short breaks, and costs a quarter of high-summer prices.

How to do it

[Latitude 50](#) (01208 869090) offers three nights at Chyanna (sleeping 8) from £1,600.

[Our guide to Cornwall →](#)

Meet literary royalty in Aberdeenshire

For the ultimate quick shot of inspiration, head to Braemar. Robert Louis Stevenson penned some of Treasure Island in the Cairngorms village, while Braemar’s [Fife Arms](#) has suitably creativity-fuelling rooms – try the boho-opulent Artist’s Studio. Or come for the Braemar Literary Festival (September 26-28, 2025; braemarliteraryfestival.co.uk), when big-hitters like David Nicholls will be on stage; hotel guests can get priority seats.

How to do it

[The Fife Arms](#) (01339 720200) offers three nights in the Artist’s Studio from £2,283 B&B. A festival Literary Package costs from £2,760 for two, including talks.

Hang with the cool crowd (for less) in Oxfordshire



Head to Oxfordshire for a charming stay at Cotswolds Hideaways

A [Cotswolds](#) weekend, staying at one's own Chipping Norton retreat? Yes please. Beechnut is a romantic stone cottage with a Mediterranean-chic vibe on Heath Farm.

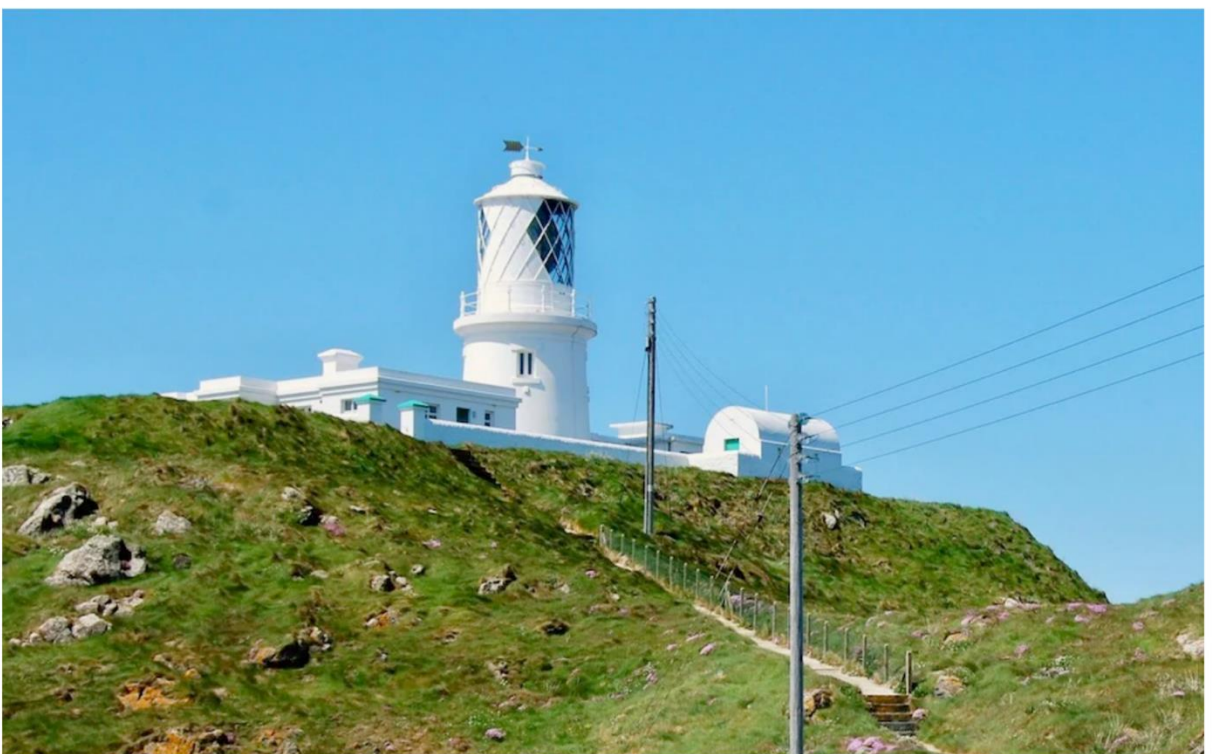
It has a serene 70-acre estate with meadows and woodland to waft through, a games lawn on which to play croquet and a springwater lake for boating, fishing and wild swimming. You have to share it with five other cottages, but that means it doesn't cost Chipping Norton set prices.

How to do it

[Cotswolds Hideaways](#) (01451 887766) offers three nights at Beechnut (sleeping 2) from £559.

[Our guide to the Cotswolds →](#)

Combine class and culture in Pembrokeshire



The Strumble Head Lighthouse in Pembrokeshire

Manor Town House, a Georgian pile in the heart of Fishguard, makes for a stylish [Pembrokeshire](#) escape year-round. But it's also hooked up with VIP Wales to offer a couple of special small-group trips. These combine expert-guided tours of St David's and Strumblehead, walks on Carnigli Mountain and dips (for the brave) at secret coves with treats such as four-course breakfasts and Welsh high teas.

How to do it

[Manor Town House](#) (01348 873260) offers B&B from £150 per night, three-night VIP packages from £660 pp including B&B accommodation and tours; set departures October.

[Our guide to Pembrokeshire →](#)

Historic stays

Live it up, Cheshire

Built in 1868, Liongate Lodge once housed the gardener of Bolesworth Castle. In summer 2025, it opened as a luxurious self-catering retreat – complete with decadent furnishings, hidden bar, hot-tub patio and lake and castle views – allowing couples privileged access to the grand Cheshire estate for the first time. It's also virtually on the 34-mile Sandstone Trail, one of the country's finest short long-distance trails, making it perfect for a two- or three-day adventure.

How to do it

[Bolesworth Estate](#) (01829 782210) offers three-night stays at Liongate Lodge (sleeps 2) from £1,250.

Indulge in Austen, Bath



Celebrate the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth with a visit to an exhibition in Bath Credit: Derryn Vbranch

How better to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Jane Austen in 2025 than with a long weekend in beautiful [Bath](#), the city that still looks like one of her novels. Of course, she didn't actually like it much – a theme explored at [the No 1 Royal Crescent Museum's](#) *The Most Tiresome Place in the World* exhibition, which looks at Austen's time in the city (until November 2, 2025). Stay just a few doors down at the elegant [Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa](#).

How to do it

[The Royal Crescent Hotel](#) (01225 823333) offers four nights B&B from £1,735, including one afternoon tea and unlimited use of the spa.

[Our guide to Bath →](#)

[Return to index](#)

Wellness weekends

Take a private plunge in Warwickshire

The benefits of dipping in cold water have long been known – certainly since 1748, when the Bath House was built. This remarkable Georgian folly, tucked in the countryside near Stratford-upon-Avon, has just two octagonal rooms: a grand living space, festooned with stucco icicles and shells, and a basement plunge pool, with gates that fling open to the fields beyond. Spend all weekend indulging in private wellness, 18th-century style.

How to do it

[The Landmark Trust](#) (01628 825925) offers the Bath House (sleeps 2) for three nights from £642.

Retreat on the cheap in Devon



A package at Ocean Backpackers in Ilfracombe includes Pilates, yoga, surfing and beach meditation. Credit: Ocean Backpackers

A weekend of coastal wellness doesn't have to cost a sickening amount. Look to hostels, which don't bump their prices in summer. These work brilliantly for groups and are usually in prime locations for accessing the great outdoors. Ilfracombe's Ocean Backpackers in [Devon](#) has smart shared and private rooms and also offers a bargain Ocean Mix & Match break that includes Pilates, yoga, surfing and beach meditation.

How to do it

[Independent Hostels](#) (01629 580427) offers dorm beds at Ocean Backpackers from £25pp per night; a two-night Ocean Mix & Match costs £120pp including accommodation and four activities.

Do it yourself in the Brecon Beacons

Wern-y-Cwm Farm, on the edge of [Bannau Brycheiniog](#) (Brecon Beacons), has mountain views and the perfect set-up for creating bespoke retreats. There's a handful of cottages (and, from September, a vintage camper for two) plus wildflower meadows, art installations, pick-your-own plots and a natural swimming pool. Join scheduled retreats – art, yoga, executive resets – or put together your own: enlist the in-house masseur, book the sauna, or add on classes in foraging, weaving and more.

How to do it

[Wonderful Escapes at Wern-y-Cwm Farm](#) (07917 866993) offers three nights in the Cider House (sleeps 5) from £600.

[Our guide to the Brecon Beacons →](#)

Soothe your soul on a pilgrimage from Scotland to Northumberland



Follow St Cuthbert's Way from Melrose Abbey to Lindisfarne on a self-guided tour with Macs Adventure. Credit: Macs Adventure

A trip focusing on the best bits of [St Cuthbert's Way](#) means even the time poor can make a satisfying spiritual journey. Follow parts of the saint's route from Melrose Abbey to Lindisfarne, crossing from the Scottish Borders into [Northumberland](#), ending with a barefoot walk (if you like) across to Holy Island where you'll spend two nights soaking up its special atmosphere.

How to do it

[Macs Adventure](#) (0141 530 5452) offers a five-day self-guided Highlights of St Cuthbert's Way trip from £570pp including B&B accommodation.

RECOMMENDED

Britain's greatest walks

[Read more](#) →

[Return to index](#)

Get back to nature

Delve into the Yorkshire Dales



Head to How Stean Gorge in Upper Nidderdale for outdoor activities like gorge walking, caving, and abseiling in Yorkshire. Credit: Tom Arber

Get intimate with the ravines, cliffs and caves of the [Yorkshire](#) Dales on an action-packed stay at How Stean Gorge. Glamp in the cabins (which have wood burners and hot tubs) then throw yourself into nature: activities include ghyll scrambling, abseiling, canoeing, spelunking (exploring caves) and via ferrata-ing (climbing a route of fixed anchors, ladders and cables). The indecisive could book the 'Big 5', which crams five escapades into one day. Fabulous for families.

How to do it

[How Stean Gorge](#) (01423 755666) offers three nights in a lodge (sleeps 4-10) from £525; camping from £12.50/9pp per night adult/child. Big 5 from £149pp.

[Our guide to Yorkshire →](#)

Hide away in Northamptonshire



Book a stay at a remote cabin in Northamptonshire for outdoor cooking, hammock relaxation and stargazing Credit: Northamptonshire

Lark Rise sits between a handful of cities but feels like the perfect rural idyll. The cabin is surrounded by pasture and woodland (the owners have planted 50,000 trees

over the past 30 years) and is a place to do a weekend of nothing in nature: swing in the hammock, soak in the outdoor bath, stare through the stargazing window, book the sauna or take a dip in the swimming lake. An on-site expert leads birding sessions too.

How to do it

[Canopy & Stars](#) (0117 204 7830) offers three nights at Lark Rise (sleeps 2) from £545

[Return to index](#)

Discover the best of the UK

The Telegraph's UK travel guide contains expert tips on what to do, where to eat and the best places to stay in destinations including [London](#), [Cornwall](#), [Scotland](#), the [Lake District](#) and the [Cotswolds](#).

Looking for inspiration for your next trip? Discover [the underrated UK cities you must visit in 2025](#), or read our expert's verdict on [England's 48 counties, each ranked and rated](#).

If you're in need of a place to stay, our [Hotel Finder](#) has more than 10,000 trusted reviews, so you have all the information you need to book the ultimate escape.

What did you think of this article?