



30 home holidays for 2021

Family Breaks

Seaside Reunion

■ If an extended family reunion is on the cards this summer, why not splurge on a magnificent escape to the seaside at the Cliff Beach House? The Cliff Group don't do things by halves, and the Beach House is no exception with six bedrooms overlooking the Atlantic, two living rooms, and impeccable design throughout. A stay here is all about the luxury, whether you opt for having one of the multi-award-winning chefs cook your dinner, a seafood cooking masterclass, or an evening of live traditional music. It's the holiday we all need! Prices start at €2,500 per night; sleeps 12. ■ cliffbeachhouse.ie

Pod Escape

Have the kids been asking to go camping? Does your back start to twitch at the thought of a blow-up mattress? Well, you can enjoy all the perks of camping without the rough night's sleep at five different Further Space pod locations throughout Northern Ireland. The pods' design weaves in their stunning locations, be it overlooking Lough Erne, out to sea at Glenarm Castle, or by the infamous Dark Hedges.

Each pod includes a BBQ and campfire pack so s'mores and sloppy joes don't get forgotten about. In happy news, Further Space will be expanding their locations across the country this summer with five new spots including Mayo, Kerry and Leitrim. Pods start at £130, sleeps up to four. ■ <https://further.space>

Lighthouse Family

Seeing as a trip overseas is off the cards for the foreseeable, we're travelling coast to coast to find joy on our little island. Even if that means going very close to

the edge. There are myriad destinations to hunker down at along coast, my favourite being spending the night at one of the eight 'great' lighthouses throughout the country from Fanad Lighthouse in Donegal, Galley Head in Cork, or Clare Island out west. It's guaranteed to be a holiday that the whole family will remember, but if staying the night isn't for you, why not visit one? Now that would be a road trip to remember. ■ greatlighthouses.com

River Cruising

Sick of being stuck on land? Take to the water on one of Emerald Star's cruise boats for a week of floating along the River Shannon and Erne. With multiple

mooring points along the way, this is a trip that can be as adventure-packed or as chilled out as you like. Your journey starts and ends in Carrick-on-Shannon; spend your days exploring towns along the waterways such as Enniskillen, heading north, or Killaloe, venturing south. Catch your dinner with some fishing, or just sit back and relax while someone else does the steering. The boats sleep up to eight people, they're fully equipped with kitchen and shower facilities, and prices start at €779 for seven nights. ■ emeraldstar.ie

Viking Adventure

It seems like fun and quirky staycations are what are going to get us through the year, and stepping back in time to the Viking era in Co Wexford is setting that bar high. The Viking House on the River Slaney is a replica of the settlements Vikings lived in thousands of years ago. Set in the grounds of the Irish National Heritage Park, guests will stay in a hut which has wattle walls, a thatched roof, and a central hearth, as well as get the

opportunity to dress up in authentic costumes while

cooking dinner over an open fire — a memorable experience for the kids to bring back to their first day of school. €300 per night. ■ irishheritage.ie

Solo Travels

Culinary Tipp

Having spent the last year "buying local" and discovering many new amazing producers that this country has to offer, it only makes sense to visit the place and meet the people behind these mouthwatering deliveries that arrived at our door almost weekly — maybe daily. There so many food tours happening this summer, my stomach can't even keep up — but a highlight is Tipperary Food Tours which will be running a range of tours throughout the summer months, including visits to Cashel Blue Cheese, Magners Farm, Galtee Honey Farm, and Brookfield Farm — a feast for every food lover. For more information and dates, visit tipperaryfoodproducers.ie.

Single in Dingle

I'm a big fan of solo trips, but if the thought of going away on your own is slightly overwhelming, I'd highly recommend making Dingle your first stop. You won't have your car long parked before you're befriending lovely local people and feeling like part of the furniture. While normally a seasonal spot for visitors, the beginning of the year saw the announcement of plans to grow and sustain tourism in the peninsula year-round, meaning it's always a good time visit Dingle. To treat yourself, enjoy a stay at stunning Castlwood House which, in

addition to being a popular escape for couples, also offer bespoke solo traveller packages: picnic hamper boat-trips to the Blasket Islands among the heavenly highlights.

■ castlewooddinge.com
■ dingle-peninsula.ie

Remote Walking

If lockdown has reignited a sudden grá for walking, then the Irish countryside is the perfect place to explore on foot.

There are endless amounts of walking routes from the Dublin Mountains

Way to Croagh Patrick, but if gorgeous views and solitude are what you're after, West Cork's Sheep's Head Way is the perfect choice. Spanning over 200km, you can opt to take on the trail over six days, or you can pick from over 25 looped walks that range from one to seven hours in length with maps and general information available on the website.

Spots like Dromloc House offer the perfect place to rest tired limbs for the night. Single rooms from €60.

■ thesheepsheway.ie

Old Favourite

Sometimes it's good to go back to old favourites, and cycling the Ring of Kerry is

one of those, although tired legs may not always agree. It could be argued that the 171km cycle is one of the most scenic routes in Ireland, starting in Killarney, heading out towards the coast over mountains and through the stunning countryside and towns, before looping back towards Killarney again.

The annual charity cycle has been postponed until 2022, but you can do the cycle at any time be it solo or with a friend for some moral support. Set up camp at Parknasilla, with rooms starting at €182.

■ parknasillaresort.com

Dog Friendly

The nation's gone madra mad! Ireland became an increasingly dog-friendly destination in 2020, with pet-in-tow Irish consumers driving a big shift in more dog-friendly hospitality.

Loyal dog-friendly accommodations like Dunmore House in Clonakilty and Castlemartyr Resort in East Cork always have the water bowl at the ready, the Ocean Sands Hotel in Sligo

now offer five pet-friendly hotel rooms (in addition to all of their self-catering apartments), while The Twelve in Galway have just expanded their pooch pads to meet demand; they now have three dog-friendly suites available per night, with no extra charge for your pet.

■ thetwelvehotel.ie

Wellness Getaways

Wicklow Wilderness

The Elbow Room Escape have been offering mindful moments and relaxation for many years — oh how we've missed the serenity of their beautiful space and look forward to normal service resuming.

In the past, The Elbow Room Escape has hosted weekends for mindfulness, yoga, expectant mums, and many more, and we've no doubt there will be plenty of the same and more over the coming months, but what we love at the moment is the Essential Worker Mental Health Break which gives essential workers 50% off room bookings for two nights or more.

With access to the organic menu at Escape's kitchen restaurant and gorgeous surrounding woodlands, it's the perfect way to switch off. ■ the-elbowroomescape.com

Sleep Education

The last few months have seen our dreams getting wilder. You can restore exhausted minds with the two-day Yoga & Sleep Retreat on the idyllic grounds of Lisnavagh in Carlow.

Running on selected dates between May and December, the retreat aims to encourage guests to slow down, unwind, and switch off from the outside world with a range of Hatha yoga workshops, meditation, good food, and cosy afternoons curled up by the fire.

Relaxation at the forefront of this retreat and after this madness, I really can't think of anything that we need more right now. Prices start from €350.

■ lisnavagh.com

Wexford R & R

■ If you're really looking to rejuvenate your body and mind, head for the sunny South East where Creacon Wellness Retreat's week-

long escape is designed to help alleviate stress and worry. The eight-night stay includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner with daily yoga or meditation classes, as well as the option to book in

for treatments in the spa or switch off in the media-free suites. You'll leave feeling replenished and restored, ready to take on the world again. Prices start at €2,000. ■ creaconwellnessretreat.com

Eco Fabulous

Having long established itself as a place of calmness and serenity, Ardnahoo's Eco Cabins in lovely Leitrim offer a quintessential wellness escape. Whether you just want to cosy up with a good book or channel some zen with a yoga class in the on-site studio, you'll find everything you need for total relaxation here. Plan a bespoke trip to remember with your friends, which includes two nights' stay in the self-catering eco cabins, Anusara yoga class, and a Yoga Bubble Home Retreat pack. Bespoke retreats start at €1,080 for six people sharing. ■ ardnahoo.com

Breath of Fresh Air

I think it's safe to say we are all a little bit more appreciative of the great outdoors these days — how they have helped us keep sane over the last number of months. When restrictions ease, why not take on some

new walking challenges? The Mourne Mountains are Northern Ireland's highest mountain range, with numerous hikes to choose from, not least the panoramic Slieve Binnian trail. There is a bunch of eco-friendly accommodation to choose from, like Lackan Cottage Farm, so pack your boots and take to the hills for a few days. Rates from €215 for a minimum two-night stay. ■ lackancottage.co.uk
■ walkni.com

Great Outdoors & Adventure

Cavan Cabins

Cabin culture is hot this year! After Center Parcs put Longford on the tourism radar in 2020, now Cabu by the Lakes is aiming to spotlight one of Ireland's most underrated counties. Cavan,

And their getaway game is strong here in the lakeland region: Cabu's look is Pinterest-perfect where plush, rustic interiors and gorgeous facades rock more wilderness woo-factor than

a Vermont lake lodge. But if the accommodation is impressive, so too is Cabu's soulful setting with the banks of Lough Oughter offering the perfect aesthetic for a dream kayaking escape. Perhaps it's time to lodge some love with Ireland's Hidden Heartlands? Rates teeter around €1,000 per week for four nights. ■ cabu.ie

Trailer Camping

Looking for a camping trip with a difference? Camper vans were in hot demand last year and now the market is offering road-trippers an alternative option: teardrop adventure trailers! Based out of Fe-thard, Co Tipperary, Buckled Wheel are a family-run outfit offering a rugged range of Danish-designed camper trailers for hire (and sale). They're slick, hardy, and kitted with everything including the kitchen sink and, given their sustainability-minded ethos, Buckled Wheel plant a tree for every trailer rented. The only hitch is you'll need a hitch — but the guys also offer

roof-mounted tents for hire. Great value here from €60 per night, €25 for tents. ■ buckledwheel.ie

Wild Ireland

From watching starlings in our gardens to spotting basking sharks along our shoreline, we've never had a greater appreciation for our native flora and fauna. So when touring the county this summer, why not add in a wildlife tour to your itinerary? Consider going in search of fin whales or dolphins with reputable outfitters like Whale Watch West Cork (whalewatchwestcork.com), or venture north to Rathlin Island to view its seal colony and RSPB Seabird Centre (rathlincommunity.org). Puffin-watching on the Saltee Islands is also one of the most incredible nature experiences you can encounter — anywhere. The beautiful, teary-eyed birds are found in abundance from April to July on the islands, with boat trips available from Kilmore Quay.

■ visitwexford.ie

Bog Standards

Bogs are back. Ireland's native habitats are finally being appreciated as a biodiversity tour-de-force, with rewilding projects and tourism initiatives sprouting across the country as a result. Co Laois offers a great base to get your nature fix; the Killamuck Bog Loop in Abbeyleix is a partly boardwalked 8km trail, soaking in all the natural highlights our bogs have to offer. Other outdoor attractions include the seriously underrated Slieve Bloom Mountains where you can hike the blanket bogs along the Ridge of Capard or gear up for some mountain biking with Mid-Ireland Adventure. After your adventure, stay overnight in one of the county's excellent heritage homes, like the beautiful, family-run Roundwood House in Mountrath (€85pps).

■ visitlaois.com

Royal Canal Greenway

Greenways have been a massive tourism success story across the island in recent years, and now we are gearing up for the launch of its newest — and longest. Launching this summer, the Royal Canal Greenway will run along the scenic towpaths of the historic waterway, stretching 130km from the heart of Dublin to Richmond Harbour in Co Longford. There will be myriad options for bike (and kayak) hire, with options to cycle and stay along the way or train back to your base destination. Keep tracks on the Great Southern Greenway, which set to expand in Limerick this year too.

Urban Outfitters

Corkcation

They've been saying it Leaside since about 915 AD, but Cork really is the new Dublin. From its emerging ferry port redevelopments to its rising skyline, even now, the city is on the ascendancy. Not least leading the hospitality charge is Cork's new Dean Hotel, located in the gleaming Horgan's Quay district. The ridiculously on-point design hotel offers modern pod

rooms, bursting with quirky extras, while Sophie's rooftop restaurant is a Cork dining hot-spot in the mak-

ing. During your stay, discover Cork's al-fresco highlights, from terrace dining at The Montenotte or River Lee hotels to outdoor gems like the gardens at Nano Nagle Place or watching a game at Cork's glorious cricket club.

■ thedeane.ie; from €180

Capital Interest

As many of us head for the wilds this summer, it may be a great time to seek a deal at one of your wishlist Dublin hotels. June rates for the wonderfully welcoming Hyatt Centric in the Liberties currently sit at €115, while one of the city's freshest hotels, The Mayson, has rooms (and suites with those copper tubs) from €175 (and €355) per night. Along with being able to enjoy the city's galleries and museums, consider day trips to Howth and picnics in the Iveagh Gardens or Phoenix Park to add a little more glas to your trip.

■ visitdublin.com

Gourmet Gorey

Okay, Gorey's anglicised place name may not be the most appetite-whetting, but the Wexford town is emerging as one of the region's finest gourmet getaways. For a base, Marfield House is a gorgeous Blue Book property and home to the mouthwatering The Duck Restaurant. Last autumn, the property launched its new pond suites with gorgeous interiors flocked with striking nature scenes. Try stealing yourself away for a spot at Table Forty One; Gorey's highly-acclaimed new restaurant on the block, which has just received a nod in 2021 Michelin Guide. ■ marfieldhouse.com; from €240pps

Kenmare Charm

Looking for a dream town getaway? Then consider Kenmare, Co Kerry very much at your service. Having acquired the town's historic Lansdowne Arms last year, John and Francis Brennan are currently putting their Midas touch to the hotel's grand refurbish-

ment, with the property slated for its much-awaited early-summer opening. The brothers aim to bring the heyday era of Ireland's market town hotels back — with a modern, yet unpretentious twist. Lansdowne Kenmare offers 28 charming bed-

rooms with food hubs, including The Lansdowne Café and the LK Wine Bar. Rates from €230 per night.

Open-air Belfast

In these lockdown times, the idea of a long summer night in Belfast sounds positively Nordic. The city has really been embracing the in-out flow experience for visitors in recent years, making it an attractive destination for an urban break this summer. Grab a Belfast Bike and take in sights from Belfast Castle to the Botanic Gardens or park up and stroll the ever-happening Maritime Mile. Trending Food options include Boneyard, the city centre's largest outdoor bar, while in the Titanic district, Cargo is a massive outdoor dining venue, impressively docked under the shadows of the

Harland of Wolff cranes. To stay over, look at one of the city's newest offerings, Bullitt Hotel (from €99).

■ visitbelfast.com

Couples

Aran Islands

Island escapes proved a massive hit with Irish travellers in 2020, and they can expect a rising tide of tourism this summer too. Not least the Aran Islands, thanks to the launch of the brand new Saoirse na Farraige vessel by Aran Island Ferries (aranislandferries.com). Ireland's largest passenger ferry will now be able to carry 400 passengers from Galway to all three islands, offering a further tourism boost for the archipelago. Once on Inis Mór, explore the island with Aran Off-Road Experience before hunkering down for the night in a romantic, beehive-inspired pod at Aran Islands Camping & Glamping. Note that if you're travelling from the Clare side, you can also cross with Doolin2Aran Ferries.

■ doolin2aranferries.com

Galtee Escape

While many of us spent lockdown perfecting our sourdoughs skills, couple Lisa & James Ferguson have been busy refurbishing a Georgian farmhouse in one of Munster's most scenic settings. Galtee Escape, located just off the M8, is a gorgeous rustic retreat set on the foothills of Ireland's

highest inland mountain range. Guests have the option to stay in the stunning self-catering gate lodge with plans to offer main rooms in the house on a B&B basis this year too. An ideal base for outdoor-loving couples looking for a side of rural romance.

■ galteescape.ie

Sleeperoo under the stars!

Looking for a trip to the Gaeltacht with a difference? Well, consider a date night with Sleeperoo; a German-designed sleeping cube which is one of the more original arrivals to Ireland's glamping scene this season. The weather-proof bosca (it's not a tent) is made from

sustainable materials and is unique for its clear roof which allows guests to stargaze under clear skies while in bed. Sleeperoo's current host in Ireland is a family farm on the Lettermore-Lettermullen peninsula in Connemara, where bathroom and shower facilities are provided for guests. More hosts, it is hoped, will be appearing across the country soon. €120 per night. ■ sleeperoo.ie

Organic Leitrim

From supporting local farmers and producers to going all GIY in the back garden or balcony during lockdown, we've never been more mindful when it comes to our food. So if you and your significant other are united by a love of food, why not take an organic break to, yes, Leitrim? The county is one of the leaders in the Irish slow-food movement with everything from the Organic Centre near Rosinver to Ireland's first organic drive-thru, opening at a former KFC outlet in Carrick-on-Shannon this summer. For self-catering

options, try Tawnylust Lodge, an eco-friendly countryside retreat near Manorhamilton (from €60 per night; tawnylust-lodge.com) or the Old Rectory Country House in Ballinamore (from €55pps; theoldrectoryireland.co).

Secluded Sanctuary

Nestled in stunning Connemara, Fernwood Farm is as picturesque as its mountainous surroundings. A short drive from Clifden town, this refurbished gar-

age is expertly designed with high-end interiors and set on a 140-acre private farm with chickens wandering freely and a polytunnel of beautiful bounty on your doorstep. The property makes an ideal base for couples who love the great outdoors, with an array of activities in the area including mountain biking, fishing, surfing and many more. This summer will see the arrival of a geodesic dome on site, with plans for more modern woodland cabins next year. €450 for a three-night minimum.
■ fernwood.eco.



Magners Farm is one stop on Tipperary Food Tours.

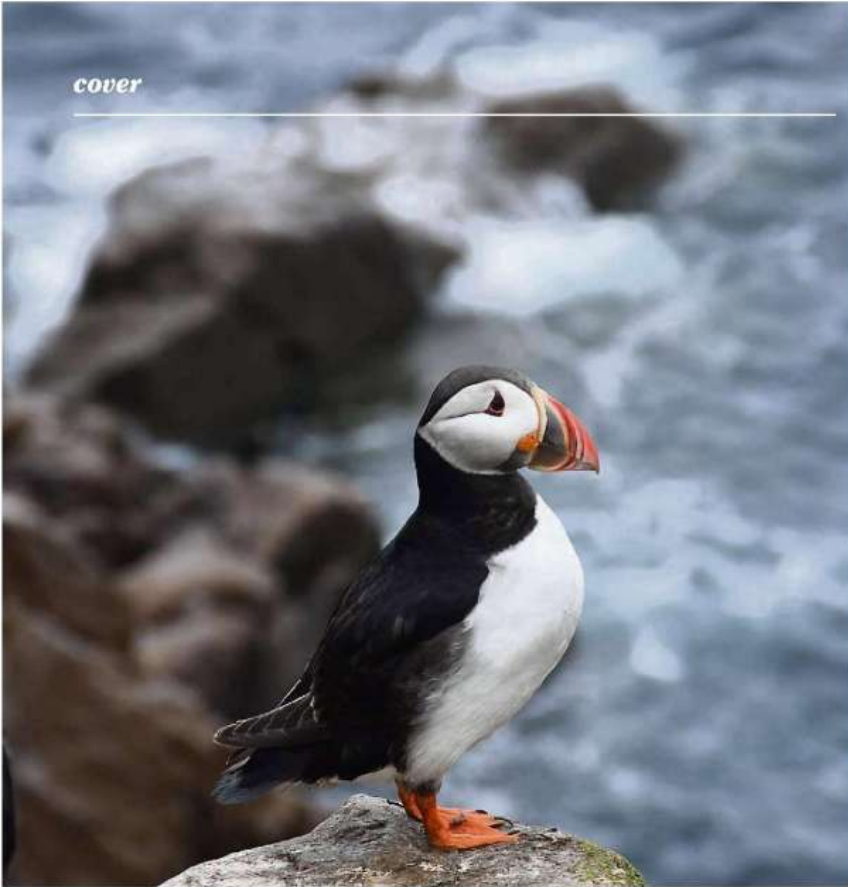


Dog-friendly Dunmore House in Clonakilty is a great spot to bring your pooch.



Castlewood House in Dingle.

cover



Puffin-watching on the Saltee Islands (above) is also one of the most incredible nature experiences you can encounter. (Below) A Pinterest-perfect lodge at Cabu by the Lakes, with its plush, rustic interiors and gorgeous facades.





Buckled Wheel offer a rugged range of Danish-designed camper trailers for hire.



Ballyhorman beach in Downpatrick boasts a long stretch of sand, as well as kayaking.





cover

Venture north to Rathlin Island to views its seal colony.



The main living room at Cliff Beach House (left) and Clare Island lighthouse (right) — a holiday the family will remember.



The Dean, Cork, offers modern pod rooms, bursting with quirky extras.



Further Space pods look out to sea at Glenarm Castle.