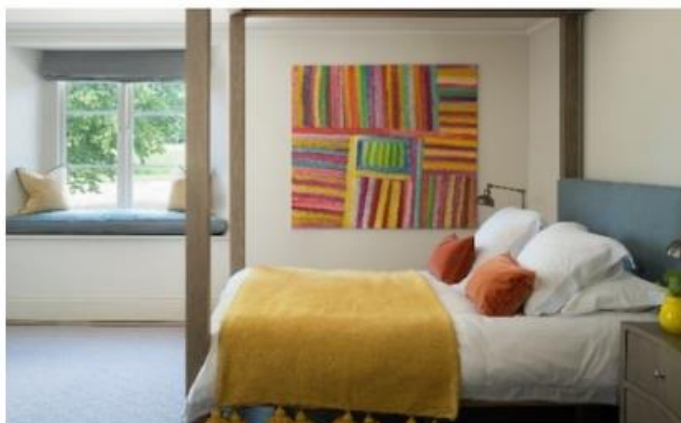


# Last-minute UK holiday cottages with availability for half term

From a converted school bus to fancy beach houses, there is still a clutch of fabulous holiday rentals available for late October

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Still deciding on where to go for half term? We round-up the best rentals to book now



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If you're a last-minute planner or someone who has held off booking a half-term holiday on the assumption that everything had been snapped up long ago, you're not alone. Thankfully, there are still a clutch of fabulous holiday rentals available for the last week in October across the country.

And while the colder weather setting might take the shine off some UK hotspots, it also means they're likely to be less overrun. Windswept beaches, woodland walks and cosy fires are some of the delights that await; from south coast beach houses to a cottage on the outskirts of York (the ideal setting for a Halloween ghost tour), we round-up the best rentals to book for half term.

## Figtree House, Kirby Lonsdale, Cumbria

Set on the borders of the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales, this 17th-century farmhouse is surrounded by rolling fields and has no near neighbours. That said you're only a short stroll from a great gastropub and it's a quick drive to the old market town of Kirkby Lonsdale, with its cobbled streets and cute boutiques. Owned by an interior designer, the house is full of quality pieces (think mid-century chairs and a roll-top bath) and stylistic flourishes such as a quirky geometric light fitting in the spacious kitchen.

**The details:** Sleeps 10. Four night stays from £2,250 (discounts available for smaller groups); [uniquehomestays.com](https://uniquehomestays.com)



Owned by an interior designer, the Figree House is full of quality pieces and stylistic flourishes | CREDIT: Mark Watts

## Elmscott, Yarmouth, Isle of Wight

An outdoor pool may not be at the top of your wishlist for an autumn break, but, crucially, the one in the grounds of this west coast family home is heated. Besides, you've got a better chance of a fair day in the Isle of Wight than, say, Scotland. The house itself has a breezy coastal style and is only a few minutes' walk from Yarmouth town centre – home to the longest timber pier open to the public in the UK. This side of the island also has the most dramatic coastline, making for some stirring walks.

**The details:** Sleeps six. A week's stay from £2,243; [classic.co.uk](https://classic.co.uk)



Crucially, the outdoor pool in the grounds of Elmscott is heated | CREDIT: Elmscott

## Rowchester West Lodge, Greenlaw, Scottish Borders

This little lodge is the perfect base for exploring the Scottish Borders, with the river Tweed, popular East Coast beaches and the Lammermuir Hills are all within a 45-minute drive. Still, it might be hard to drag yourself away from the beautifully finished Victorian cottage where Arts and Crafts-inspired furnishings combine with marble worktops for a cosy yet refined look. A top spot to curl up is the window seat, which looks out over the organic garden. The only passing traffic you're likely to encounter are horses from the nearby stables, making the surrounding area a haven for walkers and cyclists.

**The details:** Sleeps four. A week's stay from £1,450; [crabtreeandcrabtree.com](https://crabtreeandcrabtree.com)

## Llyn Peninsula Escape, Trefor, Wales

Families looking for a quirky getaway this half term should make a beeline for this Llyn Peninsula eco-retreat, set between the mountains and the sea and a short walk to a shingle beach. While there is the option to bring your own tent, a safer bet would be to book the woodland cottage or cleverly converted school bus, which both have availability throughout the last week of October. The pair are also equipped with wood burners and hot showers to keep things cosy. There's no kitchen in the cottage, but the on-site café-bar serves hot meals.

**The details:** The bus sleeps two adults and two children, while the cottage has space for two adults and one child. From £160-£200 a night; [kiphideaways.com](http://kiphideaways.com)



The converted school bus is equipped with wood burners and hot showers to keep things cosy | CREDIT: Simon Bray

## Cothelstone, Polzeath, Cornwall

Whisper it, but Cornwall's charms are really found in late autumn, when the weather can still be decent but the towns are no longer teeming with tourists. Cothelstone is a modern coastal property just five minutes' walk from politicians'-favourite Polzeath Beach – the Camerons' and Matt Hancock are among those regularly spotted here. The house makes the most of its sea views with floor-to-ceiling windows and a balcony. The wooden table football will entertain on a rainy day and the open-plan living area is perfect for board games.

**The details:** Sleeps eight. A week's stay from £2,435; [latitude50.co.uk](http://latitude50.co.uk)



Cothelstone is a modern coastal property just five minutes' walk from Polzeath Beach, where politicians like to stretch their legs | CREDIT: Cothelstone

## Middlethorpe Manor Cottages

This year's October half term takes place in the week leading up to Hallowe'en and there's no shortage of spooky activities for families to enjoy in York, from its popular ghost tours to its always-frightening dungeons. Base yourself just outside the centre (an eight-minute taxi-ride from or 40-minute walk from the station) at a cottage in the grounds of classic country house hotel Middlethorpe Hall. There are six recently renovated rentals in total, set in a converted stable block. Be sure to stop by the trendy cafés on Bishopthorpe road on your way into town.

**The details:** Sleeps four. From £1,054 for a four-night stay; [staysyork.com](https://staysyork.com)

## The Polo Farm, Cirencester, the Cotswolds

You'll need deep pockets and a large family – perhaps the grandparents can be roped in – but it's hard to beat this old polo farm turned Cotswolds country house for a luxury half-term break. Despite parts of the property being more than 500 years old, inside there's a rather avant garde style, with colourful artwork alongside mounted stag heads. All bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms and look more like hotel rooms. If the weather plays ball, get outside for croquet, giant chess and badminton.

**The details:** Sleeps 10. A week's stay from £10,000; [uniquehomestays.com](https://uniquehomestays.com)



Bedrooms at The Polo Farm are more like hotel rooms | CREDIT: Aaron Zaccardelli/Unique Homestays

## 'Scottish Sporting Estate', Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides

Decamp to a working sporting estate on the Outer Hebridean Isle of Lewis, for a half-term break to remember. Yes, it might be quite a trek and you'll need to team up with a few families to fill the eight bedrooms, but who doesn't want to feel like a Scottish Laird for a week. Most rooms have striking mountain or sea views, and days can be spent exploring the island's shimmering lochs and white sand beaches. The lodge can be hired on a self-catering basis but why not go the whole hog and book a chef to prepare meals based on local produce.

**The details:** Sleeps 15. From £800 per night; [stayonedegree.com](https://stayonedegree.com)



Most rooms at this Isle of Lewis sporting estate have striking mountain or sea views | CREDIT: Scottish Sporting Estate

## Victoria Cottage & Smuggler's Cottage, Alnmouth, Northumberland

This pair of 17th-century sandstone cottages overlook the beach in the village of Alnmouth, which was formerly an important trading port due to its position where the river Aln meets the sea. Both have cosy sitting rooms with open fires and New-England-style shutters. A double and twin room upstairs make them perfect for a family of four. The village has a number of decent pubs, while further afield you'll find the ruined castles, golden sandy sweeps and fantastically fresh seafood that make Northumberland so popular.

**The details:** Each cottage sleeps four. A week's stay from £1,450; [sawdays.co.uk](https://www.sawdays.co.uk)



This pair of 17th-century sandstone cottages overlook the beach in the village of Alnmouth | CREDIT: Sawdays

## Oldestairs House, Kingsdown, Kent

Just along the coast from Deal, quiet Kingsdown offers a slice of the Kent Coast yet to be overrun with small plates restaurants and cocktail bars – though if you are after that sort of thing then the hip Rose at Deal is only a short taxi away. Oldestairs House is a traditional, spacious family home, just seconds from the beach, which has been stylishly brought up to date with patterned wallpaper and pops of mustard in cushions and throws. Pop into the Zetland Arms just around the corner, which has pub benches right on the shingle beach.

**The details:** Sleeps eight. From £1,990 for five nights; [keeperscottages.co.uk](https://www.keeperscottages.co.uk)

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