

Source URL: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/travel/bestofbritain/article4273515.ece>

THE TIMES

Best of Britain

30 best UK hotels for winter weekends

James Ellis

22 Nov 2014 00:01:00

Scotland

1. The Cross at Kingussie, Highlands

Cairngorms National Park is a real winter wonderland. Not only is it pretty pristine (it's home to 25 per cent of Britain's threatened wildlife species) but it also offers plenty of activities, from dog-sled rides, skiing, spotting the Cairngorm reindeer herd and ice climbing. The Cross, a water-powered tweed mill built in the late 1800s, offers the cosiest of places to stay. Set in eight acres of gardens and woodland, it has eight classy rooms, two lounges and a renowned restaurant. Many of the rooms overlook Gynack Burn, which offers a reassuring lullaby gurgle as it heads towards the River Spey.

Details Double rooms start from £100 per night, B&B (01540 661166, thecross.co.uk)

2. Isle of Eriska, Argyll

The good thing about this lovely hotel is that the 300-acre island on which it lies is perfect for exploring, but not big enough to get lost; walk until you meet the sea, follow the coast and turn back for the main house when you reach the bridge or pier. Feeling virtuous, you can then tuck into the Michelin-star food and the enticing cheese trolley, with about 40 offerings including Lancashire bomb and Lanark white. Better still, if you take a spa suite, it comes with a hot tub in the garden, perfect for a warm winter's wallow.

Details An overnight stay at Eriska starts from £185pp for dinner, bed and breakfast, morning coffee and afternoon tea (01631 720371 or visit www.eriska-hotel.co.uk)

3. Torridon, Wester Ross

Let down your hair from the Rapunzel-like towers of this 18-bedroom luxury hotel in the Western Highlands. A former hunting lodge set in 58 acres of grounds, it has a bar featuring more than 350 malts, plus there's an AA three-rossette restaurant and rooms with design touches including Egyptian cotton bedding, iPod docks and Victorian-style baths. Set at the end of a sea loch, it also runs activity packages where you can learn a range of sports, including rock climbing, mountaineering and kayaking.

Details Double rooms are from £405 per night, including breakfast, a five-course evening tasting menu and tuition in an activity of your choice (0800 0893929, prideofbritainhotels.com)

4. Skeabost Isle of Skye

In the north of the Isle of Skye, this luxury hotel is a brisk walk from the Talisker whisky distillery, where one can learn the origins of single malts before heading back to the hotel's billiards room to sip one. Bedrooms have a modern Scottish country feel — think dark woods and plain blankets — plus there's a wood-panelled restaurant and a nine-hole golf course.

Details Two nights' B&B is from £99 per couple, including an on-arrival whisky and unlimited golf (01470 532202, bespokehotels.com)

The North

5. Jesmond Dene House, Newcastle

Less than a ten-minute drive from Newcastle town centre, this 19th-century Arts and Crafts mansion may as well be on another planet. There are warming fires in the billiard room and cocktail bar and an award-winning restaurant offering 14 types of tea. Rooms are individually designed and range from hidden attic spaces to chambers with high, oak-panelled ceilings. All have heated bathroom floors.

Details Double rooms are from £120 per night, room only (0191 2123000, jesmonddenehouse.co.uk)

6. Feversham Arms Hotel and Verbana Spa, Helmsley, Yorkshire

Mix wellies with watercolours at this former coaching inn in the pretty village of Helmsley. The luxury hotel is right on the edge of the north Yorkshire moors famed for its walks. Back in the hotel there's an art gallery with works by local painters. There are also log fires in many of the chic rooms and a great restaurant. The award-winning spa offers ice facials.

Details Double rooms are from £180 per night, B&B (0800 0893929, prideofbritainhotels.com)

7. Devonshire Arms, Bolton Abbey, Yorkshire

Just entering the doors of this Yorkshire Dales hotel is enough to inspire you. Waders (for fishing in the River Wharfe, which runs through the property) and wellies are stacked up in the hallway, and the Dog Lounge (replete with doggy wallpaper) always has a pooch or two stretched out in front of the fire. Rooms are split between the old building, with its rickety stairs, antiques and four-poster beds, and a more modern annexe. Outside there are miles of walks on the riverbank.

Details Double rooms start from £135 per night, B&B (01756 710441, thedevonshirearms.co.uk)

8. Askham Hall, Penrith, Cumbria

Transformed last year from a stately home into a stylish retreat, Askham Hall is no typical country-house hotel. Based on a grade I listed pele tower dating from the 1200s, the place has a bohemian feel, with open fires and comfy sofas. Rooms combine contemporary design with period features such as 17th-century fireplaces, and most have wonderful views over the River Lowther to Knipescar and the surrounding fells.

Details Double rooms start from £150 per night, B&B (01931 712350, askhamhall.co.uk)

9. Brimstone Hotel, Ambleside, Cumbria

You don't even have to bother taking wet-weather kit if you fancy a yomp across the fells around this hotel overlooking the Langdale Valley — the hotel offers free kit hire. There are 16 rooms, some with their own wood-burners and private terraces. There is also free wine, beer and nibbles 24/7.

Details Double rooms are from £250 per night, B&B (015394 38062, brimstonehotel.co.uk)

10. Daffodil Hotel & Spa, Grasmere, Cumbria

Bag a slice of cake from the famed village Gingerbread Shop and then follow in the footsteps of William Wordsworth on the old Coffin Trail to Rydal, or climb the 1,329ft Helm Crag. When done, return to this stylish hotel on the shores of Grasmere. The

rooms have a modern spin and they are huge, boasting emperor-size beds and private balconies from which to enjoy the stunning lake views. In the spa there's a thermal hydrotherapy pool.

Details Double rooms start from £130 per night, B&B (015394 63550, daffodilhotel.co.uk)

Central England

11. Langar Hall Hotel, Langar, Nottinghamshire

The 12 rooms are individually and quirkily styled, with old furniture, fine paintings and statement wallpapers plus there's an open fire in the study and a log-burner in the sitting room. There's lots to do in the surrounding area, including visits to Newstead Abbey, once home to Lord Byron, and Eastwood, the home of DH Lawrence.

Details Double rooms start from £100 per night, B&B (01949 860559, langarhall.com)

12. The Swan at Lavenham, Suffolk

You certainly won't feel the chill at this iconic 15th-century half-timbered hotel: there are no fewer than six fires in the lounges and bars. Local walks include one to a Second World War American air force base, and the tales of many who served there are told on the walls of the hotel's Airmen's Bar. The bedrooms have timber beams, leaded windows and medieval wall hangings, as well as wi-fi and flat-screen TV.

Details Double rooms are from £195 per night, B&B (01787 247477, theswanatlavenham.co.uk)

13. No 131, Cheltenham Gloucestershire

Cheltenham plays host to one of the UK's best German-style Christmas markets and this stylish hotel is the perfect place to use as a base. A Georgian former office block, it's been scrubbed down and spruced up to great effect. Downstairs, the drawing rooms and pantries have been given over to a high-end restaurant, cocktail bar and games room, while the 11 rooms upstairs are packed with mod cons, including smart TVs, iPod docks and Nespresso coffee machines.

Details Double rooms start from £150 per night, B&B (0330 1003180, mrandmrssmith.com)

14. Lords of the Manor, Upper Slaughter, Gloucestershire

The Good Hotel Guide's Country House Hotel of the Year for 2015, this superb hotel has log fires, cosy public rooms and a great wine list, as well as spacious and plush bedrooms. The Warden's Walk to nearby Lower Slaughter is long enough to make you feel virtuous and short enough to be pleasurable — especially if you return by the country lane that Google Street Maps claims is the most romantic in Britain.

Details Double rooms are from £199 per night, B&B (01451 820243, lordsofthemanor.com)

15. Dormy House, Cotswolds

Set in a 17th-century farmhouse on a 400-acre estate with a nature trail that is home to wild deer, foxes and badgers, this country-chic hotel is right on the Cotswold Way. Rooms have antique furnishings, marble bathrooms and four-poster beds. There are also several lounges with log fires and a new spa.

Details Double rooms start from £220 per night, B&B (0330 1003180, mrandmrssmith.com)

Southeast & London

16. The Montagu Arms, Beaulieu, Hampshire

There's Michelin-starred dining at this elegant 17th-century country manor house in the New Forest village of Beaulieu. There are 22 luxurious bedrooms, four large fireplaces, including one in reception, and the chance to visit the SenSpa at neighbouring sister hotel Careys Manor.

Details Double rooms are from £129 per night, B&B (01590 612324, montaguarmshotel.co.uk)

17. French Horn, Sonning-on-Thames, Berkshire

There's more food and roaring fires at this inn on the Thames outside Reading. The hotel's winter speciality is spit-roast duck. This dish, cooked over an open fire in the oak-panelled bar, has been served for more than 60 years. The hotel began life 200 years ago, and the elegant rooms and suites retain many original features. The willow-lined paths by the Thames make for gorgeous walking too.

Details Double rooms from £160 per night, B&B (0118 9692204, thefrenchhorn.co.uk)

18. Bailiffscourt Hotel & Spa, Climping, West Sussex

If you can bag your own choice of room at this hotel, originally built for the Guinness family in the 1920s with derelict stone and timber from 13th-century buildings, go for the Baylies Suite. It comes with an oversized four-poster bed, vaulted ceilings and a palatial bathroom with his and hers roll-top baths, as well as a sitting room with its own wood-burner. The other rooms — in medieval or contemporary design — aren't lacking either, plus there are open fires dotted throughout the hotel. Play Jacques of London traditional indoor games when the weather is bad and take walks on Climping Beach when it's not.

Details Double rooms start from £229 per night, B&B (01903 723511, hshotels.co.uk)

19. The Pig in the Wall, Southampton

This smart hotel was once a warehouse, set in the medieval walls of the port city. Aside from the chance to stay in the shabby chic rooms here, with their oversized showers and Nespresso machines, in the evenings you can jump into the hotel's Land Rover and dine at sister hotel The Pig in the New Forest. Back in Southampton there's a living room with an open fire, a deli and a bar. The city's main sites, such as the Mayflower Museum, are all close by.

Details Double rooms start from £129 per night, room only (0845 0779494, thepighotel.com/in-the-wall)

20. The George in Rye, East Sussex

Rye, on the south coast, is a great getaway from London in winter. It doesn't have the reputation of Brighton, so it's never too busy and prices tend to fall with the mercury. There are also some great events, such as the winter-themed Christmas Show and Wonder Rooms at the Rye Art Gallery, which runs from now to January. The George is a great place to stay too. It dates from 1575, there's a real fire in the cosy bar, rooms have feature beds and roll-top baths, and there's a grill restaurant with the best in Sussex produce, including fresh fish.

Details Double rooms are from £135 per night, B&B (01797 222114, thegeorgeinrye.com)

21. No 11 Cadogan Gardens, London SW3

This small hotel, reminiscent of an old-style gentleman's residence, is near three royal parks and a few minutes from the Thames Embankment, meaning there are plenty of opportunities for a scenic stroll, as well as the chance to sample the Winter Wonderland show in Hyde Park. Inside No 11 there are log fires in the library, a fine afternoon tea and rooms redolent of old-world decadence.

Details Double rooms are from £300 per night, room-only (020-7730 7000, nol1cadogangardens.com)

Southwest

22. St Petroc's, Padstow, Cornwall

If you want to pamper your pooch the chef Rick Stein's Padstow pad is a good choice. Expect the usual open fires and grand food, as well as stylish rooms with low beams, four-poster beds and the design touches of Stein's wife, Jill. Dogs get their own blanket to keep warm, and their owners get advice on suitable walks and a list of local sitters and groomers.

Details Double rooms are from £160 per night, B&B (01841 532700, rickstein.com)

23. The Lugger, Portloe, Cornwall

There are plenty of reasons to stay at this boutique seaside hotel surrounded by cliffs and headlands on the Cornish coastal path. There are 22 cosy bedrooms, many of which have sea views or balconies, and a two-AA rosette restaurant with locally caught shellfish, lobster and crab. In the winter, though, it really comes into its own as a storm-watching venue, as the Atlantic swells roll in. The hotel provides macs, brollies and wellies, as well as a hot toddy and buttered crumpets once back in front of the open fire in the lounge.

Details Two nights' B&B is from £169 per person, half-board (bespokehotels.com)

24. The Scarlet, Mawgan Porth, Cornwall

Stave off the winter chill with a dip in one of the wooden hot tubs at this sassy adults-only hotel — you might need it to defrost if you visit on Christmas day, when a morning dip in the Atlantic is planned (don't worry, wetsuits are provided). Over the Christmas and new year period there will also be scenic walks on the coastal path, including winter picnics with spiced hot chocolate, roaring fires and entertainment including dance lessons and wine tasting.

Details Double rooms are from £200 per night, B&B (01637 861800, scarlethotel.co.uk)

25. Lucknam Park Hotel & Spa, Chippenham, Wiltshire

This Palladian mansion hotel set on a 500-acre Wiltshire estate is the only hotel in the UK to have a spa offering Haslauer reflective sunlight therapy to help top up vitamin D levels, which are known to help combat SAD. There are, of course, other things to keep you jolly, including Michelin-starred dining, a cookery school and bedrooms with log fires. It's just six miles from Bath, too, so ideal for the city's evocative Christmas market (November 27 to December 14).

Details Double rooms are from £260 per night, room only (01225 742777, lucknampark.co.uk)

26. Ilsington Hotel, Newton Abbot, Devon

Take in excellent views of the south coast and the Teign estuary with a hike to the top of Haytor, arguably Dartmoor's most famous landmark, before heading back to this lovely country house hotel in the middle of the national park. Rooms have period-style furnishings, free-standing baths and plush carpets or wooden floors, plus there's a log-burner in the lounge and decadent Devon cream teas. Hiking's not the only activity on offer either — there's cycling, horse riding, shooting, fishing and falconry, all available on site.

Details Double rooms start from £110 per night, B&B (01364 661452, ilsington.co.uk)

Wales

27. The Grove, Narberth, Pembrokeshire

You don't have to forgo a moment's luxury if you decide to explore the Wales Coast Path from this intimate boutique hotel in the shadow of the Preseli mountains. Staff will pack you off in the morning with a luxury hamper. Back at the hotel there are roaring in-room fires, bubble baths, and a massage each from the hotel's therapists.

Details Two nights are from £400pp, half-board plus massages (01834 860915, thegrove-narberth.co.uk)

28. Ynyshir Hall Hotel, Machynlleth, Powys

Nestled in the Welsh countryside by the River Dovey and with views over to Snowdonia National Park, this ten-bedroom hotel in the Cambrian Mountains that was once home to Queen Victoria has excellent star-gazing. The Relais & Chateaux property has been named 2014 AA hotel of the year and gained its first Michelin star. Two of the ten upscale rooms have their own wood-burners, plus there's a vast RSPB reserve next door which is a perfect spot for a wintry walk.

Details Double rooms are from £205 per night, B&B (01654 781209, ynyshirhall.co.uk)

29. New White Lion, Llandovery, Carmarthenshire

This recently opened hotel in an 1839 grade II listed building has rooms with antiques and original Georgian features, an honesty bar, lounges with exposed brick open fires, and a smart restaurant. Close to both the Brecon Beacons and the Cambrian Mountains, it offers great hiking and biking, while the Botanic Gardens of Wales and Aberglasney Gardens are both close by.

Details Double rooms are from £100 per night (01550 720685, newwhitelion.com)

Northern Ireland

30. Galgorm, Co Antrim

Game of Thrones fans will love this hotel for its proximity to the locations of many of the wintry scenes from the hit TV series. Also close to the famed Giant's Causeway and set within 163 acres of parkland on the banks of the River Maine, Galgorm offers the chance to hike clifftops before heading back to the hotel to relax in outdoor hot tubs and snuggle up in cosy modern rooms. There's a new art deco conservatory overlooking the grounds that serves a decadent afternoon tea, an in-house pub with open fires, and the chance to ride from the resort's stables.

Details Double rooms are from £125 per night, B&B (028 25881001, galgorm.com)

Related Images



Isle of Eriska, Argyll (2)



Askham Hall, Penrith (8)



Langar Hall Hotel, Langar (11)



The Swan at Levenham, Suffolk (12)



Dormy House, Cotswolds (15)



Ynyshir Hall Hotel, Machynlleth (28)

Publisher: News UK & Ireland Ltd

Published Date: 22 Nov 2014 00:01:00

Article Id: 16993524 Version: 1

Word Count: 2884

Character Count: 13152



Reproduced by NLA media access with permission from the Publisher. May not be copied or otherwise reproduced without express permission.