

HALF-TERM HEAVEN



Treat your brood to an autumn getaway this October...

THE OUTBUILDING, APPLEDORE

THE LOWDOWN: Appledore is a picture-perfect village in Kent and is within easy reach of a multitude of gorgeous beaches, such as Camber Sands (pictured above), and lively market towns, such as Rye. We stayed at The Outbuilding, a beautifully designed bolthole with everything you need for a family of four or five.
WHY THE ADULTS WILL LOVE IT: With an outdoor terrace, barbecue and a wood-burning stove for chillier nights, The Outbuilding is the ideal place for a relaxed weekend away. There's even a freestanding bath in the main bedroom for those who fancy a candlelit soak in a tub.

WHY THE KIDS WILL LOVE IT: Our children adored the cosy bunk beds and the thoughtful selection of games and DVDs on offer and loved chilling out in the delightful sitting room after a busy day on the beach.
OUT AND ABOUT: Nearby Rye has a fantastic mix of quirky interior design shops, cafés and bric-a-brac emporiums. We spent a morning exploring, then after lunch at The Ship Inn (Theshippinnrye.com), we headed down to the windswept dunes of Camber Sands. There's a lovely walk between the two if you're feeling energetic. Further afield, Dungeness beach offers a dramatic landscape, a trip on a narrow gauge



The welcoming lounge at The Outbuilding

railway and some of the best fresh fish you'll ever eat at the Dungeness Snack Shack.
NEED TO KNOW: From around £140 a night for two, with an additional £10 per person per night for the bunks (minimum two-night stay). Book at Theoutbuildingappledore.com.

THE BARN, BARTON ST DAVID

THE LOWDOWN: This converted barn is located in a picturesque part of Somerset and is ideal for a relaxing break – or for anyone who wants to experience Glastonbury festival but can't bear the thought of camping!
WHY THE ADULTS WILL LOVE IT: The owners have thought of everything – we loved the parcel of edible goodies waiting for us when we arrived. The master bedroom is gorgeously decorated, with cosy throws and rugs to snuggle up on. And best of all, there's a brilliant pub, The Barton Inn, just across the road.
WHY THE KIDS WILL LOVE IT: There's an en-suite double room downstairs for children, with a huge TV screen and Sky TV to keep them happy.
OUT AND ABOUT: The Barn has amazing views over the field to Glastonbury Tor, so that's where we headed for an energetic walk to the summit. You can see miles and miles of lush green countryside from the top, and from there it's a short stroll to Glastonbury itself. It's no surprise to find a very eclectic selection of shops there –



The Barn has a cosy interior

everything from vintage boutiques to crystal merchants. It's definitely worth visiting the ancient abbey as well, where King Arthur is rumoured to have been buried. And if you're in the mood for a retail splurge, factory outlet Clarks Village is close by.
NEED TO KNOW: The Barn sleeps four and costs from £369 for a seven-night stay. See Sykescottages.co.uk or call 01244 617683.



Walk to the top of Glastonbury Tor for impressive views

EFTELING, HOLLAND

THE LOWDOWN: This incredible theme park is a hugely enjoyable way to spend a few days with the family. We stayed in one of the on-site hotels, Efteling Loonsche Land, which has everything you need, including bunk beds for the kids, and the breakfast buffet was delicious. It's within walking distance of all the rides or you can hop on the complimentary train, which is a really fun way to get around. There's also an outdoor playground, and you can sit and have a drink on the terrace while your children play.
WHY THE KIDS WILL LOVE IT: This place is paradise for children. There are endless rides, a fairy-tale forest (a particular favourite of ours), theatrical shows, water rides, firework displays and most importantly, sugary treats on every corner. It's a truly magical experience and has so much going on, you could spend a week there and not get bored.
WHY THE ADULTS WILL LOVE IT: The surroundings are beautiful, so even if theme parks aren't really your thing, you'll still have a nice break. The staff are incredibly friendly and helpful and your kids will be so happy that their enthusiasm will rub off on you. Oh, and there are loads of coffee shops and delicious doughnut stalls to give you a boost if your energy levels start to drop.
NEED TO KNOW: Book at Efteling.com. A one-night stay in a five-person room at Efteling Loonsche Land Hotel is priced from



There are plenty of rides to keep your kids entertained

£311, based on two adults and two children staying, including breakfast and entrance tickets to the park. Efteling is a three-hour drive from the Eurotunnel Le Shuttle Calais terminal (Eurotunnel.com). Eurotunnel Le Shuttle has up to four departures per hour with daily crossings from Folkestone to Calais. Return tickets are priced from £46.



AYSGARTH LODGES, YORKSHIRE DALES

THE LOWDOWN: These family and dog-friendly holiday homes, which sleep up to eight people, are located in the stunning Yorkshire Dales, so you're surrounded by the rolling English countryside. If you're looking for a luxury rural retreat, you're in the right place!
WHY THE ADULTS WILL LOVE IT: Each lodge has its own furnished decking area and hot tub – the perfect way to relax after you've been out exploring the region. We also loved the contemporary kitchen/dining area, which was ideal for a family dinner, especially as it had a dishwasher! But if you're not in the mood for cooking, the on-site restaurant is a

great option – the steak and Wensleydale ale pie was delicious.
WHY THE KIDS WILL LOVE IT: Aysgarth has its own petting farm, where you'll find everything from alpacas to chipmunks. The kids will love the fact that they can hold a tortoise and feed the sheep, plus there's a children's playground next door.
OUT AND ABOUT: It's a ten-minute walk to Aysgarth Falls – spectacular waterfalls where scenes from *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves* were filmed. Also check out The Forbidden Corner – a fun outdoor space with tunnels and follies for the kids to explore (Theforbiddencorner.co.uk).



The restaurant serves tasty local dishes



Nearby Bolton Castle is worth a visit

Cheese lovers will enjoy watching the cheese-making process at the Wensleydale Creamery and there's a fun interactive area for children. You can sample all the wonderful flavours – mango and ginger is amazing! Bolton Castle (Boltoncastle.co.uk) is another fab place to visit, with its dungeons, maze and birds of prey centre. You can also try your hand at archery – our five year old even had a go.
NEED TO KNOW: Visit Leisureresorts.co.uk or call 01969 663 268. From £425 per week for a one-bed Scandinavian Retreat (self-catering).

WORDS: Leahy Eyres, Leonie Lodge, Rhona Mercer PHOTOS: Getty Images