



 | SYKES HOLIDAY COTTAGES

# THE SYKES STAYCATION INDEX 2018

An in-depth review of the holiday let and staycation market in the UK - brought to you by Sykes Holiday Cottages





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“In recognising all that’s on offer on our doorstep, the total spend on staycations in 2017 was £23.7 billion - up 3% on 2016.”

**The UK boasts four countries**

**94,525**  
square miles

**7,723**  
miles of coastline

**46**

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**69**  
cities

**15**  
national parks

## Welcome to the Sykes Staycation Index 2018

At Sykes Holiday Cottages, we're able to paint a clear picture of the UK's staycation habits. Here we bring you our insight into the growing trend of holidaying closer to home.

In our inaugural Staycation Index, we reveal what Britain wants when it comes to holidaying closer to home. Over the years, the nation's love of a staycation has gone from strength to strength. According to the latest figures from VisitBritain, there were 59 million staycations in the UK last year, up by almost 6% on 2016.

The UK boasts four countries, 94,525 square miles, 7,723 miles of coastline, 69 cities, 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 15 national parks. Why on earth would you go anywhere else?

Whether it's the Cornish coastline, quintessentially English cottages in the Cotswolds or rugged fells of the Lake District - the lure of our beautiful isles has persuaded millions to stay closer to home for their holidays.

In recognising all that's on offer on our doorstep, we also know that the total spend on staycations in 2017 was £23.7 billion - up 3% on 2016.

At Sykes Holiday Cottages we're immensely proud to promote all that the UK has to offer. For more than 25 years we've developed a deep understanding of trends and travel developments and know not only how holidaymakers behave today, but how they're likely to holiday in the future.

We wanted to launch this index to help paint a picture of the scope of the staycation market, based on our bookings data. Using this, we can see emerging hotspots and predict longer-term growth opportunities for the sector.

Every spring, we plan to review our annual bookings data to deepen our understanding of what is happening in the market now, and provide predictions on what will shape the way we travel in the UK in future.

Our insights team will tell you about the most sought-after regions, towns, property types and features. When are people booking? Who plans to book for the future? And what makes them stay closer to home for their holidays?

Welcome to our first edition.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "G Donoghue". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Graham Donoghue**, CEO, Sykes Holiday Cottages

## The state of the staycation market

Sykes Holiday Cottages bookings data has been analysed extensively by our insights team to reveal the top trends in our industry. Looking at what's hot, and what's not when it comes to holidaying closer to home. We have also polled more than 2,000 UK adults to get their views on what makes the perfect staycation.

VisitBritain says there was a 5.8% rise in domestic holidays in the UK in 2017. Our booking data supports this trend. We've found:

### staycation:

*noun informal*

A holiday taken in the UK by Britons. This includes all trips away from your home, whether that be weekend breaks, longer two week stays or shorter retreats.

Bookings for holiday cottages rocketed by

**24%**  
in 2017

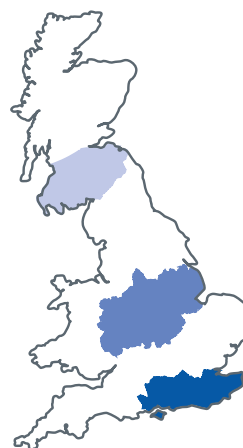
Top three most sought-after holiday home features

- Garden space
- WiFi
- Off-road parking



- South Coast England
- Midlands
- Southern Scotland

Were the top three **fastest growing** regions for bookings in 2017 (compared with 2016)



- South West England
- North Wales
- Cumbria and the Lake District

Were the top three **most popular** regions for bookings in 2017 (by number of bookings)

Top three most popular towns in 2017



**Yarmouth  
Whitby  
Filey**

Nodding to our love of traditional seaside resorts

**9/10**

Adults holidayed close to home as a child - 66% did so frequently



Was the most popular date to book a holiday - and has been for four years

Top three most popular holiday home types in 2017



**LUXURY**



**BEACH & COASTAL**



**PET-FRIENDLY**

**ALMOST**  
**1/3**

of 18-24-year-olds are open to the idea of letting out a home (or part of it) to holidaymakers in the future to secure more income

In 2017 alone, **56%** of all adults staycated

And **74%** plan to do so in 2018

## Holiday hotspots in the UK

### A closer look at where we're holidaying – top regions

Over the years there's been a handful of distinguished holiday hotspots that stand out across the UK. Here we reveal the current most sought-after regions and towns.

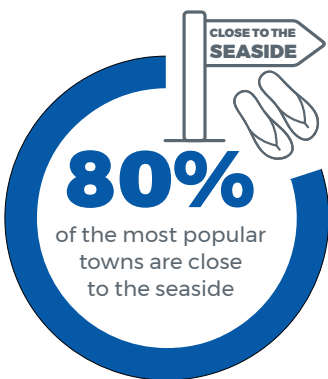
While Devon and Cornwall remain holders of the crown for most-booked destinations, new towns and resorts are quickly rising up the ranks and closing the gap. Last year, (2017) saw steep rises in bookings to Scotland and Wales, begging the question as to whether 2018 could see a change in the number one spot.



Most popular region



## A closer look at where we're holidaying – top towns



### Top 10 most popular towns for bookings in 2017

1. Yarmouth
2. Whitby
3. Filey
4. Falmouth
5. Windermere
6. Scarborough
7. Pickering
8. Benllech
9. Beadnell
10. Llandudno



## The staycationers

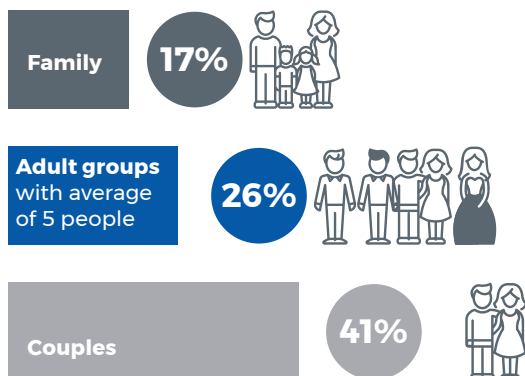
# How do Britons like to holiday in the UK, and how has this changed over time?

We've established that the nation is a firm believer in the staycation. But who exactly are the staycationers, and what are they looking for?

Here we explore the key characteristics of the Brits who love to holiday on home turf, and what style of break they prefer. From longer retreats in modern coastal properties, to short-stays in unique lighthouse conversions and cosy traditional cottage breaks, we reveal the most popular staycation.



Of all bookings made in 2017



The most popular dates to book over the last four years were

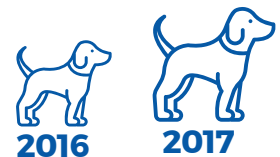


Average staycation length



**20% growth**  
in demand for short breaks

Bookings to pet-friendly properties increased the most from 2016 to 2017



Top three most popular holiday home types in 2017



Couples from South East England staycationed the most in 2017

The most popular property features are





## The rise in pet-friendly breaks

Every member of the family deserves a break – including the four-legged ones. We have more than 5,000 pet-friendly properties on our books, and see this as a growing trend throughout 2018 and beyond. Holidaying at home means you can bring your canines to the Pennines, enjoy walkies in Wales, or take your pooch on a break to the Peak District.

## The rise in quirky stays

While luxury cottages remain the most popular, we know Britons are seeking opportunities to staycation in weird and wonderful properties across the UK. We've got over 400 converted barns, 950 properties situated on a farm, 21 shepherd's huts, 30 converted chapels or churches, six yurts and even one converted water tank and one converted railway carriage.



## The rise in luxury 'bubble breaks'

We've seen the popularity of luxury holiday homes go through the roof as Britons look for affordable, but indulgent, holidays closer to home – which is why we offer more than 1,000 properties with hot tubs and swimming pools across the UK.

## The rise in experience-led trips

We also know that while Brits love to relax and unwind, many seek staycation locations that allow them to get active. Given the majority of our properties are based in rural areas, we find our customers are likely to take full advantage of countryside pursuits – whether that be birdwatching, fishing, walking and for some, more adrenaline filled sports like rock climbing and mountaineering.



# Case study- The staycation family

Jillian Courtney and Craig Jenkins, along with their eight-year-old daughter Penny, took a trip to the Lake District last year. The couple wanted a hassle-free break, which allowed them to spend time together as a family exploring the outdoors – they were so surprised by how much they enjoyed themselves, they're now planning a 2018 staycation to the Isle of Wight.

“ I always enjoyed going on holiday in South Wales growing up, and I wanted Penny to have the same experience. We've been abroad previously but not only was it expensive, there was so much planning involved it didn't really feel like a relaxing break! I'd always worried that Penny might find staying in the UK boring, but the opposite turned out to be true. We got to make the most of the outdoors on our Lake District adventure; we cycled and picnicked, and even got to bring along some home comforts with us! We were lucky with the weather too, and on the one day it did rain, had a family baking and film day curled up on the sofa.

“My favourite thing about staying at a holiday cottage is that it instantly feels like home. We felt refreshed when we finally made it back to Bramble Cottage in Maryport, rather than tired and cranky after waiting in the airport security queue. I'm getting to visit places I've never been before in the UK, and we're already counting down the days to this year's summer holiday in the Isle of Wight!”



# A closer look at who holidays at home

In 2017 alone, **56%** of all adults staycationed

And **74%** plan to do so in 2018



**81%**

have enjoyed a staycation as an adult



**91%**

holidayed in the UK as a child



A garden, good WiFi and the proximity to pubs are the three most important property features for men. Whereas women want to be as close to the beach as possible

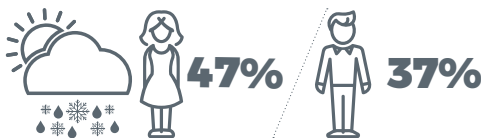
 ..... **Yorkshire residents have staycationed the most**

 ..... **People in the West Midlands are more likely to have already planned a staycation for 2018**

**Why are Brits more likely to choose a staycation than travel abroad?**

“ **54%** said it was easier ”

“ **45%** said it was less stressful ”



Our unpredictable weather puts more women off holidaying closer to home

**46%** British travellers find cottage breaks most appealing

**43%** followed by city breaks and

**35%** luxury hotel & spa stays

Those aged **25-34** are more likely to be going on a glamping break 

 **46%** think there's no need to go abroad as the UK has enough beautiful destinations of its own

More women than men have planned a staycation in 2018

**77%** of women compared with 69% of men



## The holiday home owners

### Who are the people behind our staycations – and what do they get out of it?

Without holiday-let owners opening up their homes, none of this would be possible. From quaint country cottages to grand manor estates and modern apartments, we work with a whole host of different property owners up and down Britain.

Holiday letting can be a profitable business, with our owners earning on average £18,000 annually through bookings. We've become experts in what attracts holidaymakers, so we know just what to offer to get more bookings through the door, whether that be a hot tub, games room or fast WiFi.

**£18,000**  
is the average gross income of a holiday let property



Coastal properties make 10% more than other properties in the same region

**Coastal** ..... **10%**



Owners who accept short breaks in winter earn 30% more in the winter period

**Winter short breaks** ..... **30%**

Properties in national parks also earn 10% more than other properties in the same region

**National Park** ..... **10%**

#### Top five earning regions

1. Dorset  
2  £16,000  
4  £43,000

2. Lake District  
2  £16,000  
4  £28,000

3. Peak District  
2  £14,000  
4  £29,000

4. South Coast England  
2  £15,000  
4  £28,000

5. Heart of England  
2  £14,000  
4  £26,000

#### Money-earning property features include:

 **Pet Friendly** ..... **10% more**

 **WiFi** ..... **20% more**

 **Open fire** ..... **20% more**

 **Games room** ..... **39% more**

 **9-10 **  
9-10 bedroom properties make on average  
**£78,000** a year

**18%** of Brits would consider becoming a holiday let owner to earn more income

**31%** of 18-24-year-olds are open to letting out their home (or part of it) to holidaymakers

**23%** of Londoners would consider becoming a holiday home owner

# Case study- The holiday home couple

Retired teachers who swapped pencils for paintbrushes – and earn £18,000 on their renovated cottage.

Deborah and Trevor Harris, retired teachers from the South East, took on the challenge of renovating their farmhouse in Winsham, Somerset to transform it into a holiday cottage. The couple made the move to South Somerset after researching the area for several years. When they found Church Farmhouse in August 2014, they fell straight away for its rustic charm. Since then, they've not looked back and have had over 40 weeks booked in their first year, hosting 242 guests and 32 pets in total. Letting out their farmhouse has earned them £18,000 so far – almost double the £10,000 they first thought and they are expecting even more income in 2018 as the demand for staycations rises.

“ Letting out Church Farmhouse has been such an adventure and we've enjoyed every minute. Hosting our guests in the farmhouse next door and hearing about how they've enjoyed the house and surrounding countryside is hugely rewarding. Last year we had families stay for weddings and lots of big groups of old friends reuniting. The children who visit love playing with our cats and dogs and even get involved feeding the chickens too.

“As well as being an enjoyable experience, we now have a healthy income from the venture. We wanted a comfortable and quiet retirement after our careers in teaching and letting out the farmhouse means we don't have to worry as much about the future. It's given us peace of mind so we can spend time and money on the things we enjoy doing the most.”



## What we've found – our conclusion

### The report reveals the UK's favourite destination spots

2017 proved to be another successful year for the staycation market. Across the board, the leisure and tourism industry thrived. Today more Britons than ever are choosing to holiday in the UK. And that makes us immensely proud.

Our report has revealed the ingredients for a perfect holiday home; a great location and luxury cottage but also an extra eye for the details that matter whether it's parking, or high speed WiFi. It's these thoughtful touches that make our family of property owners so special, and means we have the best selection of properties available for holidaymakers.

It's encouraging to see holidaymakers exploring all corners of the UK, and our fastest-growing regions, the South Coast of England, Midlands and Southern Scotland, are setting the pace.

Tourism is the lifeblood of many communities up and down the UK and friends, families, couples and solo travellers are realising the fun to be had by discovering what's on offer just beyond their doorstep.

We'll be tracking these staycation hotspots and more over the next year to provide further insight into the holiday market.

Last year we helped more than one million people go on holiday in the UK. And as the market continues to grow, we're on track to see an even more successful 2018.

My thanks to our property owners, guests, and the full Sykes Holiday Cottages team.

**Graham Donoghue**, CEO, Sykes Holiday Cottages



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Graham Donoghue".

# About Sykes Holiday Cottages

Sykes Holiday Cottages has been serving customers for over 25 years and is the nation's favourite holiday letting agent.

We have more than 10,000 properties available across the UK and Ireland, and have been awarded 'Best Large UK Holiday Cottage Booking Company' at the British Travel Awards for five years running.

While the business has grown significantly over the years, our commitment to giving our customers an extensive range of great quality cottages at value-for-money prices remains unchanged.

Based in Chester, our team of 400 work with customers and owners to find the perfect holiday cottage for you. Each and every property has been handpicked, personally inspected and approved by us. From properties with hot tubs and log fires to places with breath-taking landscapes and scenic ocean views, we offer something for everyone.

## Methodology

Sykes Holiday Cottages internal bookings data from January 2014 to December 2017. Full-year bookings data from 2017 was used to provide a snapshot of the staycation market, while comparisons with full-year data from 2014, 2015, and 2016 were used to identify market trends. Consumer research was carried out by OnePoll, based on a sample size of 2,000 UK adults.

## Contact

For further information on the report findings, methodology or press enquiries please contact [sykescottages@citypress.co.uk](mailto:sykescottages@citypress.co.uk)

## Book a holiday

Visit [www.sykescottages.co.uk](http://www.sykescottages.co.uk)

## Become a holiday let owner

To find out more, visit [www.sykescottages.co.uk/letyourcottage](http://www.sykescottages.co.uk/letyourcottage)

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