

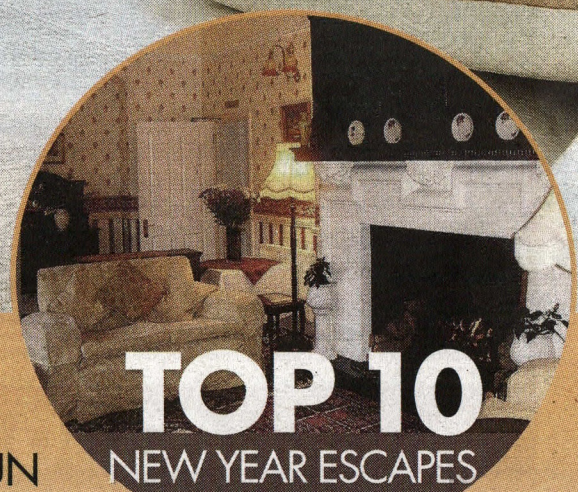
Holidays

and Getaways



GRAN CANARIA

A PERFECT BREAK FOR WINTER SUN



SANTA'S PRESENCE

A LITTLE BOY IS ENCHANTED ON A MAGICAL TRIP TO LAPLAND

FESTIVE FAIRS

GET INTO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT WITH FOOD AND FUN

TOP 10

NEW YEAR ESCAPES

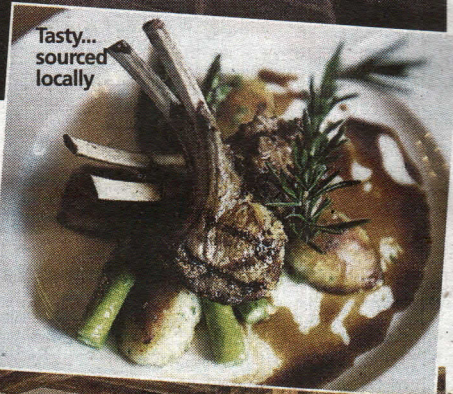


To the manor born...
Llanthony Manor in
Monmouthshire



Kitchen synch...
beamed ceilings and
flagstone floors

HAVE A PUKKA STAY



Tasty...
sourced
locally

Winter is the perfect time to round up family and friends for a cosy staycation in the gorgeous British countryside.

And there is increasing demand for rambling cottages with vast kitchens to try out your culinary skills with tasty local meat and seasonal veg.

Erica Chang of HomeAway, the online lettings agency, says: "We call them Jamie Oliver-style weekends... enjoying great food with loads of people in wonderful locations, where you can source local products from farm shops and countryside stores in beautiful places like the wilds of the Cotswolds or Yorkshire."

For something fabulously decadent, try HomeAway's seven-bedroom Llanthony Manor in **Monmouthshire**. Starting at £357 a night, it has beamed ceilings, trestle tables and flagstone floors on the edge of the delectably foodie Wye Valley. homeaway.co.uk/p404339

Naturally, these holiday rentals need a great kitchen. High Houses, an atmospheric farmhouse near Bassenthwaite in **Cumbria**, has a huge kitchen with an Aga taking centre stage. Built in 1669, the house is full of quirks: open fires and winding corridors with four-poster beds at the end of them – a

great backdrop to a memorable holiday. Owner Jill is a professional cook who uses local lamb and venison if you want a head start on the catering. A week starts at £600. highhouses.co.uk

Nick Rudge, managing director of Cottages4you, says: "Traditionally, self-catering may have been considered a budget option but a rise in upmarket holiday lets means that they're now a highly desirable lifestyle choice. Property owners are furnishing their cottages with luxury touches which has led to a marked increase in the quality of accommodation."

Room for all your mates is essential, of course. West House in the coastal village of Elie in **Fife** sleeps up to 16. There's a vast kitchen-diner, a smart sitting room for grown-ups and a more colourful one for kids. Add plenty of bathrooms and bunk beds and it's a winner for extended families and groups of friends. A week starts at £2,150 – that's just £135 per person if you fill the place, making it fairly affordable. house-parties.com

Unique Homestays operates at the posh end of the market and the Herringbone



Aga saga... High
Houses in Cumbria

more than lives up to its website promise. It's in the fishing village of Mousehole, **Cornwall**, and is perfect for a romantic getaway as it sleeps just two. It's got deliciously indulgent furnishings and woodburning stoves. A three-night stay starts at £525. uniquehomestays.com