



List

Words: William Gray | 26 November



12 last-minute Christmas family trips

It's not too late to wrap up a last-minute family holiday, says Family Man, Wanderlust contributing editor and the editor of 101familyholidays.co.uk



1. Christmas in the Cotswolds

Cotswold Water Park Four Pillars Hotel is offering two-night Christmas breaks from £295 per adult, £66 for five to ten year-olds and £132 for 11-16-year-olds (under fours stay free).

Festive treats include a welcome reception, carols around the Christmas tree and – for the little ones – a visit from Santa. You can work off the full English breakfasts, mince pies and Christmas pud with a guided walk around the lake and a Las Vegas themed disco!

2. A cottage in Cornwall

Just eight miles from St Ives, the stylish and contemporary **Atlantic Heights** sleeps seven and has a large dining room – perfect for serving up a festive feast. Stairs lead to a fabulous sitting room, which boasts a roaring wood-burner and spectacular sea views – just the place for snuggling up with the kids after a walk to nearby Portheras Cove.

Classic Cottages is currently offering 20% off a week's stay over Christmas, arriving 21 December for £173 per person (£1,212 in total).

3. Chill out in the Caribbean

Quiet and unspoilt, Tobago is ideal for a relaxing Christmas well away from it all. Located a few steps from the beach and the nearest restaurant, **Hawksbill House** is a three-bedroom colonial style villa with a private pool and maid service.

Based on six sharing, it costs £1,319 per person, including return Gatwick flights, villa rental and private return airport transfers, departing on 21 December for seven nights.

4. Festive in France

Great for a big family get-together at **Christmas, Chateau Castelsagrat**, near Moissac in Southern Quercy, sleeps 19 and is available from 17 December to 7 January for €7,500 per week.

A seven-foot Christmas tree and decorations are provided, along with a special festive welcome basket of mince pies and Christmas tipples – best enjoyed around the roaring log fires in the chateau's 17th century fireplaces. Catering is available, or you can order everything you need – from crackers to a Norfolk turkey – from the English shop in the local village.

5. Presents on the pistes

Christmas is a great time for skiing – there's fantastic fun to be had on the slopes, plenty of exercise and fresh air for combating Christmas excesses and you're also guaranteed a white Christmas.

Mark Warner still has availability in Courmayeur for £595 per person (a massive saving of £255), including TorAir flights to Geneva on 24 December, accommodation at the Chaletotel Cristallo, transfers, breakfast, high tea and Christmas dinner with all the trimmings (with three-course dinners with wine on other nights).

6. Winter sun wonderland

For Christmas in the sun, Vintage Travel has a selection of properties on Lanzarote, which are available for the week commencing 22 December.

Situated on the outskirts of the village of Tinajo in the north of the island, **Villa La Acequia** is a spacious three-bedroom, two-bathroom property sleeping six. In addition to a private pool, there are open and covered terraces, as well as a gym. A week's rental costs £1,450.

7. Deck the narrowboat

Why not float away from it all this Christmas on a narrowboat holiday? A well-equipped 63ft boat, Rachel sleeps six and has creature comforts like central heating, a generous galley area and colour TV/DVD.

Waterways Holidays is offering a 20% discount, which means a week's hire from 23 December is reduced to £1,120 (saving £280), inclusive of fuel, bed linen, car parking and tuition on arrival. For an extra £35, you can even treat your dog to a Christmas on the Kennet & Avon Canal.

8. A Swiss family Christmas

Inntravel is offering a week's half board at the Hotel Edelweiss in Engelberg from £1,098 per adult and from £406 per child, including return flights Heathrow-Zurich, connecting journey by rail and transfer.

Winter activities in the area include skiing, igloo building, curling, horse-drawn carriage rides, ice-skating and a long toboggan run, while Hotel Edelweiss will be getting festive with gala dinners and torch-lit walks.

The hotel also offers a sauna, solarium, and outdoor hot tub, as well as Nintendo games consoles, table tennis and billiards.

9. A Wight Christmas

Nip across to the Isle of Wight with **Wightlink** this Christmas, stay in a luxurious converted barn and let The Real Island Food Company take care of your yuletide supplies. Niton Barns' Haven Cottage is available for one week from 21 December for just £120 per person, based on six-sharing, and includes return Wightlink car ferry crossings from Portsmouth or Lymington.

10. Pre-Christmas on the pistes

Most UK schools break up on Friday 16 December making the week before Christmas a perfect opportunity for a family skiing holiday. Snow has already been falling across the Alps and resorts are now open and waiting for the skiers to arrive.

Located in the French resort of Samoens, the 4-star Le Reine des Pres has a pool, sauna, steamroom and jacuzzi, and is available from **Peak Retreats** for £266 per person for eight nights' self-catering, based on five sharing a two-bedroom apartment, and including a FlexiPlus Eurotunnel crossing for a car and passengers, free aroma massage and kid's ski pack.

11. A wild Christmas

Leave behind the tired old Christmas tree and head for the lush rainforest of Central America. Departing 27 December, **The Adventure Company** has a nine-day Tropical Adventure to Costa Rica from £1,949 per adult and £1,899 per child (minimum age six), including flights, accommodation, all breakfasts, transport and an experienced local group leader. You'll travel deep into the rainforest in search of Costa Rica's fabulous wildlife, witness the power of the earth at Arenal Volcano, relax on beautiful Pacific beaches and get adventurous on the Monteverde Skywalk.

12. Meet Rudolf

Taking place over the weekend of 10-11 December, the 5-star self-catering resort of **Gwel an Mor** in Portreath, Cornwall, has its first 'Celebration of Christmas' Festival this year.

Highlights include a Cornish craft fair and a chance to meet Father Christmas in his grotto, along with reindeer and other nativity animals that live at the resort's Feadon Farm Wildlife and Conservation Centre. Gwel an Mor has availability throughout December, with a lodge sleeping four costing £689 for a four-night break during Christmas week.

William Gray has contributed to Wanderlust travel magazine and wanderlust.co.uk for over ten years. He now focuses on family travel and also edits www.101familyholidays.co.uk.

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