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# Surprising stays in the UK

## Brits taking a break seek the weird and wonderful

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**F**or many years, Brits have had an unfair reputation for being unadventurous travellers. Stories abound about holidaymakers who've been visiting the same resort for the past 25 years, asking for the same room and – on occasion – even requesting the same table for dinner.

But if the results of several new surveys are anything to go by, all that could be about to change.

According to research from accommodation website Booking.com, three quarters of us are seeking something weird and wonderful when booking a short break in the UK.

When asked what their ideal 'out of the ordinary' accommodation might be, 70% of the 2,000 people taking part in the survey said they'd like to stay in an historical building such as a castle.

A smaller percentage (13%) said they like to be able to live out a childhood fantasy when holidaying in the UK. The mind boggles at what that might actually be, but with the surge in enquiries for treehouse lodgings (such as Center Parcs and Chewton Glen Hotel & Spa) and shepherds' huts (thanks in part to Liz Hurley pur-

chasing one for her 11-year-old son) it seems Brits are definitely becoming more playful when booking their breaks.

Booking.com supports this view, with an increasing number of visitors to the site searching for more surprising stays. Examples include the Llamas Pyjamas B&B in Penrith, a South American-themed hotel in the Lake District, where guests can enjoy trekking with llamas and a birds of prey experience, a converted railway station in Petworth, or 'Hobbit' pods at Camp Katur in North Yorkshire.

But it's not just on home soil that we're learning to be braver. Banishing the stereotype that Brits will only order fry-ups from picture menus, a survey by travel search site Momondo suggests we're

willing to try more unusual cuisine when abroad. More than half (63%) said that good food was essential to an enjoyable holiday, and 26% said they preferred to try unusual dishes in a country, remarkably, only 15% said they preferred to stick with food they were already familiar with.

"The Brits are culinary curious people - both when it comes to travel destinations, and experiences while away. This study reflects how food is the focal point for many of us when we travel," says Julie

Pedersen, travel spokesperson at Momondo.

"Food is a natural part of the sensory experience, so it follows that travellers want to taste different things when in new and exciting places. Cooking is so often an expression of culture and travellers can experience something closer to the local experience, by eating local cuisine."

So as our appetite for sampling new things continues to grow, hopefully those stereotypes of conservative, play-safe travellers will disappear once and for all.

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**UNUSUAL HOUSE VISITOR** The Llamas Pyjamas B&B, Penrith, which is revealed as one of ten most suprising stays in the UK according to Booking.com