

Family Gatherings

Holidays are a great time to get the family together – but one size does not fit all. Here are some ideas for even the biggest family gatherings, in places that cater well for grandparents, parents, aunts, cousins and for babies and toddlers alike.

Not many of us have homes large enough to accommodate all the family at one time – and even those who do will find it a relief to share the responsibility of it all! Getting away together as a family can work especially well if the accommodation allows some independence.

Here are some great places – some quite close to Surrey to keep the travelling to a minimum – and two more for when proximity is not an issue. All of them offer plenty of space, beautiful locations, excellent accommodation and are suitable for extended families or smaller groups.

The recommendations will provide perfect settings for family reunions, when the focus is on generous indoor spaces including great dining areas; those further away also have the appeal of a brilliant range of activities for all the family.

Staying Close to Home Gloucestershire

Recommended Family Holidays has thought of it all. Their accommodation comes recommended by other parents – and there is plenty of information about the facilities for kids and babies on their website.



The Coach House at Upper Court

Gloucestershire is easy to reach and offers **Kemerton Cottages** at Upper Court, near Tewkesbury. With six cottages, each with 1-5 bedrooms, there is space for more than 30 people. Three of the dwellings, The Coach House, Courtyard and The Stables can be interconnected and provide space for 24 people.

The Coach House alone has space for 10 (+cot) and costs £1300 per week in low season, £2180 in high season. The Dovecote is a romantic hideaway by a small lake for 2 (+1 cot) and costs £495-£790 per week depending on the season. Short breaks are available off peak.



Manor Farmhouse in Milstead, Kent

Kent

Near Sittingbourne in Kent, these luxury self-catering cottages at **Manor Farmhouse, Milstead** cater for family groups of up to 18 people. The main farmhouse sleeps 7, stable cottage sleeps 6 and The Barn sleeps 5 guests.

Also included is the leisure complex, which consists of a billiard room, a library and a sauna. On the first floor is a cinema room seating 18 with a large flat screen surround sound TV, DVD, CD, Laser Disc, VCR, Stereo. There is an outdoor, heated swimming pool set within a sunken walled garden (heated between 1 May and 30 September). And they take dogs!

Renting the whole accommodation costs between £3800 and £5300 per week, depending on the time of year. Shorter breaks are available.

There is a page dedicated to the larger style properties promoted by Recommended Family Holidays, both in the UK and abroad, which you can find at recommendedfamilyholidays.com/large-holiday-homes.shtml



Eco-Lodge East at Fair Oak Farm

Fair Oak Farm, East Sussex

Near Tunbridge Wells, choose from 3 small barns around a courtyard or rent them all together – a lovely space for 10-14 people, with a central barn offering a great kitchen and a dining area big enough for everyone.

For larger gatherings the two eco lodges (tree houses) are great fun to stay in – and beautifully kitted out, as are the barns, too.



Eco-Lodge interior

Family activity breaks are also on offer here – with archery, falconry and cooking events available. The farm is well located for some great family days out – to Bodiam Castle, Hever Castle, Kent and East Sussex Railway and the south coast.

To hire the three barns for a week costs from £1885 in low season to £2373 in high. There are special offers for families booking all five places to stay (barns and lodges) plus activities. In all there is space for 19 people.

A gypsy caravan in the gardens can be explored by all and, in the summer, there are tipis for some fun playtime.

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FAMILIES SPECIAL OFFER

Fair Oak Farm is offering Families Surrey East readers a **10% DISCOUNT** on mid-week rates! The offer extends to mid-week bookings made before February 9th. Quote 'Families Surrey east' on booking to receive your 10% discount.