



Tried & tested:

# UK glampsites

Yurts, pods, safari lodges and gypsy caravans — we've tried them all to find the UK's finest luxe campsites. Here they are...

## Wild Luxury Thornham Bay, Norfolk

**Best for:** Foodies. Between the gourmet fish 'n' chippy and the well-stocked farm shop five minutes' walk away, you can eat restaurant-quality grub while cuddling under canvas, in safari-camp-style lodges. **The glamp factor:** There's almost nothing that these safari lodges don't have, including tea lights for illuminating the outdoor terrace; a large dining table with proper crockery and wine glasses; a wood-burner oven; and plenty of kit for cooking up a storm (as well as a shower and proper loo, *obviously*). There's lighting, as well as plugs and fridges or coolboxes in all 11 lodges, but the biggest luxury is the space. With three separate rooms (plus a bathroom) to wander between, you're never tripping over each other. **Make time for:** Devour a sublime beer-battered haddock at nearby Eric's (ericfishandchips.com; mains about £10), then burn it off on a ramble along windswept coastal dunes, a 20-minute walk down a snaking boardwalk.



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Specialist websites Canopy and Stars (canopyandstars.co.uk) and Cool Camping (coolcamping.com) feature plush glampsites with friendly price tags in France, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

**Know this:** It's an extra £6.95pp if you want linen provided — and you'll need to bring your own towels. **The details:** Up to six people in a safari lodge, from £425 for four nights midweek (wildluxury.co.uk).

## Ekopod, Cornwall

**Best for:** Stylish couples. With faux-fur throws and copper-trimmed fairy lights, the three geodomes on this site by Bodmin Moor are as slick as city penthouses. But their views of verdant fields are 100% Cornwall. **The glamp factor:** Inside your pod, a wood-burner keeps things toasty, though you'll warm up well snuggling under fuzzy throws in your canopy-draped four-poster anyway. There's an ottoman and solar lighting (huddle up with a book) — just remember to charge the lamps outside during the day or else you'll have to read by candlelight (there's no electricity). The rest happens alfresco: there's a fire pit for toasting marshmallows and a compact kitchen packing all the essentials (pre-stocked with Cornish

Cheddar, chutney and biscuits). A separate bathroom comes with bathtub, loo and Cornish soaps. **Make time for:** Be sure to wander into the picture-perfect local village, St Clether. There's a wonky old church and a holy well, while the Old Vicarage (the house adjoining the glampsite) features in a Thomas Hardy poem. **Know this:** Being next to Bodmin Moor, things can get windy. Pack earplugs to drown out the late-night whistling, especially in cooler months. **The details:** Two in a geodome, from £210 for three nights (ekopod.co.uk).

## Chiltern Yurt Retreat, Buckinghamshire

**Best for:** London weekenders. The three quirky structures — a wood-panelled cabin, spacious yurt and the 'Badger's Bower' (a converted tabernacle or portable chapel) — feel miles from anywhere. But Wendover station, less than an hour by rail to London, is just a 10-minute walk away. **The glamp factor:** Each property has its own vibe, but the highlight is the tabernacle, a cosy, one-room home-from-home with generous bathtub, electricity and indoor compost loo. Heating ups the luxe factor, so even in cool weather you're toasty. There's a private outdoor hot tub (£30 per day), and the kitchen has all the necessities. But if you're allergic to self-catering, then tea rooms, pubs and restaurants

line Wendover High Street in abundance, eliminating the need to fire up the provided barbecue. **Make time for:** You can get alternative spa treatments, including reflexology and reiki, in your room, from £50 an hour. **Know this:** The only thing missing? Shampoo and body wash. Pack 'em. **The details:** Two adults in a cabin, yurt or tabernacle, from £250 for two nights (chilternyurtretreat.co.uk).

## Secret Meadows, Suffolk

**Best for:** The glam family. These gypsy caravans and lodges, surrounded by farm fields outside Ipswich, have a back-to-nature-feel — and on-site fun to suit adults and kids alike. **The glamp factor:** The colourful gypsy caravan and 'hobbit box' cabins, each sleeping four, are perfect for squirrelling away in. Though small, they contain cleverly placed dining tables, kitchens and loos, with candle chandeliers and beds tucked away in oversized cupboards. If you're a larger group — or travelling with older children — the safari lodges provide more space. But what makes this site great for families is that it's *easy*: an honesty larder at the bottom of the field, stocked with local goodies and BBQ essentials, is heaven-sent (you won't have to go out for food); board games and kid-friendly books keep little 'uns busy by day; and a quiet site by night ensures no-one is kept up unduly past their bedtime.

**Make time for:** Hire your own chicken coop for fresh eggs for breakfast (£24 per stay). It's pricier than the shops, but kids adore helping round up the hens. **Know this:** Highchairs come at an extra cost of £6 per stay. **The details:** Four (two adults and two children), from £295 for two nights (secretmeadows.co.uk)

## Crafty Camping, Dorset

**Best for:** Woodland-loving grown-ups. This adults-only site, tucked in a patch of west Dorset forest, has a jumble of bell tents, yurts, tipis, shepherd's huts — and one spectacular treehouse. **The glamp factor:** Bell tents and yurts look fairly standard from the outside, but step in to find proper beds, fluffy down duvets, electric sockets, log-burners and heated towel racks. There's an outdoor communal kitchen (complete with pizza oven and dough for sale), alongside a chill-out yurt with honesty bar and games, and a sauna. If you book a bell tent (the cheapest), you'll share bathrooms — otherwise, you get your own. For the two-person treehouse (from £176 for two nights), book months ahead. Thanks to its private hot tub, sauna and built-in slide, it's popular. **Make time for:** The woodworking tutorials on site are the reason many people come. Depending on your level of interest, opt for a two-hour 'have a go' class (£48), or a five-day chair-making course (from £834).

**Know this:** It's a bit of a hike from the car park to the edges of the site, so pack light and bring sturdy shoes. **The details:** Two in a bell tent, from £176 for two nights (mallinson.co.uk).

## Glampotel, Edinburgh

**Best for:** Edinburgh Festival escapees. Swaddled among Scots pines on Dundas Castle's loch, 10 'canvas cottages' (bell tents) offer tranquillity 30 minutes' drive from the action. **The glamp factor:** The roomy bell tents feature all the glamping staples (king-size bed, Egyptian cottons, chunky wooden furniture), but it's the little touches that add an extra level of luxury, from eco-friendly toiletries in your en-suite bathroom to breakfast hampers with farm-shop treats. A recent upgrade added electricity, while wood-burners have been swapped for cosy gas stoves (to stop you smelling like a bonfire when you decamp to the city). Mostly, though, you'll want to stay put, idling over a barbecue dinner on your heated deck, watching the swans on the loch. **Make time for:** Walk around the estate (a map is provided) — you're pretty much guaranteed to see deer. **Know this:** The castle isn't open for tours, so you'll have to stick to exploring the landscaped grounds. **The details:** Bell tents sleeping two adults (and up to two kids), from £159 a night (glampotelundascastle.com).

The great outdoors: opposite, from left, spacious safari lodge at Wild Luxury Thornham Bay; interior of a geodome at Ekopod; a cabin at Chiltern Yurt Retreat; gypsy caravan at Secret Meadows. Above, from left, inside a yurt at Crafty Camping; a bell tent at Glampotel

WORDS: KATE HOCKENHULL, ALICIA MILLER, TAMZIN REYNOLDS