

Great British ROMANCE

Enjoy the love-is-in-the-air magic at these UK stays



With acres to roam, outdoor dining in hot-air balloons or The Glasshouse (right), all tastes are catered for at The Grove

I BEST FOR: A SUITE STAY *The Grove, Hertfordshire*

WHY GO Just 18 miles north of London, The Grove boasts vast grounds, facilities galore and multiple restaurants. But the real draw is its clutch of recently renovated suites, combining modern design with Georgian original features. Just the thing for a special occasion splash-out.

YOUR STAY From the moment you roll up The Grove's winding drive, you'll be impressed by the resort's scale. With

forests, a walled garden, art-dotted gardens and golf courses, tennis courts and laser clay-pigeon shooting, there's plenty here vying for your attention. And that's before you even see the Sequoia Spa, featuring treatments by Bamford.

However, everything else falls away when you check into one of the refurbished Mansion Suites. Overlooking the neat lawns and complete with the likes of marbled bathrooms, real

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fireplaces and free champagne-stocked mini-bars, they're the epitome of romance. Light pours in from rows of Georgian windows, and stylish contemporary furniture provides the perfect place for curling up with your other half. Suddenly, you might not feel like going out at all.

OUT AND ABOUT Most people come just to enjoy the estate – and with so much to see and do here, you should make the most of it. However, if you're itching to explore further afield, the National Trust's Ashridge Estate is just half an hour away.

✦ **Double rooms from £370 per night and Mansion Suites from £890 per night, including breakfast; thegrove.co.uk**



romantic retreats

A tucked-away courtyard garden is perfect for intimate al fresco meals

2 BEST FOR: COSY SELF-CATERING

Rose Lodge, Cornwall

WHY GO Perfectly styled for just two, this historic self-catering lodge in sleepy Perranarworthal puts all of Cornwall's walking wonders within easy access.

YOUR STAY Rose Lodge looks like it's been plucked from a storybook. Step through the cute arched doorway and you'll be welcomed by a wood-burner-warmed lounge, a double bedroom painted in soft blush, and a modern kitchen leading out to a courtyard garden with dining table. There's underfloor heating warming the parquet and a bathtub big enough for two – just the thing to revive you after a day spent rambling along the Cornish coast.

OUT AND ABOUT As the cottage is set between Truro and Falmouth, it doesn't take long to get anywhere from your home base. Pull on your boots and strike out to the lush Roseland Peninsula, where a walk from St Mawes



DOG FRIENDLY

to St Just-in-Roseland is rewarded by a cream tea at St Just Church Cafe. Or meander from the Ferry Boat Inn along the rising and falling landscapes fringing the Helford River, fuelled by a sublime pasty from nearby Gear Farm.

✦ **Long weekends and midweek breaks from £609 self-catering; boutique-retreats.co.uk >>**

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3 BEST FOR: STATELY ALLURE

Hartwell House, Buckinghamshire



WHY GO Nestled in 90 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds, just a short drive from Aylesbury, this stunning National Trust hotel is steeped in history. It's a dream getaway for lovers – especially those with a taste for exquisite gardens.

YOUR STAY Meandering through the picturesque grounds of Hartwell House, awash with 18th-century monuments, you'll feel as if you're on the set of *The Crown*. Royalty have resided here, and the interior features regal portraits flanking grand period fireplaces or resting on antique pieces of furniture. Spot swans gliding across the lakes, avenues of trees towering into the sky and, in spring, thousands of daffodils

beginning to blossom. The hotel can provide brollies and wellies if needed or, on a brighter day, enjoy a picnic filled with treats picked straight from the hotel's orchards and allotments.

After you've seen it all, enjoy the opulent interiors – every one of the Georgian rooms at Hartwell tells a story. For example, the Royal Meteorological Society was founded in the library in 1850. Take afternoon tea in the same room or spend a few hours in the luxurious spa.

OUT AND ABOUT You'll have free entry to all National Trust properties during your stay, so start exploring. Or if you're looking to do a little shopping with your other half, pop to Bicester Village, half-an-hour's drive away.

✚ **Double rooms from £295 per night, including breakfast;** hartwell-house.com



Hartwell House oozes Georgian charm and prides itself on fine dining





A cosy bolthole
with panoramic
views and walks
on the doorstep

4 BEST FOR: LAKESIDE LOUNGING

The Smithy, Cumbria

WHY GO This former blacksmith's cottage overlooking Helm Crag and Steel Fell in the Lake District comes with sublime views – and room service on tap. As it's owned by bistro-with-rooms The Yan at Broadrayne, The Smithy boasts all the culinary benefits of a hotel stay, but with the privacy of a self-catering hideaway.

YOUR STAY Converted to strike the balance between atmospheric and modern, The Smithy has all the essentials for a cosy twosome break – a wood-burning stove, deep soaking tub and a snug bedroom in warm neutrals. There's also a south-facing garden, the perfect place to sit out ahead of a catered dinner featuring venison and saffron arancini or



Grasmere Herdwick lamb shepherd's pie. If you'd rather cook yourself, the team can provide anything from eggs laid by their resident hens to bottles of fizz.

OUT AND ABOUT Walks abound from your front door, whether you fancy tackling slopes to Grisedale Tarn or wandering over to the pretty village of nearby Grasmere. At the latter, crown your walk with a boat ride on the lake or a visit to Allan Bank, once the home of poet William Wordsworth.

✚ From £175 per night self-catering or £375 including breakfast and dinner; theyan.co.uk

romantic retreats



5 BEST FOR: SPA PAMPERING

The Gainsborough Bath Spa, Bath

WHY GO Nestled among the city's cobbled lanes, The Gainsborough offers something no other Bath hotel does – its own thermal mineral pools. You and your partner can relax in warm, mineral-rich waters before an in-depth pampering session in the hotel's fabulous spa.

YOUR STAY This five-star hotel offers luxurious bedrooms with contemporary classic styling, and the on-site restaurant serves up impressive modern British meals. Guests can access the thermal waters every morning and evening for free, but for more privacy, book a spa treatment during the day and, as part of the deal, you can enjoy the Roman-inspired pool complex (below) almost to yourself. For an al fresco soak, hotel staff can arrange private hire of the nearby Cross Bath, an outdoor thermal pool.

OUT AND ABOUT From towering Bath Abbey to the stalls of Guildhall Market, Bath's architecture lends itself to love.

Wander through the Roman Baths to see where the city's bathing culture began. Or take tea in the Pump Room, where visitors came to drink the waters.

✚ Double rooms from £233, including breakfast; thegainsboroughbathspa.co.uk



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