Get the gang together

From beachside retreats and cottages to stylish country piles and luxe villas, group stays have gone up a gear. Orla Neligan discovers how all three generations and your best friends can holiday in harmony together, at home and overseas

Forget the stereotypical 2.4 holiday: parents, kids and beach. A lot of standards have changed since the pandemic, with people rethinking how they want to spend their precious days off and a renewed enthusiasm for multi-generational and bonding breaks with friends.

Group getaways are one of travel's biggest post-pandemic trends. Hotels, guesthouses and anyone with a home worthy of renting have developed a savvy sense for delivering accommodation that keeps granny happy just as much as your moody teen, and gives adults a chance to reconnect amid the whirl of career and parenting responsibilities, with plenty of space to come together and escape alone should you need to.

Airbnb is awash with generous homes catering for extended clans; luxury hotels like Dromoland, which has just opened its first lodge accommodation catering for groups of 10, are responding with packages and offers designed to help larger groups get together; and even some airlines like Easyjet are recognising the desire to holiday en masse with its 'grans go free' offer.

We've rounded up 20 great places at home and abroad that'll allow for bonding time and space for when you're driving each other nuts. From remote Irish islands and stylish pads to Georgian townhouses and French farmhouses, there's something for the entire clan or your favourite friends — all 50 of them.

Groups of 8-12

Burrenmore Nest, Co Derry

There's a new breed of sumptuous self-catering stays that eschew the traditions of a hotel for wild escapism that combines grace and privacy. The lodges at Burrenmore Nest are just one of a few new cabin-style retreats that are so much more than treehouses. Think slick wooden hideouts sequestered in the middle of lush forest in the historic Downhill Estate grounds, some of them on stilts for elevated viewing. The interiors channel luxury cabin living with king-size beds, fully equipped kitchens, built-in home cinema projectors and private outdoor whirlpools. You might be off-grid but you're certainly not roughing it.

Details: From £265 per lodge per night; *burrenmore-nest.com*

Sleeps: Nine across four lodges

If you like this, try: Slow Cabins, Galway (sleeps 10); *slow-cabins.ie*

Ocean Lodge, Co Clare

There are no bows to passing fashion at this slick seaside holiday home sandwiched between Doughmore Bay and Doonbeg golf course on the Wild Atlantic Way, with everything you need for a cosy winter break or summer escape. Expect underfloor heating, wood-burning stove, steam room, fully equipped gym, pizza oven, barbecue, large outdoor seating area and a hanging chair on the porch — a guest favourite — perennially swinging with wine-sipping/coffee-drinking guests. The large open-plan ground floor is ideal for large gatherings, and Co Clare's major attractions are just 15 minutes away.

Details: From €600 per night/€5,000 per week in high season; *airbnb.com/rooms/40550073*

Sleeps: 12

If you like this, try: Wild Atlantic Way Beach House, Sligo (sleeps 10); *vrbo.com/2197265*

Westerly House, Co Cork

West Cork has long been a popular pilgrimage point for those looking to escape the city for an Irish seaside break and yet you'd be forgiven for thinking you've landed in the Hamptons at this gorgeous shingled house with its own private pontoon over Bantry Bay. Built by a French architect in 1949, and subsequently home to Peter Barry (of Barry's Tea), the house is perfect for family or friends with plenty of nooks and crannies in which to hide out as well as large rooms for gatherings, an outdoor hot tub and use of three kayaks.

Details: From €8,800 for three nights/€2,800 per week; *westerlyhouse.ie*

Sleeps: 12

If you like this, try: The Boat House, Cork (sleeps eight); *twinkbeg.com/holiday-home-rental/*

Riad Jardin Secret, Marrakech

Owned by a creative duo from Paris, this seven-bedroom riad has their stylish stamp all over it, from the lavish stucco-work, ornate courtyards and artisanal textiles to the lush garden and cosy seating nooks. Rooms are beautifully finished with market finds and mosaic tiles, and the shaded terrace is perfect for chilling with a book or lingering over the organic breakfast — a real highlight. The absence of a pool might be a clincher for some but it's a dreamy spot for those after a restful getaway and to live as the locals do.

Details: From €1,900 a night; *riadjardinsecret.com*

Sleeps: 15

If you like this, try: Riad Tizwa (sleeps 15), Marrakech; *riadtizwa.com*

Ballyvolane House, Co Cork

A home designed for valuable time in communal areas, Ballyvolane has multi-generations and large parties in mind, ticking just about every box: gregarious hosts, historic house, stellar food and plenty to do, with a tennis court, football pitch and farm animals to feed, wooded grounds, a high tea for the kids, a lavish honesty bar, and a distillery where they make their very own gin, Bertha's Revenge. Stay in the main house, one of the boho chic glamping options or the quirky 'Father Ted's caravan'. Either way, you and your extended clan will feel right at home.

Details: Full exclusivity from €3,000 per night; *ballyvolanehouse.ie*

Sleeps: 12/32 with glamping option

If you like this, try: Rock Farm, Meath (sleeps 36/52 glamping); *therockfarm.ie*

Le Moulin Sur Célé and below: Sligo Sea Barn Previous page: Burrennore Nest

former purpose as a cow shed belies its plush interior, which has come a long way since its bovine roots. Owners Des and Mary have taken great pride in creating a chic and comfortable home from home. It's unlikely there will be any arguing over rooms — all are huge with en-suite bathrooms, balconies and views of the ocean (and the cows), the kitchen is well-equipped for caterers or dining in and there's quiet rooms for escaping. Private access to the beach and tractor rides with Des are the icing on the country cake. It featured on our Fab 50 this year.

Details: €2,850 for two-night stay for 12 guests/€240pp for two-night stay for up to 17 guests; *sligoseabarn.ie*

Sleeps: 19

If you like this, try: Loughderg Lodge (sleeps 20); *fivestar.ie/self-catering/lough-derg-lodge/*

Roundwood House, Co Laois

Grand, romantic yet effortlessly informal, Roundwood House is the place to let loose for the weekend with your mates or extended family. It's all squishy sofas, roaring fires and evenings spent feasting around a communal dining table with the promise of a sing-song and dancing accompanied by owner Paddy, a former full-time musician. Don't forget to enjoy a pre-dinner tipple in the Library of Civilisation in the Old Coach House and explore the extensive grounds with native woodland and wildflower meadows.

Details: €1,200 per night for Main House/€2,000 per night for Main and Yellow House; *roundwoodhouse.com*

Sleeps: 20

If you like this, try: Lisdonagh House, Galway (sleeps 18); *lisdonagh.com*

Within The Village, Co Galway

Everything about these five townhouses, converted from a former pub and guesthouse, feels authentically Irish, with interiors that brilliantly balance rustic and chic. All are interconnected and each has different bedrooms to suit grandparents, parents and kids or various friend groups, from ground-floor rooms to luxury bunks. "Family gatherings are great but it's not always easy sharing the same space for a few days," says manager Maria Murphy. Sustainability is a core consideration with original features, local crafts and Burren Perfumery toiletries. One of the aces in their hand is the location in the middle of Roundstone village with the beautiful communal outdoor area designed by award-winning landscape gardener Mark Grehan and personal touches like welcome refreshments, Tweed Project textiles and a 30-bottle wine fridge (should you be planning a party).

Details: €4,000 for a two-night stay; *withinthevillage.ie*

Sleeps: 29

If you like this, try: Doolin Village Lodges (sleeps 21); *doolinvillagelodges.com*

Casa Branca, Portugal

This small family-run, family-friendly retreat in the Algarve is a welcome oasis from the swarming summer beaches. Set in three acres of woodland, there are three fully furnished safari lodges and a luxury chalet so you can travel lightly and sleep deeply. Kids run free through the gardens, pool and children's play park, while adults kick back in the outdoor kitchen with barbecue and pizza oven, dipping in and out of the honesty fridge. There's giant garden chess and hammocks for star gazing and, if you decide to leave, Algarve's beaches are just six miles away.

Details: £2,200-£4,950 for seven nights; *casabranca.co.uk*

Sleeps: 20

If you like this, try: Aterra Eco Boutique glamping (sleeps 20); *aterra.pt*

Parties of 20+

Killyhevlin Lodges, Co Fermanagh

These hygge-friendly huts put a new spin on the summer camp getaway serving up Scandi-style comforts and rural vibes without scrimping on luxury. Each one comes with walk-in showers, private decks that jut out over Lough Erne and all mod-cons, and some are pet-friendly so the whole family can join. If all six are booked together, they