

Ireland AM: 25th August – Quirky Family Holidays with an eco-twist

- ‘Glamping’- the term given to chic camp-sites, where accommodation is in yurts, funky vintage caravans, wooden cabins and even tree-houses.
- Different levels of comfort, ranging from more basic bell-tents, to wooden floor yutes with king-size beds, fires, bathrooms to luxurious eco-lodges with all the mod-cons.
- Sites are usually in remote, picturesque locations, such as on farms or in forests and it’s a very affordable which is important for so many these days.
- It’s also something very different and what child would not be excited to sleep in a tepee or old caravan? Yet adults are catered for in terms of basic luxuries!

FRANCE

- Alain-Dominique Perrin has been buying camp-sites around France and creating luxurious eco-friendly sites suitable for family holidays:

Camping Les Moulins, Île De Noirmoutier (www.camping-les-moulins.com)

- Little island off the west coast of France, southwest of Nantes in the Vendee Region.
- Long stretch of beach and they planted 4000 trees during renovations
- Huge range of camping options and accommodation to rent, all made from natural materials – canvas and wood.
- Hire a tepee or eco-lodge, which is a hut on stilts - inside they have wooden floors, sectioned off bedrooms, dining area and all mod cons – electricity, fridge, gas stove and even a microwave.
- The beach is beautiful for walking, swimming, host of watersports and there’s a pool, spa and play areas for kids.
- Kids camps are arranged throughout the summer.
- Open from April – September.

How to get there:

Flights Direct to Nantes

From €39 one way

www.rvanair.com

Ferry from Rosslare to Roscoff

From €114 car and 2 passengers one way

www.irishferries.com

Prices From:

Tepee Tent (sleeps 4) from **€299 per week**

Superior eco-lodges with bathroom from **€399**

Weekend rates from **€90 - €150**

UK

Feather Down Farms, UK (www.featherdown.co.uk)

- One of the pioneers is a company called Feather Down Farms, who opened their first site in 2006.
- Concept was brought over by a Dutch man and started with one site, expanding to 26 sites around England and Wales and one was recently added in Northern Ireland – Ash Park in Derry.
- The idea is to get back to nature, slow down and spend time with your family.
- Accommodation is in African safari tents located on a working farm; they are not your typical tent, rather they are fully equipped with wooden floors, living area, two bedrooms with comfortable beds and eiderdown duvets, a kitchen where all food is cooked on fire-stove.
- No electricity, light is by candle-light and oil lanterns.
- It’s not all back to basics, there’s running water and a flushing toilet in the tent.
- Ash Farm - guests can help out on the farm, milk cows, collect eggs from the hens.
- 550 acres and the family have been farming the land since the 1600’s
- There are between 5 -7 tents in each location, all very spaced out for privacy.
- All are located in beautiful surrounds. Some by the sea, others deep in countryside, or by mountains.
- There’s plenty to do around the areas, fishing, walking, biking, but a lot of people opt to stay on the farm and enjoy the experience. You can even hire a goat or hens during your stay to teach kids how to take care of animals.

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- Some have luxuries such as outdoor hot tubs, order meals from the farmer.

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Fly direct to London/Manchester/South Hampton

From €19.99 each way

www.aerlingus.com

www.flybe.com

Ferry to Holyhead/Fishguard

From €120 one way

www.stenaline.ie

www.irishferries.com

Prices from:

Weekend breaks from £279

Mid-week breaks from £239

Week from £405

Ireland

Teapot Lane Luxury Camp, Tawley, Co. Leitrim (www.teapotlaneluxurycamp.com)

- Teapot Lane is new to the scene, opening in June last year and the idea was to provide a fun, rural family holiday retreat.
- Five-acres land there are two thatched cottages, three yurts and a bell tent. Next year they are adding a tree-house.
- One of the cottages can be rented out for big groups.
- Yurts are very eco-friendly, down to the material used to make them and they are insulated with lambs wool. Inside they're cosy with wooden floors, pot bellied stoves, king size beds and compost toilet and sink.
- Use lanterns and candles for light.
- Two indoor kitchens and BBQ's & communal space with books and games for kids, which is essential in case it rains and there's a little playground and hammocks littered around.
- The camp fires at night are a big hit with people gathering about for a few drinks.
- They can arrange guided walks in the area, horse-riding, foraging around the grounds for wild fruits and vegetables and there's acres simply just to roam about. It's also only a five-minute drive from Bundoran so you can go surfing or there are a number of beaches around there.

Prices

Weekends from €160 per tent (Sleeps 2 – 4)

Week long from €550 per tent (Sleeps 2-4)

Tents can sleep up to 6 people

Ardnahoo Eco-Lodges, Leitrim (www.ardnahoo.com)

This is more luxurious and no camping involved as accommodation is in luxury eco-cabins. They've been open for ten years and are well established. There are 3 wood cabins accommodating up to 7 people in the larger cabin. They are fully equipped with bathrooms, kitchen and separate bedrooms. It started off as a health farm and this is still a major focus. Guests can get treatments or take part in yoga or meditation classes. It's also very family friendly with a playground on site and plenty of local walks.

Weekends from €150 pps

Week long from €225 pps

Weekend retreats from €170 pps