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The Burren County Down

By Johanna Payton · On April 28, 2015

Freelance journalist and exiled Londoner [Heidi Scrimgeour](#) reviews a hideaway holiday house in Northern Ireland. Read her review of *The Burren County Down*.

With dramatic views of the Mountains of Mourne and private access to Tyrella beach, it's difficult to believe that this luxurious holiday house is just 25 miles south of Belfast.

You'll find [The Burren](#) nestled at the end of a winding country lane just outside the village of Dundrum. There's not much there, but the castle is worth a visit and dinner at [The Buck's Head](#) is a must.

Beyond the front door, the view of the mountains that greets you through floor-to-ceiling patio doors is a tonic for any tired traveller, but the real treat is upstairs, where leather sofas are artfully arranged to make the most of the gorgeous views of mountains and sea. Picture windows open onto a balcony, where the smell of the sea and the sound of waves crashing onto the beach conspire to ease any frayed edges that your ferry crossing might have wrought. Relaxation doesn't usually come naturally to me, but I defy anyone to resist the pull of that sofa. It cries out to be languished on and – once you succumb – the sight of those moody mountains does something good to the soul.

The kids in our company appreciated the flat screen TV and DVD player, too – we dispatched them upstairs while the grown-ups lingered

over after-dinner coffee, enjoying all four seasons in an hour passing over those picturesque peaks. We couldn't tear ourselves away from the view long enough to actually light the open fire (a cosy option for a winter retreat). I imagine Christmas would be magical here, and the dining table with seating for 12 is perfect for New Year's Eve feasting.

A four bedroom house that comfortably sleeps 12, The Burren is surprisingly spacious. The open-plan lounge/diner and large adjoining kitchen make mealtimes super-sociable, which isn't always the case when you're catering en masse away from home. The kitchen is well-equipped with everything from cosy-clad teapots and numerous cafetieres to kid-friendly cutlery and a bottle opener. There's even a pizza slice.

The bedrooms are generously-sized and thoughtfully-furnished, and three out of four have en-suite bathrooms. We had five cousins aged 10 and under in our company, all determined to recreate an adventure worthy of Enid Blyton during our stay, so the private path to the beach and the enclosed acre of gardens were welcome indeed. I loved that my toddler could safely roam around outside once we closed all the gates, and we had many a happy game of adults vs kids football on the front lawn. (We trounced the rug-rats.)

There's oodles for families to do right on the doorstep, and the close proximity of Belfast means you can combine your seaside idyll with some decent retail therapy. We particularly enjoyed a walk and a picnic at [Tollymore Forest Park](#), and a stroll along the boardwalk with dune jumping at [Murlough Bay](#).

Our party of 12, including three generations, stayed for a week, and we were each sorry to leave. I left a little piece of my heart in this house, which just means, happily, that I'll be forced to return in order to reclaim it.



The Burren is a home-from-home for families or groups



The countryside on is on your doorstep



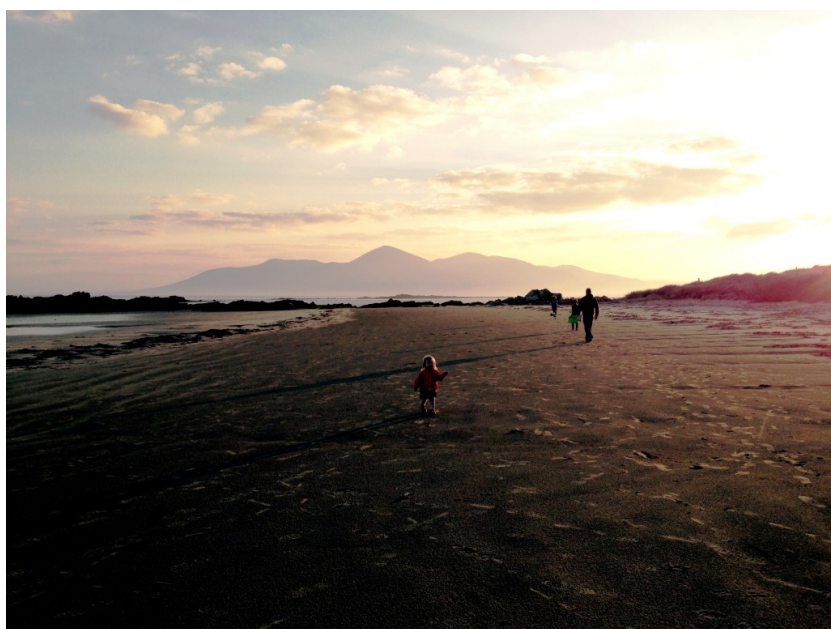
The Burren is great for larger families or groups



The beach is not too far away



The views are unforgettable



Heidi's daughter enjoyed the beautiful beach

How to get to The Burren, County Down without flying:

From England, you can take a **Stena Line ferry from Liverpool to Belfast**, or from Scotland, there are six crossings daily **from Cairnryan**.

From Belfast, The Burren is a 25 minute drive.

Writer: Heidi Scrimgeour for Feet on the Ground

Images: The Burren / Heidi Scrimgeour

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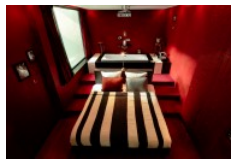
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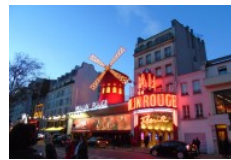
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