

Christmas in a hotel comes with all the trimmings - and no washing up

Staying in a hotel this year could be a Christmas gift but be warned, it can be expensive. Fancy a horse drawn carriage drive to Christmas mass? Or how about a gospel choir serenading you with carols? Or better yet, your turkey and ham served up to you on a plate – and with no quarrels over who is doing the tidying up! Staying in a hotel this year could be the Christmas gift you never thought you wanted; but be warned, it will cost.

All over the country, people are starting to gear up for the biggest family event of the year. Over the coming weeks, people will start buying presents, decorating the house, clearing out rooms for adult children who will be returning home, and trying to figure out where extra guests will sleep.

It can be a lot of work, but for most people, the joy of having everyone together, even for one day, is worth it.

However, if you don't relish the thought of slaving over a hot stove, cleaning the house from top to bottom or even having every room full of guests, or, on the other side of the coin, you may not have any visitors and would actually relish spending time with others, a hotel could be an option for you.

So, for all of those who want to enjoy the festive season without the fuss and bother, we have put together a few ideas for getting away from it all and being pampered in the lap of luxury.

If you're looking for the hotel experience – but don't want to give up your festive decorations – you could consider Carton House in Kildare, where you can get a suite with your own Christmas tree.

Its festive celebrations start on Christmas Eve, where guests will be welcomed with a champagne and canapé reception, while enjoying carols sung by the local Maynooth Gospel Choir.

Suites or state rooms in the main house, the magnificent 18th century building, come with their own Christmas tree, but you can also book the cheaper options in the garden wing. Another option is the beautiful four-bedroom Lennox Lodge, complete with living area and kitchen, making it the perfect place for a family or group of friends.

[Christmas online shopping: 101 of the best Irish websites to buy gifts from]

Guests will receive a stocking full of treats on Christmas morning and following a buffet breakfast, can wrap up and enjoy a walk or cycle around the estate or a leisurely swim in the wellness suite to work up an appetite for the fabulous five-course festive lunch. A two-night package is available from €1,165 per person based on two adults sharing.

Or how about a stay in the heart of Galway city, overlooking Lough Atalia? A two-night festive break at the Galmont Hotel and Spa, starts from €570 per person sharing, with three nights (including dinner on St. Stephen's night) from €745 per person sharing. You can expect mince pies, muffins, hot chocolate and mulled wine on Christmas Eve, plus a visit from Santa on Christmas Day, and bubbles and canapés before a festive lunch.

For a castle experience (here's hoping it snows!), how about [Dromoland](#) Castle in Co Clare, where a special surprise visitor will bring gifts for everyone, while guests will be encouraged to relax in front of a roaring fire or enjoy the magical sounds of local carol singers, as part of its Christmas package. A hawk walk with the castle's resident falconer is also possible.

The special festive three-night package will finish with a relaxed dinner in the [Earl of Thomond](#) Restaurant and [Earl of Thomond](#) Terrace, followed by post-dinner entertainment and costs €2,532 per person.

It is one of the most familiar landmarks in Dublin, so spending Christmas at The Shelbourne Hotel is undoubtedly going to be special. Having played host to centuries of revellers, at Christmas time and throughout the years, the combination of old-world elegance, luxury and a relaxed vibe make the venue the perfect home from home in the city.

Celebrations start on Christmas Eve with a four-course lunch or dinner in the Saddle Room, followed by an afternoon spent relaxing by the fire, taking a stroll around Stephen's Green or the festive city streets or simply enjoying the luxury of your hotel accommodation.

On Christmas morning, guests can enjoy a traditional Irish breakfast followed by a special visit from Santa Claus in the Lord Mayor's Lounge, before a five-course lunch, which takes place in the Saddle Room Restaurant.

A two-night Christmas stay costs from €770 per person, based on two people sharing, with children under 16 at €350 each.

Adare Manor in Co Limerick promises a Christmas celebration of “unforgettable splendour”. Beginning on Christmas Eve with a festive champagne afternoon tea in The Gallery, or lunch in The Carriage House, Santa will also be in residence for anyone who wants to pop in for a chat at his secret location on the estate, which can be reached by horse and carriage.

[I ordered my Christmas tree. I won't be decorating it until December 8th though. I'm not a complete animal]

A champagne reception will take place before a lavish dinner and as the evening comes to a close, visitors can avail of a chauffeur to take them to Christmas Eve mass at the beautiful Holy Trinity Church in the village, or head to the Tack Room for a nightcap and some light entertainment.

Christmas Day will also see the opportunity to visit the local church service following breakfast in The Gallery; alternatively, guests can enjoy relaxing around the manor house or exploring the estate before the festive lunch in the ballroom. The three-night package starts at €3,675 per person sharing.

A two-night break at the Killarney Plaza Hotel and Spa (including breakfast each morning and festive dinner on one evening), starts from €184 per person for two people sharing.

Pack the golf clubs to enjoy Christmas at The K Club, Co Kildare. A three-night Christmas Celebrations package, which includes family portraits, Christmas Eve mass, a performance from the Dublin Gospel Choir, a visit from Santa Claus and a kids magic show, is available from €3,090.

Set in 1,300 acres of unspoilt countryside, a two-night stay at the Farnham Estate Spa & Golf Resort, Co Cavan starts from €519 per person sharing, with three nights from €690 per person.

If you fancy a Christmas Day swim – without the chill factor – Center Parcs in Longford has options, such as €1,999 for a three-bed woodland lodge for four nights. You can also pre order a tree and decorations for your lodge.

A three night Christmas package costs from €1,215 per person sharing, and four-night Christmas packages are from €1,499, at Mount Juliet Estate in Co Kilkenny.

For those who want to head away for Christmas, the UK is just a short hop away. The Fairmont Hotel Windsor Park, is within an hour of London, and packages cost from £1,745 (€1,999) for two people for a two-night stay (children are £45 per night).

If you want to be closer to the bright lights, then the COMO Metropolitan in London has Christmas packages from £800 per room (€916) per night, while COMO The Halkin is offering festive deals for £640 per night.

And if you really want to get away from it all, where could be more exotic than the Maldives. The Alila Kothaifaru is a serene island retreat offering Christmas with a difference, including a festive dive with Santa, a treasure hunt for hidden gifts around the tranquil lagoon and carol singers under the tropical night sky. A seven-night stay including flights and sea transfers costs from £7,620 per person (€8,733).

Caption: Caption:

Expand Christmas at the K Club: A three-night Christmas Celebrations package is available from €3,090 per person

kclub