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Brits acquire a taste for unusual holidays

FOR many years, Brits have had an unfair reputation for being unadventurous travellers. Stories abound about holidaymakers who have been visiting the same resort for the past 25 years, asking for the same room and – on occasion – wanting the same table for dinner.

But if the results of several new surveys are anything to go by, all that is changing.

Accommodation website booking.com, says three quarters of us want something weird and wonderful when booking a short break in the UK. When asked what their ideal 'out of the ordinary' accommodation might be, 70 per cent of the 2,000 people it surveyed said they'd like to stay in an historical building such as a castle.

A smaller percentage (13 per cent) said they like to be able to

live out a childhood fantasy when holidaying in the UK. And with the surge in enquiries for treehouse lodgings (such as Center Parcs and Chewton Glen Hotel & Spa) and shepherds' huts, it seems Brits are definitely becoming more playful when booking their breaks.

Booking.com supports this view, with an increasing number of visitors to the site searching for more surprising stays. Examples include the Llamas Pyjamas B&B in Penrith, a South American-themed hotel in the Lake District, where guests can enjoy trekking with llamas and a birds of prey experience; a converted railway station in Fetworth; or 'Hobbit' pods at Camp Katur in North Yorkshire.

But it's not just on home soil that we're learning to be braver. Banishing the stereotype that

Brits will only order fry-ups from picture menus, a survey by travel search site Momondo suggests we're willing to try more unusual cuisine when abroad. Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) said good food was essential to an enjoyable holiday, and 26 per cent liked to try unusual dishes in a country. Only 15 per cent preferred to stick with 'familiar' food.

"The Brits are culinary curious... food is the focal point for many of us when we travel," says Julie Pedersen, at Momondo.

"Food is a natural part of the sensory experience, so it follows that travellers want to taste different things when in new and exciting places."

So as our appetite for sampling new things continues to grow, hopefully those stereotypes of conservative, play-safe travellers will disappear once and for all.



The Llamas Pyjamas B&B, Penrith, one of the more surprising stays in the UK