

Devon & Cornwall



England's two most westerly counties tend to saunter into your soul, wander around and leave a trail of sandy footprints. These are places for barefoot beachcombing and sunset strolls, storm watching and star gazing, island hopping and moorland mooching. Devon and Cornwall are a blend of quiet hamlets, jewel-green meadows and breathtaking coast, and their charms range from ancient to modern, with all the best bits in between. From mystical stone circles on Dartmoor to the myth-rich castles at Tintagel and St Michael's Mount; from a creaking maritime history at Falmouth and Plymouth to cobbled fishing villages at Colvelly, Looe, Polperro and Fowey.

Devon and Cornwall are also alive with regeneration. Gastropubs, designer bars and boutique hotels are opening up practically everywhere you look. Old fishing harbours, derelict mining towns and faded seaside resorts are reinventing themselves as cultural centres, artistic havens and celebrity chef-run gastronomic hubs. In both counties you can check into supremely hip hotels, learn to ride the surf and then stuff yourself silly at elegant eateries – before hiking it off the next day on the moors. Party through the night in Newquay and Plymouth or get environmental inspiration at the Eden Project, ecofriendly Totnes or west Cornwall's exotic gardens. And then there's Exeter's stately cathedral, art-rich St Ives and the enticing Isles of Scilly – a Cornish archipelago with a touch of the Med. In fact, Devon and Cornwall have such a surfeit of charms it hardly seems fair on the rest of England. Make some space in your soul and prepare for sandy feet.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Becoming a barefoot castaway in the blissfully beguiling **Isles of Scilly** (p419)
- Hiking the myth-rich, mist-shrouded wilderness that is **Dartmoor** (p387)
- Hanging 10, or just hanging on, in the exhilarating surf off **Newquay** (p402)
- Discovering your inner gardener at subtropical **Trebah** (p411), Agatha Christie's **Greenway** (p380) and the huge biomes of the **Eden Project** (p406)
- Gazing up at the supremely serene, gloriously Gothic cathedral in **Exeter** (p375)
- Treating your tummy at great-for-gourmands **Padstow** (p400) and **Dartmouth** (p381)



■ POPULATION: 1.26 MILLION

■ AREA: 3947 SQ MILES

■ NUMBER OF THATCHED COTTAGES IN DEVON: 4000

