



Exmoor & North Devon

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Mason's Arms (p138)
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Best Wildlife Spots

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Why Go?

Thousands of holidaymakers peel past this region on their way to the (undeniably lovely) holiday spots further west. So they miss Exmoor, an enchanting national park, where heather-clad hills are roamed by wild ponies and red deer. Villages huddle cosily beside precipitous cliffs; dramatic headlands plunge towards mossy gorges; and sturdy towns deliver an authentic slice of rural life.

North Devon's charms are also worth the detour: classic surf breaks; a wild, jagged coast with vast expanses of sand; plus pretty villages, striking modern art, fine gardens and stately homes. Everywhere, restaurants serve just-caught seafood and produce fresh from furrow and farm, while sleep options range from comfy camping and vintage caravans to art-packed boutique hotels. That's why your Exmoor and North Devon detour just might end up being your destination.

When to Go

- ➔ **Apr & May** Vivid bluebells carpet woods; bright yellow gorse dots Exmoor. At Easter, attractions open.
- ➔ **Jun–Aug** By late-July, blooming heather turns Exmoor into a sea of purple. Expect (possibly) warmer days, but also more demands on accommodation.
- ➔ **Sep & Oct** Holiday crowds disperse, leaving (hopefully) reasonable weather and warmer seas, and definitely cheaper sleeping bills. Freshly gathered mushrooms enliven restaurant menus.
- ➔ **Oct** brings the spectacle of stags battling it out, as Exmoor's deer rut begins.
- ➔ **Dec** Short winter days reveal North Devon and Exmoor's exceptionally dark skies. Enjoy the magical, mischievous Dunster by Candlelight celebrations.



Exmoor & North Devon Highlights

- 1 Stag Safari** (p127)
Heading off-road to spot Exmoor's famous red deer.
- 2 Croyde** (p136) Riding the waves at Devon's uber-cool, thatched surf village.
- 3 Mortehoe** (p127)
Watching a shepherd and sheepdog herd their flock.
- 4 Stargazing** (p127)
Marvelling at constellations in this Dark Sky Reserve.
- 5 Hartland Abbey** (p139)
Tracing a timeline spanning centuries at this historic home.
- 6 Clovelly** (p138) Strolling the steep, cobbled streets of a supremely pretty fishing village.
- 7 Broomhill Sculpture Gardens** (p137) Hunting out artworks hidden in acres of magical woods.
- 8 Lundy Island** (p138)
Setting sail for your very own offshore, get-away-from-it-all, castaway escape.
- 9 RHS Rosemoor** (p134)
Exploring the riot of colour at this exemplar of garden designs.