

# Understand Devon & Cornwall

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Get up to speed on the local topics: house prices, energy sources, food and agriculture, tourism and Brexit.

## **HISTORY .....242**

From ancient stones to modern architecture, the southwest packs an astonishing amount of history into a tiny space.

## **FOOD & DRINK.....250**

From farm shops to vineyards and celebrity chef restaurants, the southwest is capitalising on its culinary credentials.

## **THE ARTS .....256**

West Cornwall has been a hotbed of artistic creativity since the early 19th century, and it shows no sign of slowing down.

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Coast and countryside, cities and surf: find out all about the region's rich flora and fauna, both above and below the waves.

# Devon & Cornwall Today

Welcome to the southwest, a land of beaches, countryside and coastline – as well as sky-high house prices and rock-bottom wages. It has more Blue Flag beaches than practically anywhere, as well as a higher proportion of second homes. Coastal communities are changing, towns are gentrifying, and not everywhere is sharing in the spoils. Will this all change post-Brexit? Only time will tell.

## Best in Music

**Word of Mouth** (Seth Lakeman; 2014) Devon's foremost folk artist explores his West Country roots.

**Year of the Clown** (3 Daft Monkeys; 2017) Playful pop-folk with a political edge courtesy of this longstanding Cornish band.

**Making Waves** (People's String Foundation; 2009) Heart-warming, multi-instrumental and huge amounts of fun from this folk orchestra.

**Every Kingdom** (Ben Howard; 2011) The classic post-surf soundtrack from this chilled singer-songwriter.

## Best in Print

**Vanishing Cornwall** (Daphne du Maurier; 1967) A lyrical history exploring various aspects of old Cornwall.

**Collected Poems** (Charles Causley; 2000) Cornwall's de facto poet laureate lived most of his life in Launceston.

**The Levelling Sea** (Philip Marsden; 2012) Fascinating account of Falmouth's seafaring heyday.

**The Cornish Overseas** (Phillip Payton; 1999) A readable account of Cornwall's post-mining migration.

**Jamaica Inn** (Daphne du Maurier; 1936) The classic thriller, set on Bodmin Moor.

## House Prices & Second Homes

Spiralling house prices and the ever-increasing number of second homes and retirement apartments continue to be thorny topics. With the average house price now more than 10 times the average wage in Cornwall and Devon, this region is officially one of the UK's most unaffordable areas, especially for young people and first-time buyers in picturesque places such as Salcombe, St Mawes, Perranporth, Padstow, Fowey and Falmouth. Cornwall and Devon also top the league for the number of holiday homes (50,000-plus, and growing), but the debate rumbles on about how much these homes-away-from-home actually contribute to the local economy. One solution is to let locals decide: a recent vote in St Ives to limit new-build homes to residents working locally met with widespread approval, and may point the way forward in years to come.

## Fine Food & Sustainable Fish

Food and drink continue to be major growth areas. From Michelin-starred restaurants to microbreweries, coffee-roasters to chocolate makers, vineyards to gin distilleries and street-food vans to food-box schemes, the southwest's producers are leading the way when it comes to culinary innovation – and, in a world where local sourcing and seasonal ingredients are becoming ever more important, that's a really positive sign. Similarly, the southwest's fisheries are pioneering more sustainable fishing practices – since 2012, the 90-sq-mile Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve has enabled conservationists to work with fishers to preserve fish stocks and ensure the health of the marine environment.