



### ♥ HISTORY

From ancient stones to modern architecture, the southwest packs an astonishing amount of history into a tiny space. (p257)

### ♥ CORNWALL & THE ARTS

West Cornwall has been a hotbed of artistic creativity since the early 19th century. (p266)

### ♥ OUTDOORS

This vast adventure playground offers the ultimate great escape. It could spell the start of a new passion or the rediscovery of an old. (p271)

### ♥ GARDENS

Step back in time and explore the stories of some of the southwest's glorious landscaped gardens. (p277)

### ♥ FOOD & DRINK

Famously a gourmet hot spot and celebrity-chef-packed zone, the southwest also leads the way in green, sustainable cuisine. (p281)

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# HISTORY

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## ANCIENT STONES

It's thought that humans have inhabited southwest England for more than 100,000 years, but the first evidence of human settlement is a jawbone dating from around 35,000 BC, unearthed in Kents Cavern (p144), near Torquay, during an excavation in 1927. (Academic opinion is still divided as to whether the bone belongs to a Neanderthal or prehistoric ancestors of *Homo sapiens*.) The earliest settlers were tribes of hunter-gatherers, living seasonally from the land and travelling in pursuit of game. The oldest complete skeleton ever discovered in Britain was found in Cheddar Gorge (p65) and dates from around 7150 BC.

The first signs of organised farming and animal domestication emerged around 4000 BC. Around this time prehistoric builders developed their taste for eye-catching architecture, and built many stone rings, menhirs, quoits and barrows across Devon, Dartmoor, Bodmin Moor, Penwith and the Isles of Scilly.

By 1800 BC there was already a thriving trade in gold, tin, bronze and copper between southwest mines and many parts of Europe and the Mediterranean. This trade continued following the arrival of the Celts, who established themselves in southwest Britain from around 1000 BC.

The Celts quickly conquered much of the area, establishing themselves in hilltop forts and coastal strongholds such as Maiden Castle (p106), just outside Dorchester, and Ham Hill (p79) in Somerset. Over the next few centuries, Celtic society flourished in southwest Britain and developed its own culture, architecture and language, but by the 1st century BC, a new wave of invaders had landed and brushed all but the hardest Celtic defenders aside. *Veni, vidi, vici* – the Romans had arrived.

*'Celtic society flourished in southwest Britain and developed its own culture, architecture and language'*

## ROMAN RULE & THE COMING OF THE KINGS

The first Roman landings in Britain were led by Julius Caesar in 55 BC. In AD 43 Aulus Plautius invaded Britain with around 20,000 troops, who were backed by

### » TO 4000 BC

The southwest is populated by tribes of nomadic hunter-gatherers.

### » 4000–1500 BC

First evidence of organised farming. Neolithic builders construct many dolmens, quoits, stone circles and menhirs.

### » 1000–500 BC

Arrival of the first Celts on British shores. Celtic warriors establish hillforts and fortified settlements across the region, and gradually begin to integrate with native Britons.