

3 PERFECT DAYS

🍷 DAY 1 // HANDS-ON HISTORY

Start with the oldest – 150 million years to be exact. The waves have been shaping the stunning Durdle Door (p102) limestone rock arch for centuries; study it from the crescent beach alongside, then head to the water for an unforgettable swim. Next navigate winding lanes to Corfe Castle (p101), a shattered fortification that looms from the landscape in dramatic style. The battlement tour over, head to Clouds Hill (p100), the austere and deeply personal four-room home of Lawrence of Arabia.

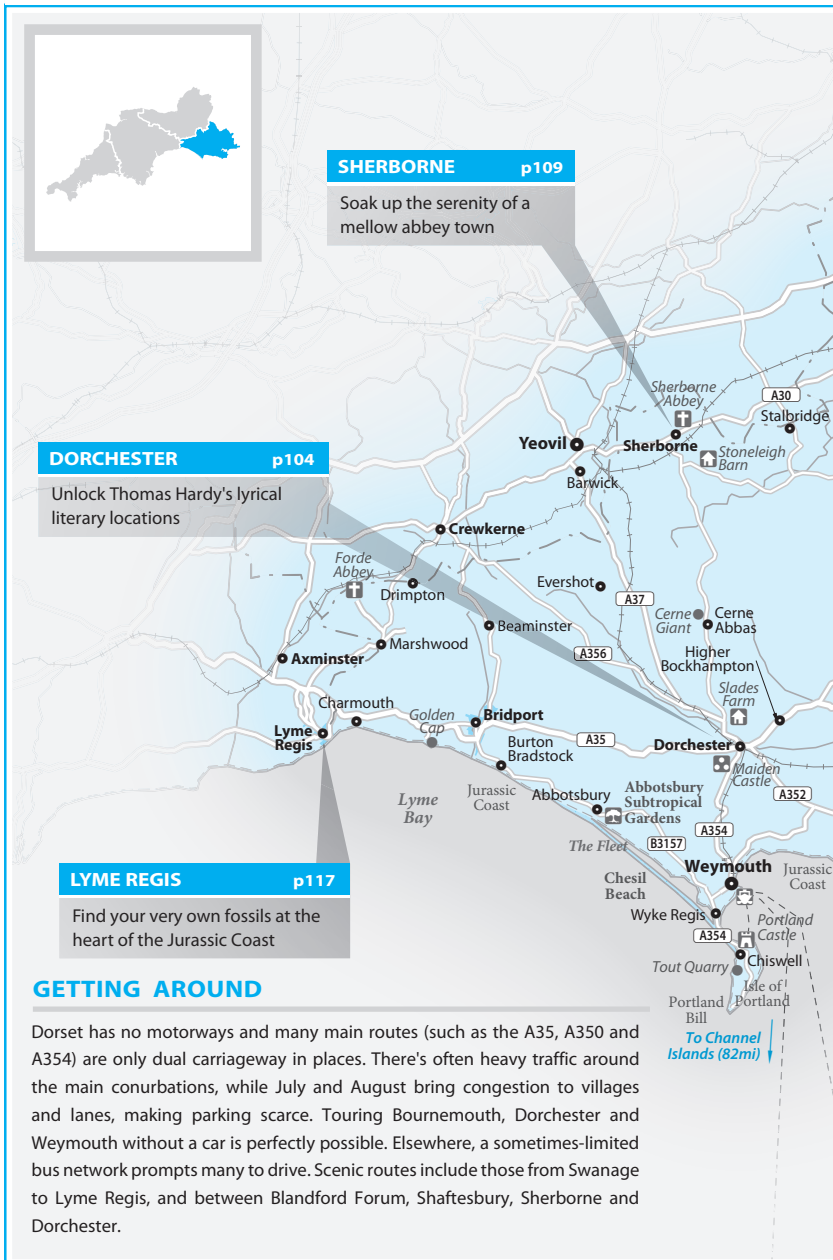
🍷 DAY 2 // HIGH-CLASS CUISINE, LOCAL LIFE

The sea has shaped life on Dorset's coast for centuries. Get a taste of it at bustling Mudeford Quay (p97), where gulls wheel as fishermen land a catch. Sample it fresh at their stall, then echo centuries of seafarers by navigating the surging water that is The Race – albeit by ferry. Your destination? Mudeford Sandbank, an idyllic spot to ease into easygoing beach life. Finally, head round the harbour to enjoy Dorset's incarnation as a foodie hot spot – at Gary Rhodes' sleek waterside eatery (p99).

🍷 DAY 3 // A CLASSIC, JURASSIC DAY OUT

Some holiday souvenirs are special. Join a fossil-hunting trip (p117) near picturesque Lyme Regis and find your very own piece of prehistory to take home. Then, after savouring a quintessentially English afternoon tea (p120), study Lyme's literary links (think Jane Austen and Tracy Chevalier; p120) or discover the dinosaurs in local museums (p117). In the evening revel in the survival of that primitive but delectable life form – the oyster – at gourmets' favourite Hix Oyster & Fish House (p120).

DORSET

**SHERBORNE** p109

Soak up the serenity of a mellow abbey town

DORCHESTER p104

Unlock Thomas Hardy's lyrical literary locations

LYME REGIS p117

Find your very own fossils at the heart of the Jurassic Coast

GETTING AROUND

Dorset has no motorways and many main routes (such as the A35, A350 and A354) are only dual carriageway in places. There's often heavy traffic around the main conurbations, while July and August bring congestion to villages and lanes, making parking scarce. Touring Bournemouth, Dorchester and Weymouth without a car is perfectly possible. Elsewhere, a sometimes-limited bus network prompts many to drive. Scenic routes include those from Swanage to Lyme Regis, and between Blandford Forum, Shaftesbury, Sherborne and Dorchester.

Portland
Bill
To Channel
Islands (82mi) ↓