

# INTRODUCING DEVON, CORNWALL & SOUTHWEST ENGLAND

WHEN THE REST OF THE NATION WANTS TO ESCAPE, IT'S THIS FAR-FLUNG CORNER OF ENGLAND, THE WESTCOUNTRY, THEY INVARIABLY HEAD FOR.

Every year millions of visitors flock to the region's shores to feel the sand between their toes and paddle in the briny blue, and with over 650 miles of coastline and clifftops to explore, not to mention some of England's greenest, grandest countryside, it's not really surprising.

But while the stirring scenery is undoubtedly one of the main attractions, there's much more to this region than just shimmering sands and grandstand views. After decades of economic underinvestment and industrial decline, things are really changing out west. Run-down harbours are being renovated. Celebrity chefs are setting up shop along the coastline. Old fishing harbours, derelict mining towns and faded seaside resorts are reinventing themselves as cultural centres, artistic havens and gastronomic hubs. Whichever way you look at it, there seems to be something special in the air, and it's not just the salty tang of sea breeze. Everyone seems to want their own little slice of the southwest lifestyle these days, and it's high time you found out why.

**TOP** Bathers bask in the sun by the limestone rock arch, Durdle Door (p102) **BOTTOM LEFT** The space-age biomes of the Eden Project (p241) **BOTTOM RIGHT** Bristol's famous landmark, the Clifton Suspension Bridge (p41)

NOSINTWOL GRAYO



JURASSIC COAST



NIEL STITCHFIELD

EDEN PROJECT



HANINSTE COUHANNAH KINGO - STANHOOD'S CAPTURE BRISTOL COMPETITION



BRISTOL



**DARTMOOR**



**BATH**



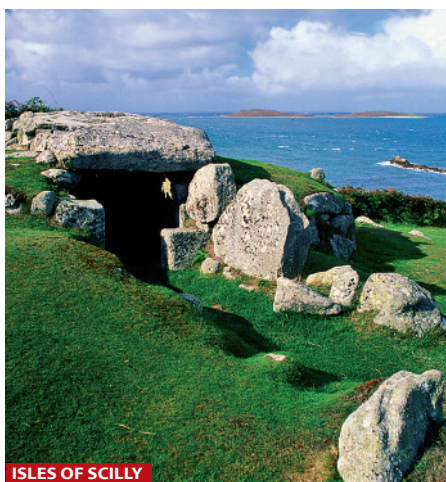
TOM WHEELER  
HOLDSHIP



**TOP LEFT** View from Haytor, Dartmoor National Park (p168) **TOP RIGHT** The ruins of Corfe Castle (p101) loom behind the village pub **BOTTOM LEFT** Bath's Colosseum-inspired terrace, the Circus (p53) **BOTTOM CENTRE** Boats line the harbour of artists' haven St Ives (p206) **BOTTOM RIGHT** A prehistoric burial mound on St Mary's, Isles of Scilly (p250)



CLEVE BRANMAN  
DANIEL GIBLING



# GETTING STARTED

DEVON, CORNWALL  
& SOUTHWEST  
ENGLAND



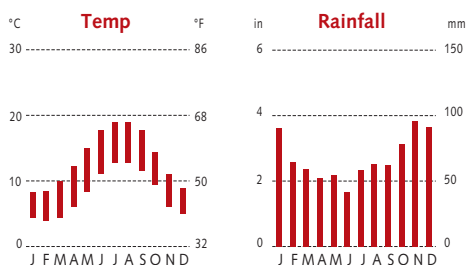
THE NATIONAL TRUST PHOTOGRAPHY / ALAMY

## WHAT'S NEW?

- ★ A mining World Heritage Site for Cornwall and west Devon (p205)
- ★ Public access to Agatha Christie's house at Greenway (p152)
- ★ A boutique hotel overlooking Mawgan Porth (p302)
- ★ New sections of the Cornish Way cycling trail (p242)
- ★ Europe's first artificial surf reef near Bournemouth (p90)

## CLIMATE: EXETER

Average  
Max/Min



## PRICE GUIDE

	BUDGET	MIDRANGE	TOP END
<b>SLEEPING</b>	<£80	£80-130	>£130
<b>MEALS</b>	<£10	£10-20	>£20
<b>ATTRACTIONS</b>	<£5	£5-10	>£10



**TOP LEFT** Summer's in bloom, Lanhydrock (p249) **LEFT** Great British staple: fish and chips **CENTRE LEFT** The terraced cobbled lanes of Clovelly (p181) **RIGHT** Hiking along the South West Coast Path (p271)

## ACCOMMODATION

Whether you're after a budget campsite, a boutique B&B or a supremely comfy country hotel, you'll be spoilt for choice in the Westcountry. There's an enormous range of accommodation to suit all budgets, but the most popular spots are often booked out in summer, so it's worth planning as far ahead as you can. Many visitors opt for self-catering to keep costs in check; with a bit of digging you'll turn up some wonderfully quirky properties, from converted barns to landmark lighthouses and retro caravans. For more on accommodation, see p287.

## MAIN POINTS OF ENTRY

**BRISTOL AIRPORT** (BRS; ☎ 0871 33 44 344; [www.bristolairport.co.uk](http://www.bristolairport.co.uk)) The region's largest airport. Serves mainly UK and European destinations.

**EXETER AIRPORT** (EXT; ☎ 01392-367433; [www.exeter-airport.co.uk](http://www.exeter-airport.co.uk)) Budget flights covering the UK and some continental destinations.

**NEWQUAY AIRPORT** (NQY; ☎ 01637-860600; [www.newquaycornwallairport.com](http://www.newquaycornwallairport.com)) Cornwall's only airport, with regular links to London Stansted, Gatwick and a few other UK airports, as well as flights to the Isles of Scilly.

## THINGS TO TAKE

- ★ Swimwear, beach towel, snorkel and sunscreen
- ★ A good raincoat – waterproof and breathable is best
- ★ Comfy shoes for the coast paths
- ★ Flip-flops or sandals for the beach
- ★ Picnic gear – thermos, cork-screw, crockery, cool bag



ANDREW MANSFIELD & LENNIE WALKER

## WEBLINKS

**VISIT SOUTHWEST** ([www.visitsouthwest.co.uk](http://www.visitsouthwest.co.uk)) Comprehensive tourist site.

**TRAVELINE SW** ([www.travelinesw.org.uk](http://www.travelinesw.org.uk)) Public transport info.

**SIMPLY SCILLY** ([www.simplyscilly.co.uk](http://www.simplyscilly.co.uk)) The lowdown on the Isles of Scilly.

**ADVENTURE SOUTHWEST** ([www.itsadventuresouthwest.co.uk](http://www.itsadventuresouthwest.co.uk)) Outdoor pursuits.

**SEIZE THE DAYS** ([www.lonelyplanet.com/132days](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/132days)) Weekly update on UK activities/events.

# FESTIVALS & EVENTS

DEVON, CORNWALL  
& SOUTHWEST  
ENGLAND



LEE PENNELL/AMM

## MARCH

### ST PIRAN'S DAY

#### CORNWALL

Processions and events on 5 March in honour of Cornwall's patron saint, culminating in a big march across the sands of Perranporth.

## MAY

### 'OBBY 'OSS

#### PADSTOW

Padstow's colourful 'osses whirl round the harbour in this ancient fertility rite on 1 May (p197).

### FLORA DAY

#### HELSTON

Townfolk take to Helston's streets in early May to celebrate the coming of spring (p222; [www.helstonfloraday.org.uk](http://www.helstonfloraday.org.uk)). The day's main event is the Furry Dance.

### BATH INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

#### BATH

Bath's celebration of classical, opera, jazz and world music, some of which is outdoors and free, runs from late May to early June ([www.bathmusicfest.org.uk](http://www.bathmusicfest.org.uk)).

## JUNE

### BATH FRINGE FESTIVAL

#### BATH

Britain's largest fringe theatre festival after Edinburgh, spanning May and June ([www.bathfringe.co.uk](http://www.bathfringe.co.uk)).

### GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL

#### PILTON

The mother of all music festivals. A mad, mud-soaked rite of passage for every self-respecting British teenager. Held in late June ([www.glastonburyfestivals.co.uk](http://www.glastonburyfestivals.co.uk)).

## JULY

### EDEN SESSIONS

#### EDEN PROJECT, BODELVA

Big-name gigs in the shadow of Eden's biomes, held over successive weeks in July and August (p241; [www.edensessions.com](http://www.edensessions.com)).

### PORT ELIOT FESTIVAL

#### ST GERMANS, CORNWALL

Blending literature, arts, dance, poetry and live music, this magical festival takes place in the sweeping grounds of a Cornish country house (p245; [www.porteliotlifest.com](http://www.porteliotlifest.com)).

**TOP LEFT** Starbursts explode behind Smeaton's Tower during the Fireworks Championships in Plymouth (p162) **RIGHT** A man feels the weight of the flaming world on his shoulders, Ottery St Mary

## AUGUST

### RIP CURL BOARDMASTERS

#### NEWQUAY

The largest surf, skate and music festival in Europe. Surfing and extreme sports on Fistral, bands on Mawgan Porth ([www.ripcurlboardmasters.com](http://www.ripcurlboardmasters.com)).

### BRITISH FIREWORKS CHAMPIONSHIPS

#### PLYMOUTH

Plymouth's skies are filled with bursts of colour for this two-night contest in mid-August. Fantastic fun and completely free ([www.britishfireworks.co.uk](http://www.britishfireworks.co.uk)).

### INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA

#### BRISTOL

Hot-air balloons from across the world soar above the grounds of Ashton Court (p44; [www.bristolballoonfiesta.co.uk](http://www.bristolballoonfiesta.co.uk)).

### BRISTOL HARBOUR FESTIVAL

#### BRISTOL

Music, dance, circus acts and lots of ships hit the harbourside for this big

Bristol knees-up (p46; [www.bristolharbourfestival.co.uk](http://www.bristolharbourfestival.co.uk)).

## OCTOBER

### FALMOUTH OYSTER FESTIVAL

#### FALMOUTH

Mass oyster eating on Falmouth's quayside, plus cookery demos, boat races and concerts. Held in late October ([www.falmouthoysterfestival.co.uk](http://www.falmouthoysterfestival.co.uk)).

## NOVEMBER

### BLAZING TAR BARRELS

#### OTTERY ST MARY

Unhinged locals carry flaming tar barrels through packed-out streets on 5 November each year, while paramedics and health-and-safety officials look on in horror.

## DECEMBER

### CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

#### MOUSEHOLE

This tiny Cornish fishing village lights up the festive season in truly stunning style.



# CULTURE

DEVON, CORNWALL  
& SOUTHWEST  
ENGLAND



WAYNE WALTON

## NATIONAL TRUST

**TYNTESFIELD** (p51) A grand Victorian mansion just outside Bristol that offers a fascinating chance to see a restoration work in progress.

**LANHYDROCK** (p249) A glimpse of Cornish aristocratic life in Victorian England, complete with enormous kitchens, drawing rooms and period bedrooms.

**MONTACUTE** (p79) This rosy-bricked Somerset mansion boasts the longest Long Gallery in England, lined with Elizabethan portraits on loan from the National Gallery.

**KNIGHTSHAYES COURT** (p134) Devon's grandest slice of Gothic Revival was designed by the eccentric architect William Burges and is packed with mock-medieval drama.

**COTEHELE** (p245) A Tudor beauty in southeast Cornwall, with a restored quay and a working watermill.

## WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Mining in Cornwall and west Devon (p205) has a heritage stretching back well over 3000 years that has left a lasting mark on the region's landscape and culture. So it seems entirely fitting that many of the most important mining areas now form part of the region's newest Unesco World Heritage Site, the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape (p205; [www.cornish-mining.org.uk](http://www.cornish-mining.org.uk)), designed to promote understanding of this powerhouse industry and protect its heritage. But the mining landscape certainly isn't the only thing to make it onto Unesco's radar. Bath's unique Georgian architecture (p51) has been protected under World Heritage status since 1987, and in 2001 the entire Jurassic Coast (p115) became the UK's second natural landscape to qualify as a World Heritage Site after the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland.



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**TOP LEFT** An ancient Cornish grave, Lanyon Quoit (p213) **LEFT** The grand manor of Montacute House (p79) **CENTRE RIGHT** The fabled coastline of Tintagel (p192) **FAR RIGHT** Botallack Mine clings to the cliffs (p212)

## CLASSIC CASTLES

**CORFE CASTLE** Wander among the romantic ruins of this tumbledown Dorset fortress (p101).

**TINTAGEL** Clifftop castle rumoured to be the birthplace of King Arthur (p192).

**ST MAWES** One of Henry VIII's best-preserved Tudor keeps (p238).

**POWDERHAM CASTLE** Half fortress, half stately home (p135).

**RESTORMEL CASTLE** Classic circular medieval keep built by Edward the Black Prince (p241).



DANIEL JUNGHEISER / ALAMY



ANDREW MANSFIELD &amp; LEANNE WALKER

## DON'T MISS EXPERIENCES

- ★ Unforgettable theatre – Catch a play at the clifftop Minack Theatre (p215)
- ★ *SS Great Britain* – Climb aboard Brunel's landmark steamship on Bristol's harbourside (p38)
- ★ Eden Project – Marvel at the ecological ambition of Cornwall's world-famous biomes (p241)
- ★ Hot baths – Take a soothing dip in the rooftop pool at the Thermae Bath Spa (p57)
- ★ Maritime history – View the shipshape collection in Falmouth's National Maritime Museum (p228)
- ★ Agatha Christie – Wander around her inspirational house, Greenway (p152)
- ★ Tin mines – Descend into the depths of one of Cornwall's deepest mines, at Geevor (p211)

## RESOURCES

- WWW.VENUE.CO.UK** Latest listings for Bristol & Bath.
- WWW.SOMERSETARTS.COM** Lively arts site for Somerset.
- WWW.THEATREBRISTOL.NET** Plays and theatrical happenings in Bristol.
- WWW.CORNWALLCULTURE.CO.UK** Cultural listings.
- WWW.KNEEHIGH.CO.UK** Cornwall's much-lauded theatre company.

# CULTURE

DEVON, CORNWALL  
& SOUTHWEST  
ENGLAND



MOSHOY SHINJO

## ARTY EXPERIENCES

**ARNOLFINI** (p44) Browse the work at Bristol's warehouse gallery.

**NEWLYN ART GALLERY & THE EXCHANGE**

(p217) Cutting-edge arts institutions in Penzance.

**BARBARA HEPWORTH MUSEUM** (p207) Visit the studio of St Ives' celebrated sculptor.

**RUSSELL-COTES ART GALLERY** (p92) Huge arts repository amassed by a 19th-century collector.

## TOP GARDENS

The southwest is famous for its glorious gardens. Here are a few of our favourites.

**LOST GARDENS OF HELIGAN** Forgotten garden restored in spectacular style (p239).

**TREBAH & GLENDURGAN** Side-by-side estates developed by the Fox family (p232).

**ABBEY GARDEN** Scilly's subtropical wonder (p252).

**BARRINGTON COURT** Historic garden designed by Gertrude Jekyll (p79).

**ROSEMOOR** Sixty-five acres of RHS splendour (p181).

**HESTERCOMBE** Three stunning gardens for the price of one (p75).

**THE GARDEN HOUSE** Wild botanical adventure near Yelverton (p171).

## LITERARY LOCATIONS

The southwest is littered with literary locations. For many, Dorset is synonymous with Thomas Hardy (p105), while Bath provides the quintessential Jane Austen setting (p56). Mystery supremo Agatha Christie lived near Dartmouth (p152) and wove countless local places into her novels, while thriller writer Daphne du Maurier was based in Fowey and often employed Cornish locations in her books. Then there's John Betjeman, who holidayed in north Cornwall throughout his life and was buried in St Endellion Church near Port Isaac (p192). But the literary links don't stop there – for more ideas, check out our itinerary on p32.

**TOP LEFT** Bath's Pulteney Bridge, one of the few in the world lined with shops (p62) **RIGHT** The cliff-top Minack Theatre overlooks the Atlantic at Porthcurno (p215)

## ANCIENT REMAINS

The southwest has an astonishingly rich concentration of prehistoric sites. Most of the region's ancient remains were erected by neolithic settlers, including the stone circles at Stanton Drew in Somerset (p69), the Merry Maidens near Penzance (p213), the Hurlers on Bodmin Moor (p247) and Merrivale on Dartmoor (p171). Quite what these stone circles were used for is a matter of great debate – some people think they were used as celestial timepieces, while others think they served some ritual or magical purpose. Other structures have more obvious functions: quoits (pillars topped by a capstone) mark ancient burial sites, while menhirs (standing stones) were usually used as way markers or to commemorate important figures.

## QUIRKY MUSEUMS

- ★ Maritime history in a landmark lighthouse on the Lizard (p224)
- ★ Tales of smugglers and shipwrecks in Charlestown (p240)
- ★ Explore the history of fossil hunting on the Jurassic Coast (p117)
- ★ The UK's top collection of classic cars in Yeovil (p79)
- ★ Exeter's eccentric celebration of celluloid (p129)
- ★ Witchy memorabilia collected by an ex-MI6 spy in Boscastle (p191)



# FOOD & DRINK

DEVON, CORNWALL  
& SOUTHWEST  
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## FOODIE HUBS

**DARTMOUTH** One of Devon's prettiest ports is awash with great food – from fine dining to kiosk fare (p157).

**BATH** Packed with exquisite eateries from gourmet vegetarian to bistros laced with Gallic charm (p59).

**PADSTOW** The port that kick-started the region's culinary renaissance is a food fan's delight (p197).

**BRISTOL** From Michelin-starred restaurants to gourmet sausage and pie shops (don't forget the mash; p46).

**TORQUAY** The English Riviera's foodie central – superb seafood, stunning views (p147).

**BOURNEMOUTH** Choose from beachside bistros or French-style brasseries (p98).

**ST IVES** Cornwall's quaintest port serves some of its most imaginative food; expect seafood treats galore (p209).



## A GOURMET REGION

The southwest is one of Britain's happening foodie hot spots. Take a superb array of local, seasonal and organic produce, mix in a range of atmospheric eateries and finish with a sizable scattering of celebrity chefs. The result? A region whipping up a perfect culinary storm – and a series of very satisfied stomachs. But the southwest's food does more than just fill bellies. It also helps bridge that disconnect between producer and consumer. It's a magic added-ingredient, because a dish eaten on a farm, in a vineyard or beside a fish quay is different. You can see where it comes from; you can taste where it comes from. It's something no amount of added flavourings and fancy cooking can replicate. For more on the region's cuisine, see p281.



**TOP LEFT** The serious business of the Cornish pasty (p282) **LEFT** 'Catch of the Day' equals zero food miles at this village pub **CENTRE RIGHT** Harvesting at Sharpham Vineyard (p150) **FAR RIGHT** When in Devonshire...

## TOP RESTAURANTS

**GIDLEIGH PARK** The southwest's best, set in a luxurious country pile (p176).

**BORDEAUX QUAY** Provincial European flavours infuse meals at Bristol's most stylish eatery (p46).

**SIENNA** This sleek Dorchester venue is a favourite with the foodie crowd (p110).

**RIVERFORD FIELD KITCHEN** A pioneering eco-eatery dishing up superb meals in a Devon farm canteen (p151).

**PAUL AINSWORTH AT NO 6** The Mediterranean in the heart of Padstow (p198).



AP/WIDEWORLD/ALAMY



JACKSON/ALAMY

## DON'T MISS EXPERIENCES

- ★ Wine – Perfect your palate just yards from the vines at the region's beguiling wineries
- ★ Picnics – Watch from picturesque cliffs as the sun sets over the sea, surfers and your starter
- ★ Chefs – See how those celebrity chefs cope with your very own taste test
- ★ Rustic pubs – Drink in centuries of history, culture and top cider and beer
- ★ Seafood – Watch fish being landed, then dine on gourmet delights, or a supertasty crab roll
- ★ Cream teas – Just-baked scones, homemade jam and so-thick-you-can-stand-your-spoon-up-in-it clotted cream

## TOP DROPS

**CAMEL VALLEY** Acclaimed Cornish wines including dry whites, sparkling reds and an elegant brut (p247).

**SHARPHAM** Expect oaked whites, ripe rosés and robust reds from this vineyard beside the River Dart (p150).

**BURROW HILL** Traditional Somerset cider, and an apple-based brandy that's aged for 15 years.

**PLYMOUTH GIN** Smooth spirit from the world's oldest gin distillery (p165).

**BRISTOL BEER FACTORY** Citrusy pale ale and a creamy dark stout (p49).

# FOOD & DRINK

DEVON, CORNWALL  
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MACGIBBON / ALAMY

## LOCALS' TIPS

**SEAHORSE** Superb seafood roasted over a charcoal fire – within sight of Dartmouth's fishing boats (p158).

**KOTA** Cornish organic meats and veg transformed by delicate Asian flavours (p227).

**LORD POULETT ARMS** Food fit for a duke served amid baronial-pile chic deep in rural Somerset (p80).

**BILLY THE FISH** Seafood fresh from the boats at a funky eatery run by a fisherman turned chef (p110).

## COOKERY COURSES

**RIVER COTTAGE** At Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's east Devon HQ learn butchery, baking or allotment gardening (p126).

**FAT HEN** The ultimate no-miles food: wild food foraging in Cornwall's rugged far-western tip (p215).

**BORDEAUX QUAY** Move from basic to advanced in this slow-food haven. Or focus on cheese, steak, risotto or puds (p46).

**SEAFOOD SCHOOL** Spend one to four days mastering the basics at Rick Stein's Padstow kitchen classroom (p195).

**ASHBURTON COOKERY** Choose from 40 courses at an award-winning school on Dartmoor's southern fringe ([www.ashburtoncookeryschool.co.uk](http://www.ashburtoncookeryschool.co.uk)).

## FAMOUS CHEFS

Sometimes in the southwest it seems you can't go far without falling over a celebrity chef. Their restaurants pop up regularly, their presence raises the culinary bar and the profile of the region as somewhere to eat well. Their number includes Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall on the Devon-Dorset border (p139), Jamie Oliver near Newquay (p201), Rick Stein in Padstow (p198), Garry Rhodes near Bournemouth (p99) and John Burton-Race at Dartmouth (p158). Some have proved powerful campaigners on ethical, sustainable, local and organic produce (see p281) – arguably one of the region's most important food exports.

**TOP LEFT** Traditionally brewed cider, or scrumpy, is renowned in the Westcountry (p284) **RIGHT** Enjoying a pint in the sunshine: another much-loved British tradition

## FOOD HISTORY & CULTURE

The region's speciality foods and drinks speak eloquently of its past, and shape present cultural identity. The Cornish pasty is a miner's lunch turned cultural icon; its legacy is found in towns and cities around the world. The fish-filled stargazy pie evokes days when a failure to land the catch meant people went hungry. Cider conjures up a subsistence economy – a time when most people worked the land and this 'wine of wild orchards' helped bolster their pay. And Plymouth Gin speaks volumes about a county, and a country's, role in conquests that secured the British Empire – an entity that reshaped the world, and a legacy that lingers (sometimes painfully) in our modern world. In the southwest, the region's past and present combine on your plate. For more, see p282.

## PUBS

Pop in for a pint at these favourites, or track down your own.

- ★ Turk's Head – Britain's most southerly ale house, on the Isles of Scilly (p255)
- ★ Queen's Arms – Sip draught farm cider or 10-year-old port at this gem (p80)
- ★ Warren House Inn – Real fires and great beer in the Dartmoor wilderness (p176)
- ★ Pandora Inn – Sink your drink on a pontoon at this waterside smugglers inn (p234)
- ★ Cove House Inn – Real ales, astounding sunsets and views down a 17-mile beach (p116)



# OUTDOORS

DEVON, CORNWALL  
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## GREAT ESCAPES

**DARTMOOR** Southern England's wildest, biggest, highest wilderness, perfect for hiking, cycling, climbing, white-water rafting – or stone-circle sitting (p168).

**EXMOOR** Hike or cycle amid more than 260 sq miles of gorse-covered hills fringed by precipitous cliffs and dotted with wild red deer (p80).

**SOUTH WEST COAST PATH** Britain's longest national trail winds for 630 miles from Poole in Dorset to Minehead in Somerset (p271).

**BODMIN MOOR** A myth-rich landscape peppered with stone circles and the iconic, crumbling ruins of tin mines (p247).

**MENDIPS** A 198-sq-mile Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that stretches across Somerset, just south of Bristol and Bath (p64).



COLIN UNDERHILL / ALAMY

## ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

The southwestern corner of England is a natural break-free zone with a checklist of charms. It boasts two national parks, hundreds of miles of coast and oodles of stunningly beautiful bits in between – here you can be as adventurous (or not) as you wish.

Hike the iconic South West Coast Path or wander intimate hills and desolate moors. Surfing and its sister sports exert a magnetic pull on people drawn by the biggest and best waves in England. Tempting cycling routes range from leg-testing gradients to hundreds of miles of level path.

Trot sedately on a horse, escape on a yacht, paddle around tranquil coves, clamber up a rock face, dive the UK's most exciting sites or test your mettle in a frenzy of adrenaline sports. Your break could signal the start of a new passion or the rediscovery of an old. See p271.



BERKESTONE / ALAMY

**TOP LEFT** Pony trekking across Exmoor (p81) **LEFT** Heather-clad countryside at Exmoor National Park (p80) **CENTRE RIGHT** Yachts race the waters of Fowey (242) **FAR RIGHT** Cyclists tackle the Tarka Trail (p180)

## TOP CYCLE ROUTES

**WEST COUNTRY WAY** A 250-mile epic from Bath, via Bristol, Exmoor and Bodmin, to Padstow in north Cornwall (p273).

**DEVON COAST TO COAST** Ilfracombe to Plymouth, 102 glorious miles (p273).

**CAMEL TRAIL** A 17-mile, car-free trip from Bodmin Moor to the north Cornwall coast (p194).

**RAILWAY PATH** Glide from Bristol to Bath on a 16-mile ride (p45).

**GRANITE WAY** A spectacular 11 miles on a former Dartmoor railway line (p175).



NOLLYW/SHAW



IAN CORNELLIAN

## DON'T MISS EXPERIENCES

- ★ Sunsets – For cracking evening colours, try Cape Cornwall (p213), the Isles of Scilly (p248) and Hartland Point (p182)
- ★ Cold swim – Experience sheer exhilaration by plunging off a hot sandy beach into far-from-warm seas
- ★ Wildlife watching – Spot red deer on Exmoor, ponies on Dartmoor and basking sharks off Cornwall
- ★ Climb the tors – Clamber up Dartmoor's and Bodmin's summits for buzzard's-eye views of gorse-smothered hills
- ★ Wave riding – Hang ten, or hang on, in England's best surf spots
- ★ Fossil hunting – Rummage for a piece of pre-history on Dorset's Jurassic Coast (p117)

## CHILLING OUT

**STARGAZING** Fewer towns mean more stars; head for high ground for dazzling, unforgettable displays.

**BEACHCOMBING** Aka: 'reading the seaweed': escape into a soothing world of shells, pebbles and small discoveries.

**SANDCASTLE BUILDING** Rediscover the gentle thrill of building moat-rimmed forts; or go all arty and make a mermaid.

**ROCKPOOLING** Perch on a ledge, peer into a pool and watch tiny creatures emerge.

# OUTDOORS

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HOLDERLIFE

## BEST BEACHES

**SAUNTON SANDS** A 3-mile undeveloped shore backed by the UK's biggest dune system (p180).

**PORHCURNO** Near Land's End, this is one of Cornwall's most atmospheric beaches: a sand-filled cove framed by dramatic cliffs (p215).

**DURDL DOOR** Your chance to soak up the sun, then swim beside a 150-million-year-old towering stone arch (p102).

**BOURNEMOUTH** Seven miles of sandy, kiss-me-quick, family friendly, seaside nostalgia (p90).

## COAST PATH DAY WALKS

Superb, shorter clifftop hikes abound; here are some local favourites:

**LYNMOUTH-COMBE MARTIN** (13 miles)  
The realm of the red deer, where vertiginous cliffs meet open moor.

**SALCOMBE-HOPE COVE** (8 miles)  
Happy wanderings from a chic sailing port to an enchanting Devon fishing village.

**LYME REGIS-WEST BAY** (10 miles)  
Fossil-filled beaches and England's south-coast cliffs.

**PENDEEN WATCH-SENNEN COVE** (9 miles)  
Cracking views and the still-steaming Levant Mine.

**SENNEN COVE-PORHCURNO** (6 miles)  
From surfing beaches to a cliffside theatre, via Land's End.

## WALKING

The South West Coast Path is billed as the 630-mile adventure – and it lives up to the hype. Britain's longest national trail, it snakes from Poole in Dorset around Land's End to Minehead in Somerset. En route it passes cliffs crowned by tin mines, dazzling bays, pretty fishing villages and swaths of rural charm. It's so gorgeous you'll forgive it the combined climbs that are the equivalent of three Everests. Inland, Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor deliver hundreds of miles of wilderness walks that are rich in archaeology and laced with myth, while the Cotswold Way winds north for 102 enchanting miles out of Bath. See p271.

**TOP LEFT** Limestone stalactites and stalagmites adorn Cox's Cave in Cheddar Gorge (p65) **RIGHT** View from the coastal path along the Roseland Peninsula (p238)

## WATER SPORTS

Few regions are so rich in idyllic places to get on, and in, the water. Again, geography plays its part: there are hundreds of miles of beautiful beaches, scores of historic sailing ports and an array of sheltered estuaries. Wind and wave patterns help too – Cornwall has the most consistent quality surf in the UK. The result of this embarrassment of natural riches is endless opportunities to surf, bodyboard, sail, kayak and dive.

As well as providing thrills, these experiences take you away from the crowds, offering an insider's view of the shore: secret coves, seal's-eye views of soaring cliffs and wildlife watching galore. See p273.

## WATER-SPORTS SPOTS

- ★ Newquay – Learn to surf at buzzing Fistral Beach or nearby Watergate Bay (p199)
- ★ Widemouth Bay – Another beautiful Cornish surfing hot spot, 3 miles south of Bude (p190)
- ★ Sandbanks – Home to ranks of water-sport providers (p95)
- ★ Weymouth and Portland – World-class facilities at the home of the 2012 Olympics sailing events (p113)
- ★ Croyde – North Devon's chilled-out surfing hub, fringed by quaint thatched cottages (p179)



# FAMILY TRAVEL

DEVON, CORNWALL  
& SOUTHWEST  
ENGLAND



DOUG MCKENNA

## RESOURCES

**FAMILY HOLIDAY SOUTHWEST** ([www.familyholidaysouthwest.com](http://www.familyholidaysouthwest.com)) Your first port of call for all things family-friendly.

**CORNWALL BEACH GUIDE** ([www.cornwallbeachguide.co.uk](http://www.cornwallbeachguide.co.uk)) Useful guide to help choose your sands.

**WHAT'S ON BRISTOL** ([www.whatsonbristol.co.uk](http://www.whatsonbristol.co.uk)) Click on 'Kids Zone' for ideas for kids in the big city.

**DAY OUT WITH THE KIDS** ([www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk](http://www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk)) Online activity directory, searchable by region.

## DON'T MISS EXPERIENCES

**THE EDEN PROJECT** Cornwall's lunar landing station goes down a treat with the kids, and it's educational too (p241).

**NATIONAL MARINE AQUARIUM** Play spot-the-shark around the tanks of Plymouth's aquarium (p166).

**BRISTOL ZOO** The southwest's biggest zoo is ideal for entertaining your wild things (p46).

**FOSSIL HUNTING** Take home your own archaeological souvenir after a fossil walk (p117).

**AT-BRISTOL** Everything's 100% hands-on at Bristol's science centre (p46).

**ADVENTURE SPORTS** Learn to surf, coasteer or kite-buggy on Newquay's beaches (p199).

## TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

The southwest is a fabulous destination for kids, with loads of attractions and activities aimed specifically at young and enquiring minds. Many hotels, pubs and restaurants are well geared for younger travellers, but others only accept children over a certain age – check before you book. Travel times can be a major cause of tantrums – stock up with in-car entertainment before you leave. Lifeguard cover is usually seasonal and only available on larger beaches; be extra wary of rip currents and fast-rising tides. Lastly, British weather can play havoc with even the best-laid plans, so it's worth keeping a few indoor attractions up your sleeve in case the skies take a turn for the worse.

**TOP** Young girls catch the wind in their plastic windmills on the beach at St Ives (p206)

# THE AUTHORS



## OLIVER BERRY

### **Coordinating Author, Bristol, Bath & Somerset, Cornwall, History, Cornwall & the Arts, Gardens**

Oliver graduated from University College London and works as a writer and photographer. Proud to call Kernow home, he's always looking for excuses to explore it further; writing a guidebook's the best one yet. For this book he braved icy seawater and hot springs, conquered hummocks and tors, ate 16 types of seafood and spent far too long messing about on clifftops. He'd do it all again tomorrow, given half a chance.



## BELINDA DIXON

### **Dorset, Devon, Outdoors, Food & Drink, Directory, Transport**

Belinda came to the southwest for her postgrad, having been drawn there by the palm tree on campus. Like the best Westcountry limpets she's proved hard to shift since and now writes and broadcasts in the region. Research highlights include seeing the Durdle Door emerge from thick fog, touring TE Lawrence's home and rigorously testing local food and drink. Purely for research, you understand.

## LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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# ITINERARIES

## SOUTHWEST ESSENTIALS

### THREE WEEKS // BRISTOL TO BOURNEMOUTH // 450 TO 500 MILES

This grand tour takes in the region's unmissable sights. Begin in big-city **Bristol** (p38) before heading for England's Georgian gem, **Bath** (p51). Detour via the tiny cathedral city of **Wells** (p62) en route to hippie central **Glastonbury** (p69) and its celebrated tor and abbey. Cross **Exmoor** (p80) to cliffside **Clovelly** (p179) and Cornwall's culinary centre, **Padstow** (p194). Stop off at artistic **St Ives** (p206) before rounding **Land's End** (p215) en route to **the Lizard** (p222) and the harbours of **Falmouth** (p228) and **Fowey** (p242). Marvel at the domes of the **Eden Project** (p241), dine in **Dartmouth** (152), explore **Exeter** (p123) and hunt for fossils in **Lyme Regis** (p117), then finish up by the seaside in **Poole** (p94) and **Bournemouth** (p90).



## ARCHITECTURAL TREASURES

### TWO WEEKS // TYNTESFIELD TO MOUNT EDGUMBE // 230 TO 250 MILES

Start near Bristol with restoration work-in-progress **Tyntesfield** (p51). Nearby **Prior Park** (p58) offers a glorious view of the Bath skyline. In Dorset, **Kingston Lacy** (p98) was designed by the architect of the Houses of Parliament, while **Sherborne New**



**Castle** (p109) was originally built for Sir Walter Raleigh. In Somerset, red-brick **Montacute** (p79) is famous for its gardens and long gallery, while **Dunster Castle** (p82) offers sweeping coastal views. For architecture showiness you can't top Devon's **Arlington Court** (p179) and **Knightshayes Court** (p134). You'll also find Agatha Christie's house at **Greenway** (p152) and Francis Drake's former seat at **Buckland Abbey** (p171). Across the Cornish border are the sculptures and topiary of **Antony** (p244) and the majestic edifice of **Mount Edgumbe** (p244).

## WILD VIEWS

### TWO WEEKS // PORTLAND TO THE LIZARD // 240 TO 280 MILES

This one's for people who like their landscapes big, wild and empty. Begin with wide-angle views on the **Jurassic Coast** (p115), factoring in the rock arch at **Durdle Door** (p102), shell-shaped **Lulworth Cove** (p102), the lighthouse at **Portland Bill** (p113)



and the pebbly expanse of **Chesil Beach** (p114). Drink in the panorama from **Ham Hill** (p79) near Stoke-sub-Hamdon before crossing the flat **Somerset Levels** (p72) and detouring to the lighthouse at **Start Point** (p157). Swing northwest onto **Dartmoor** (p168) to explore wild tors and pre-historic ruins before traversing **Bodmin Moor** (p247) to **the Lizard** (p222), home to some of Cornwall's craggiest cliff-top scenery, best seen around **Lizard Point** (p224) and **Kynance Cove** (p225). Finish on the headland of **Cape Cornwall** (p213).

## HILLTOP HIKES

### 10 DAYS // CLEVEDON TO EXMOOR // 120 TO 150 MILES

This itinerary strings together some of the southwest's best hilltop walks. Start with coastal vistas on the **Poet's Walk** (p68) near Clevedon, followed by a hike along England's deepest ravine, **Cheddar Gorge** (p65). Move on to the Mendips' highest hill,



**Black Down** (p65), before getting up early to catch the sunrise from **Glastonbury Tor** (p69). To the south, **Burrow Mump** (p72) is the best place for surveying the Somerset Levels, while to the west sits **Wills Neck** (p77), the highest hump in the Quantocks. Further west, Exmoor has a wealth of lofty peaks, including Bossington Hill, Selworthy Beacon and the tallest of all, **Dunkery Beacon** (p82), from where the stunning views stretch all the way along the Somerset coast.

## CLASSIC CASTLES

### 10 DAYS // CORFE TO TINTAGEL // 200 TO 250 MILES

Fortresses abound in the southwest. Most romantic of all is crumbling **Corfe Castle** (p101), blown to bits by a Roundhead cannon during the Civil War. **Maiden Castle** (p106) was once the largest Iron Age hillfort in Britain, and **Sherborne** (p109) boasts

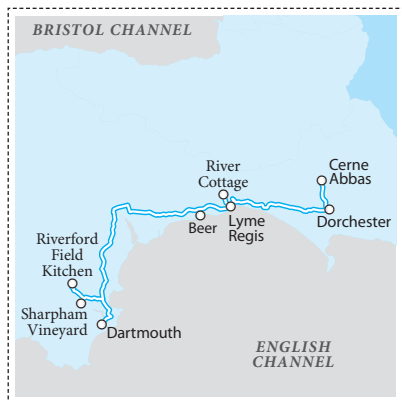


not one but two impressive fortresses, but it's Devon that really tops the castle count. **Powderham** (p135) and **Okehampton** (p175) are classic medieval castles, and **Castle Drogo** (p175) is officially the last castle to be built in England. **Restormel Castle** (p241), high above Lostwithiel, is a fine example of a medieval keep, while Henry VII built the twin Tudor castles of **Pendennis** (p228) and **St Mawes** (p238). Cliff-top **Tintagel** (p192) is the legendary birthplace of King Arthur.

## EAT SOUTHWEST

### FOUR DAYS // DARTMOUTH TO DORCHESTER // 120 TO 150 MILES

This itinerary strings together some of Dorset and Devon's best foodie experiences. Begin with breakfast in **Dartmouth** (p152) before sampling award-winning vintages at **Sharpham Vineyard** (p150), followed by home-grown produce from the fantastic



**Riverford Field Kitchen** (p151). Stop for fresh crab in **Beer** (p137) en route to celeb chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's HQ at **River Cottage** (p139) for tips on sustainable cooking, bread-making and allotment-tending. Finish with some slap-up seafood at **Hix** (p120) in Lyme Regis, gastro grub at the **New Inn** (p110) in Cerne Abbas or a Michelin-starred meal at **Sienna** (p110) in Dorchester.

## A LITERARY LANDSCAPE

### TWO WEEKS // BATH TO WAREHAM // 400 TO 450 MILES

The southwest landscape has inspired countless writers. Jane Austen set two novels in **Bath** (p56), while Coleridge penned poetry in **Nether Stowey** (p77). Henry Williamson set *Tarka the Otter* in north Devon (p180) and Charles Kingsley wrote *The*



*Water Babies* in **Clovelly** (p181). The cliffs around **Trebetherick** (p192) inspired John Betjeman, while Virginia Woolf immortalised **Godrevy** (p209) in *To the Lighthouse*. Two thrillmeisters have southwest connections: Daphne du Maurier lived in **Fowey** (p242), and Agatha Christie lived near **Dartmouth** (p152). **Lyme Regis** (p120) features in books by John Fowles and Tracey Chevalier, while you can visit houses belonging to Thomas Hardy in **Dorchester** (p104) and TE Lawrence near **Wareham** (p100).

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