

50 Best Things To Do

1. Climb a Dartmoor tor

For a heady shot of invigorating country air and instant perspective on your surroundings, take a brisk walk up Easdon Tor, the hill you see from the main bedroom window in the cottage. On the top you'll see 360-degree views of Dartmoor and wild Dartmoor ponies who come here to graze. See details on how to walk from the cottage in the back of this folder.

North Bovey.

2. Swim in a castle

Ok, so it's not actually a castle, but what Bovey Castle lacks in heritage, it makes up for with its sheer quantity of facilities and sweeping views. Set on a private sporting estate just up the river from the cottage, this luxury hotel has an 18-hole championship golf course, indoor swimming pool, tennis courts, fly-fishing lake, croquet lawn and archery arena. Huge stone fireplaces, soaring ceilings, ornate panelling and squishy sofas make it one of the most comfortable places in Dartmoor to whirl away a lazy afternoon. As a guest of Moorland View, you have complimentary membership, with 10% off what you spend. See details on how to get there from the cottage in the back of this folder.

01647 445000, www.boveycastle.com.

North Bovey.

3. Eat, drink and meet mole catchers in the Ring of Bells

Our wonky-walled, oak-beamed, 13th century coaching inn is well off the tourist trail and has fantastic food; the lamb shank is particularly delicious. This is rural Dartmoor, so you'll be rubbing shoulders with sheep shearers, mole catchers and farriers.

01647 440 375, www.ringofbells.net.

North Bovey.

4. Have a picnic

With idyllic views of North Bovey and the surrounding countryside, Top Field makes a great picnic spot in spring and summer, when the fields brim with wildflowers. The surrounding land belongs to our neighbour, Sue, who trains racehorses so you may see her stallions in the fields. A picnic rug and hamper is in the living room cupboard. See details on how to walk from the cottage in the back of this folder.

North Bovey.

5. Go hawking, North Bovey

If you've always fancied yourself as a falconer, Dartmoor Hawking's Experience Day provides the chance to see if you have what it takes to handle these powerful birds. For something a little tamer, try the Owl Experience, a hands-on introduction to birds of prey.

01647 433640, www.dartmoorhawking.co.uk.

North Bovey.

6. Shoot clay pigeons

Local farmer Chris Conley runs private clay pigeon shoots all year round, and game shoots from November to January.

01647 221349, www.dartmoorshooting.co.uk. North Bovey.

If Chris is booked, try Ashcombe Adventure Centre on 01626 866766, www.ashcombeadventure.co.uk.

7. Take a guided walk

Qualified Dartmoor guide and North Bovey resident, Debbie Jenkins, offers private hikes along paths less trodden: old pack-horse tracks, ancient remains, stone circles, tin mines and tors. She'll give you a history of Dartmoor as you go and point out hard-to-spot wildlife.

£12 per hour (minimum two hours); £45 for a half-day, £80 a day. 01647 440053.

North Bovey.

8. Dine at The White Horse, Moretonhampstead

Heralded as a 'genuine slice of foodie heaven' by the Michelin guide, the White Horse is one of our best local restaurants. Brixham crab, lobster, scallops and wild Cornish sea bass are favourites, as is Moreton lamb, Devon Ruby beef and locally reared rare breed pork. The pizzas are the best we've ever tasted. It's all served up in a lovely contemporary setting, and there's a pretty walled courtyard for dining al fresco on long summer evenings.

01647 440242, www.whitehorse-moretonhampstead.co.uk.
Moretonhampstead.

9. Take a tour of Britain's last castle

Lutyens-designed Castle Drogo is a quasi mediaeval granite castle that was the last to be built in Britain. Inside are Drewe's remarkable collection of venerable artefacts such as 17th-century tapestries. The views of the Teign Gorge and Dartmoor are magnificent, and there's a stunning walk along Fingle Gorge from the grounds (see below).

01647 433306, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-castledrogo.
Near Chagford and Moretonhampstead, near North Bovey.

10. Walk a Dartmoor gorge

A fairy tale castle, oak-lined gorge, ancient stone bridge and traditional pub - this two-hour round trip is classic Dartmoor. The hike along the River Teign starts at Castle Drogo (see above). Hunter's path runs higher up the valley, while Fisherman's path traces the spectacular wooded riverbank path, where kingfishers and woodpeckers dart between shaded pools, and trout, salmon and otters frolic in deep, clear waters. The small rocky beaches are perfect places for picnics and toe-dipping. Look out for glimpses of Prestonbury Castle Iron Age hill fort on the other side of the valley. At the bottom of the gorge is the arch of age-old Fingle bridge, which has recessed buttresses for packhorses to pass. Behind it is Fingle Bridge Inn, which serves a mean cream tea and has a pretty terrace overlooking the river. In spring, the woodlands here are carpeted with bluebells and daffodils, and in Autumn the colours are beautiful.

01647 433306; www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-castledrogo. 01647 281287;
www.finglebridgeinn.com).
Near North Bovey.

11. Stock up in Chagford

This pretty stannary town is crammed with cafes, tea rooms, farm shops and delis. Check out Blacks for great light lunches and local farm produce, Moorland Dairy for delicious local ice-cream and Best Cellars for a small, but perfectly formed selection of wine. Half-day closing on Wednesday afternoons.

Chagford, near North Bovey.

12. Dine at a two Michelin-starred restaurant

Just one of a handful of restaurants in England to have two Michelin stars, Gidleigh Park is a grand Tudor-style country manor hotel, set in 107 acres of Dartmoor woodland. Headed by Michael Caines (of culinary, not cinematic, fame), creative menus are delivered with pin sharp accuracy, and there's a 50-page wine list to choose from. Well worth the £100+ price tag.

01647 432367; www.gidleigh.com.
Chagford., near North Bovey.

13. Get spooked at an ancient castle

An impressive Norman stronghold laid waste by Henry VIII, and one of the largest castle ruins in the south west, Okehampton Castle is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Ask about the haunted nightlife.

01837 52844, www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.15589. Closed winter.
Okehampton, northern Dartmoor.

14. Learn about the Dartmoor of yesteryear

Housed in a former granary, Okehampton's Museum of Dartmoor life is a great starting point for history buffs. Fronted by a Victorian cobbled yard, it's home to three floors of exhibits charting the social history of the moor from prehistoric times.

01837 52295, www.museumofdartmoorlife.eclipse.co.uk.
Okehampton, northern Dartmoor.

15. Take the train

The aptly named 'Dartmoor Pony' puffs off from Okehampton Station and climbs for two miles through glorious scenic Devon countryside, past the ruins of medieval Okehampton Castle, then on through Estrayer Park tunnel, and out into open fields - a beautiful run. If you're interested in Devon mining and quarrying history then this trip is a must as it takes you past the workings of Meldon stone quarry to the spectacular Meldon Viaduct station in the Dartmoor National Park. The Meldon Viaduct is the largest viaduct structure of this kind remaining in the UK.

01837 55330, www.dartmoor-railway.co.uk.

Okehampton, northern Dartmoor.

16. Visit a Bronze Age village

One of the most complete examples of the moor's prehistoric settlements, Grimspound is a stone enclosure on an exposed, bracken hillside littered with the leavings of 24 Bronze Age hut circles. First settled about 1300 BC, the village's stone perimeter wall is thought to have stood at 1.7 metres high in places. The roundhouses were made from double granite walls with a rubble infill - a technique still used in dry-stone walling. The eerie setting was the model for the prehistoric hut in which Sherlock Holmes spent the night in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

www.english-heritage.org.uk. Free. Open all year round.

Near Widecombe-in-the Moor, eastern Dartmoor.

17. Take in the view from Hound Tor

The jumble of boulders that make up Hound Tor provide one of the most easily accessible and expansive viewpoints in Dartmoor. Supposedly the inspiration for Conan Doyle's moorland classic, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, the tor is a gentle half-mile walk from the car park along grassy paths and dells. Look out for 'letterboxes' - Tupperware boxes hidden by grown-up treasure trailers - hidden between the crevices. At the top, you can see the rocky peaks of several other tors, as well as Widecombe-in-the-Moor and Bowerman's Nose. Just southeast of the tor, are the remains of a medieval village. It's a great place for stargazing, too (see below).

Near Widecombe-in-the Moor, eastern Dartmoor.

18. Stargaze

With clear, dark nights, Dartmoor is a fantastic place to view the night sky, with the Milky Way often clearly visible. One of the most atmospheric spots to stargaze is from the top of Hound Tor (see above). Just take the picnic rug that's in the cupboard in the living room, a bottle of wine and lie back.

Near Widecombe-in-the Moor, eastern Dartmoor.

19. Stock up at a farm shop

Ullacombe Farm Shop, near Haytor, sells everything Devon, from chilli chocolate to cheeses. There's also a teashop selling superb farmhouse cakes. Leave time to look at the animals in the barn next door.

01364 661341, www.ullacombefarm.co.uk.

Haytor Vale, in between Widecombe-in-the-Moor and Bovey Tracey, eastern Dartmoor.

20. Drink Dartmoor ale straight from the cask

With flagstone floors, open fires and Dartmoor and Butcombe Best Bitter poured straight from the barrel, this Grade-II building in remote Widecombe is the moor-dwellers' choice. The rudimentary bar is tiny, providing plenty of opportunity to join in on the old boys' conversations. The two restaurants - one of which has an open log fire - are more spacious, and outside, over a small bridge, is a large sheltered garden with picnic tables and fabulous views.

01364 621327; www.rugglestoneinn.co.uk.

Widecombe-in-the-Moor, eastern Dartmoor.

21. Buy local pottery

The Devon Guild of Craftsmen is the largest contemporary crafts centre in the South West, displaying beautiful pieces in an idyllic riverside setting.

01626 832223, www.crafts.org.uk.

Bovey Tracey, eastern Dartmoor.

22. Visit a picture-perfect thatched village

Hidden in a wooden cleave, Lustleigh is a film set-perfect village. Its trim thatched cottages are grouped around a 13th century church, with the quaint Primrose Tea Rooms to one side and village shop to the other. The rural idyll is completed by the cricket pitch, communal apple orchard and a friendly pub serving real ales and great food.

01647 277223; www.thecleavelustleigh.com. 01647 277 365. Near www.primrosetearooms.co.uk)
Between North Bovey and Bovey Tracey, eastern Dartmoor.

23. Take a road trip

There's no better ways to blow away the cobwebs than a drive across the open moor. The circuit from Widecombe to Buckland and around to Ashburton takes in 14th century churches, clusters of granite and thatched cottages, gurgling brooks and ancient bridges.

Eastern Dartmoor.

24. Knock about antiques shops

Dubbed the gateway to the moor, Ashburton is an elegant town that makes a good base for exploring lushly wooded eastern Dartmoor. Its fortunes were founded on cloth and mining – it is one of Dartmoor's four stannary towns, where tin was bought to be taxed – and its fine slate-hung frontages house a well-to-do selection of antique shops, delis and cafes. Most notable of the latter is the Agaric Restaurant, the Fish Deli and Ashburton Deli. The famous Ashburton Cookery School, which does short cookery courses, is also here.

Ashburton, eastern Dartmoor.

25. Eat in a field kitchen

Food doesn't get fresher or more local than at Riverford Field Kitchen, the organic farm that is home to the famous veg box scheme, where enormous bowls of hearty homespun fayre is served up on long tables in a wonderfully convivial atmosphere. Booking essential. Price: £19.90 for a two-course lunch; £26.50 for a three-course dinner.

01803 762059; www.riverford.co.uk.
Buckfastleigh, near Ashburton, eastern Dartmoor.

26. Swim in The Dart at Spitchwick

A gorgeous swimming and picnic spot with a high corner pool, a deep, tranquil lower corner pool for serious swimmers; and a cliff for daredevil jumpers. It can get busy on a hot day as families gather to picnic on the common, and parking can be a problem - get there early for a space, or walk the half-mile from the car park at New Bridge. The leafy setting, the clean water (that brown colour is healthy peat) and the sheer fun of the place justify its popularity. Horseshoe Pool above New Bridge has a big square rock to jump off into the fast-flowing water. Downstream, there are pools by Spitchwick Common for longer swims and higher jumps.

Holne, near Ashburton, eastern Dartmoor.

27. Visit an ancient woodland

Stunted oaks furred with mosses and lichen and a densely moss-covered, boulder-strewn woodland floor - Wistman's Wood is a vestige of the prehistoric dwarf oak trees that used to cover Dartmoor. Start the easy 1-hour walk from the Two Bridges Hotel.

Two Bridges, near Princetown, west Dartmoor.

28. Go to prison

The Mad Axeman, Frank Mitchell and the Acid Bath Murderer were all inmates at Dartmoor Prison, a grim, gothic jail in the mist-wreathed Dartmoor town of Princetown. Once a byword for the most violent offenders, the prison – now Category C – has a museum for the macabre-minded, featuring makeshift weapons and confiscated escape gear. Most shocking is a razor mounted on the tip of a toothbrush and vicious knuckle-dusters made of six-inch nails. Most amusing is the time-honoured classic of knotted bed sheets, once used in an escape attempt. Also on display are leather-belted tunics, which were used for restraint, and a fading photo of a "mad cupboard", in which deranged prisoners were locked and doused with freezing water.

01822 322130; www.dartmoor-prison.co.uk.
Princetown, west Dartmoor.

29. Graze at a farmers' market

Tavistock: birthplace of Sir Francis Drake, and the UK's best market town, according to the Campaign to Protect Rural England. What marks it out is its food. Country Cheeses (countrycheeses.co.uk), showcases hundreds of the West Country's finest, and Crebers delicatessen (01822 612266) are both award winners. Check out the farmers' market which fills elegant Bedford Square on the second and fourth Saturday of every month, and look out for North Bovey's beekeeper Peter Hunt, who sells his honey there.

01822 820360, www.tavistockfarmersmarket.com.

Tavistock, west Dartmoor.

30. Eat at the Dartmoor Inn.

On the fringe of Dartmoor and a stone's throw from one of the National Trust's prettiest walks to Lydford Gorge, the Dartmoor Inn is the perfect blend of olde worlde pub-meets-contemporary diner. Sunday lunch features all the traditional favourites with a modern twist: Gloucester Old Spot pork with apples and juniper, roasted rib of Devon beef with Yorkshire pudding and horseradish cream, and even casserole of sea fish with sweet peppers and toasted almonds if meat and two veg is not your thing. Desserts are not to be missed either, and come with a helping of seriously good clotted cream.

Book ahead. 01822 820221, www.dartmoorinn.com.

Lydford, between Okehampton and Tavistock, west Dartmoor.

31. Have a romantic tryst in Grade-1 listed gardens.

The Endsleigh Hotel is a verdantly-gardened, Grade 1-listed Eden between Dartmoor and Exmoor, with shell houses and hidden glades for romantic tête-à-tête. Built in 1812 as the holiday home for the Duchess of Bedford, Georgiana Russell, this is a wildly romantic, chintz-free country estate that's steeped in royal history.

01822 870 000; www.hotelendsleigh.com.

Near Tavistock, west Dartmoor.

32. Indulge in a cream tea

In the land of cream teas it's hard to pick a favourite, but the spread at The Endsleigh, a romantic country estate near Tavistock (see above), pips the others to the post for its supersized offerings and sublime setting. Just-baked scones are served up with help-yourself quenelles of thick, clotted cream and gloopy strawberry jam, alongside fragrant loose-leaf tea in bone china cups. The wood-panelled drawing room has log fires and views of the hotel's romantic Grade-1 listed gardens. The breakfasts are second-to-none, too.

01822 870 000; www.hotelendsleigh.com.

Near Tavistock, west Dartmoor.

33. Leaf peep

In the ruins of a 16th century vicarage, the Acer glade at The Garden House is one of the best spots in the UK to see Autumn colour.

01822 854769; www.thegardenhouse.org.uk.

Buckland Monachorum, near Tavistock, west Dartmoor. Closed winter.

34. Take a city break

Exeter, Devon's congenial capital, has a fine Norman cathedral, a flourishing university, pretty Georgian streets, a few Roman ruins and a 14th century network of underground passages. The quayside has been attractively renovated, with antique and craft shops, cafés and pubs.

Exeter.

35. Go interiors shopping

The estuary-side town of Topsham is a delight: its narrow lanes wind towards the harbour, which is ringed with restaurants, pubs and antique shops. Other attractions include an appealing run of 18th-century Dutch-style gabled houses, a long riverside strand, huge antiques market on the quayside and the frilly Georgian Tea Rooms at 35 High Street (01392 873465), which are consistently voted the best in Devon – quite an achievement in the county that is the undisputed home of the cream tea.

Topsham, near Exeter.

36. Drink in a traditional Devonshire ale house.

One of England's last traditional ale houses, little has changed at The Bridge Inn for centuries: faded bunting from George V's 1911 coronation still hangs in the tiny bar. With up to 10 ales poured straight from the cask, this 'museum-with-beer' is a must for ale connoisseurs.

01392 873862, www.cheffers.co.uk/bridge.html

Topsham, near Exeter.

37. Visit (another) farm shop

Described as being 'Selfridges' food hall in the middle of a farm', Darts Farm has done so much to promote regional produce it's something of a legend in the south-west. Come here for your weekly shop, a three-course meal or just a takeaway. A favourite is the Fish Shed, a restaurant, fishmonger and take-out place rolled into one: the fish will have been caught that day, and the chips are fried in beef dripping.

01392 878200, www.dartsfarm.co.uk. Check ahead for opening times.

Topsham, near Exeter.

38. See how the other half live

One of the oldest family seats in Devon, the imposing edifice of Powderham Castle, set in its own deer park, belongs to the Earl of Devon. Added to and altered repeatedly over its six hundred year history, tours take in the medieval core, neo-classical areas and the Victorian kitchen.

01626 890243, www.powderham.co.uk

Kenton, near Exeter

39. Visit Salcombe

Undeniably pretty, the pastel coloured houses, steep streets and sandy coves of this boating town attract 'up country' yachting visitors in their hundreds in the summer.

Salcombe, south Devon.

40. Bask on the beach

It's hard to choose from the array of beach beauties on the south coast, but Mill Bay, a quick ferry ride across the water from Salcombe, pips the others to the post for being seaweed-free and getting sun all day. In the summer, it gets busy, so take an Ordnance Survey map to walk to quieter coves further up the coast, or hire a tender boat from town. See our 'best beaches' section for more options.

Salcombe, south Devon.

41. Eat at The Millbrook

Probably the only place in Devon where pigs' trotter patties and escargots appear on the same menu, this cosy pub is old-school Devon-meets-French auberge. On a babbling brook and close to a tranquil creek, it's accessible by boat from Salcombe so, in summer, yachting crowds come and go with the tides. There's live gypsy Jazz every Sunday and fish barbecues in the summer.

From £12 for three courses. 01548 531 581; www.millbrookinnsouthpool.co.uk.

South Pool, near Salcombe, south Devon.

42. Walk the South West Coastal Path

Britain's longest footpath traces the north and south coasts of Devon, offering easy access to wild and windswept cliffs, secluded sandy coves and tiny hamlets. The six-hour walk from Bantham to Salcombe is our favourite, with perfect beaches, jagged headlands and a fantastic little beach hut selling fresh seafood (see below). You can start further along the path for a shorter walk, or do it in reverse and end up at the Pilchard Inn, tides permitting (see number 44).

Bantham to Salcombe, south Devon.

43. Eat crispy squid at The Beach House

This weather-beaten clapboard shack overlooking the dramatic sea arch of Thurlestone is right on the beach, making it a perfect pit stop for a coastal walk. Crab cakes, crispy squid and bacon sandwiches are served up on rustic wooden tables as walkers steam up sea-salted windows comparing notes on local dolphin sightings.

Price: Mains from £8. 01548 561144; www.beachhousedevon.com. Check ahead for opening times.

South Milton Sands, south Devon.

44. Drink in an old pirate's island haunt

The Pilchard Inn is a creaky, weather-beaten smugglers inn dating from 1336 oozing with swashbuckling history: ask about the pirates' escape tunnel. Getting there is all part of the fun. Perched on the tiny, tidal outcrop of Burgh Island surrounded by sandy beaches and choppy seas, it's cut off from the mainland twice a day so you'll need to consult a tide table when planning your visit. When the seas have parted, it's a short walk across the spit. When the waters start coming in, a high-sided 'sea tractor' ferries passengers. *Burgh Island, Bigbury on Sea, south Devon.*

45. Hang ten

Discovery Surf School offer lessons for beginners through to advanced surfers from their base in Bigbury On Sea all year round. A two-hour beginner lesson is £38. *07813 639 622, www.discoverysurf.com. Bigbury on Sea, south Devon.*

46. Amble around Dartmouth

Dartmouth is a gem of a town, with ancient narrow streets, boutique shops, art galleries and delicatessens. A cobbled market place has colourful stalls and farmers markets supplying local produce. It's a popular sailing destination, too. *Dartmouth, south Devon.*

47. Eat fish and chips by the sea

One of the best fish and chips in Devon, this stylish beach shack-style takeaway and restaurant on Dartmouth's harbour is run by celebrity chef Mitch Tonks. The menu includes locally-landed scallops and oysters, along with classics such as jellied eels, cockles, cracked crab and potted shrimp. *Fish and chips from £9. 01803 832800; www.rockfishgrill.co.uk. Dartmouth, south Devon.*

48. Visit Agatha Christie's home

Agatha Christie's private holiday home on the River Dart is much as it was when the crime writer stayed here seeking inspiration for her books. First editions line the shelves, along with family photos and collections of botanical china and archaeological finds. Even if you're not a fan, the house is worth a visit for its beautiful setting on the River Dart and gardens: don't miss the peach house, winery and fernery. You can drive, but the most scenic way to arrive is by ferry from Dartmouth. *01803 842382, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/greenway. Closed winter. Greenway, near Dartmouth, south Devon.*

49. Sip Devonshire wine in a vineyard

This terrace café on the slopes of the award-winning Sharpham vineyard is made for lazy afternoon wine-tastings. It's right next to the winery, so you can see – and smell – all the oak-barrelled action. Views are of the River Dart and Capability Brown-designed hillsides. *01803 732178, www.sharpham.com. Closed winter. Book ahead. Totnes, south Devon.*

50. Visit a stately home

The National Trust property of Saltram House may look familiar: it was used as the Dashwoods' pad in Ang Lee's film of *Sense and Sensibility*. The seat of the earls of Morley, the grand Georgian façade has a Robert Adam interior with original Chippendale furniture, Wedgwood China and portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds. While you're near Plymouth, have lunch in River Cottage, or a cream tea in the Royal William Bakery, both on the city's newly developed Royal William Docks. Swing by The Ship Inn in Noss Mayo for a pretty seaside drink. *01752 333503, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/saltram/ Plympton, near Plymouth, east Devon*

Best cream teas

Bovey Castle, North Bovey

Sink into the huge sofas in one of the grand lounges and hole up for an afternoon of indulgence. Don't forget to take the membership card for 10% off.

Dartmoor tea rooms, Moretonhampstead

A cosy little tea shop that serves lovely moist carrot cake, home-baked scones and a choice of 24 teas. 01647 441116, www.dartmoortearooms.co.uk. Closed during winter.

Gateway Tea Rooms, Moretonhampstead

The fluffiest scones you'll find, and an exceptionally cute resident Golden Retriever. 01647 440772.

Old Forge Tea Rooms, Chagford

Recommended by none other than Jamie Oliver, the Old Forge Tea Rooms in Chagford, have lovely tea and cakes.

01647 433226, www.oldforgechagford.co.uk

Primrose tea rooms, Lustleigh

A old-fashioned little tearoom, with a garden at the back, in a pretty thatched village.

01647 277365

Powdermills Pottery, near Postbridge

Powdermills Pottery is a craft centre in a former gun powder factory on open moorland near Postbridge. Two scones and a cuppa will set you back just £5.25.

01822 880263; www.powdermillspottery.com

Fingle Bridge Inn, near Castle Drogo

Serves a good cream tea with little fuss and not a frilly apron in sight. This inn's picturesque riverside setting with rushing Teign waters and a narrow stone grey arched bridge have made it a popular tourist spot for over a century. Work up an appetite by parking at Drogo Castle and taking the forty-minute walk down gorge to the tearooms at the bottom.

01647 281287, www.finglebridgeinn.com

Royal William Bakery, Plymouth

One of Plymouth's newest openings, this bakery-cum-café in a former brewery is the twin of the famous Town Mill Bakery in Lyme Regis. Rough-hewn walls, long wooden tables, beaten up metal plates and wholesome help-yourself pans of vegetarian food give it a pleasantly pared down, peasant atmosphere. The bread-making timetable, showing what time loaves are fresh out of the oven, is a lovely touch. Closed Mondays.

01752 252333; www.royalwilliambakery.com.

Best beaches

Bantham

Wetsuits outnumber bikinis on south Devon's only surf beach. Look out for stand-up paddle surfers, a quirky new take on the sport.

Lannacombe Sands

A local secret, this small, sandy horseshoe cove is at the end of a long dirt track and only has space for six cars, so get there before 10am and you'll be assured a spot, even in the height of summer.

Mill Bay

It's hard to choose from the array of beach beauties that surround the yachtie town of Salcombe, but Mill Bay, a quick ferry ride across the water, pips the others to the post for being seaweed-free and getting sun all day. Take an Ordnance Survey map to find quieter coves further up the coastal path.

Blackpool Sands

Nestled below wooded cliffs, this mile-long, privately owned sweep of shingle attracts families in their droves during the school holidays. By day, swimmers can practise their dives from a floating dock; at sunset, the café serves beach BBQs.

Slapton Sands

More than 600 US servicemen were killed on this three-mile stretch of shingle when German E-boats attacked their D-day rehearsals. A Sherman tank on the sand commemorates them.

Ness Cove

Accessed via an old smugglers' tunnel, getting to this red-sand beach is an adventure. Leave time to visit Shaldon Zoo at the entrance, which homes one of the UK's largest collection of critically endangered primates (www.shaldonwildlifetrust.org.uk).

Wembury

Bill Oddie's favourite beach for rock pooling, this south coast spot near Plymouth has a marine information centre that runs summertime rock pool rambles.

Best restaurants