

Still Time to Plan a Last-Minute Beach Break to the Dorset Coast this Summer on England's Coast



L-R: The Jurassic Coast; Bournemouth Pier; Christchurch Beach.

17 July 2026: If you thought you'd left it too late for a trip to the coast this summer holiday, [England's Coast](#), the coastal booking and inspiration tool, is here to tell you there's still time to grab a beach break or plan a day out by the seaside.

The Dorset coast has it all this summer - from beach days and watersports, to food festivals and live events, including Bournemouth's spectacular weekly Friday Fireworks on the pier in July & August. Plan your summer staycation or day out with these ideas from England's Coast:

Foodie Safaris and Viticulture

The Dorset coast is awash with award-winning dining destinations, fresh-off-the-boat seafood eateries, vibrant food festivals and vineyards so why not take a food-and-wine-inspired tour through Dorset on your summer break?

- Catch restaurant in **Weymouth**, sitting on the quayside in the Old Fish Market, has been lauded by reviewers, and diners can buy fresh fish downstairs before heading upstairs for a unique sea-to-plate experience featuring adventurous dishes such as glazed octopus or Portland Brown Crab and black sea bream with kale flower sprouts.
- Affordable seafront dining options aplenty include The Noisy Lobster at Avon Beach, **Christchurch**, Rockfish in Poole, Weymouth and **Lyme Regis**, BBQ cruises on Coastal Cruises Poole and Key West Bar and Grill on **Bournemouth** Pier for wrap-around sea views.
- Annual foodie events include the Great Dorset Chilli Festival (2-3 Aug.) featuring artisan chilli products, spicy street food, chilli eating competitions, live music, local beers and a chance to try the famous Dorset Naga! The Seafood & Sounds event (13-14 Sept.) is expected to bring over 8,000 visitors to **Poole Quay** and Old Town for live music, local produce, craft stalls and a daily 'Fisherman's Market' showcasing fresh catch and local seafood delicacies.
- The Dorset coast is also home to several world-class vineyards including the Langham Wine Estate, which offers guided tours among the vines, delicious dining at Smiths Kitchen and Fizz Friday events. Or take an in-depth tour at Bride Valley Vineyards, nestled in the hills a short drive from the Jurassic Coast, with a walk around the 10-hectare site followed by a visit to the tasting tent to sample the signature still and sparkling wines against a stunning backdrop.

Watersports & Bucket-and-Spade Fun

With sparkling seas, bustling harbours, colourful beach huts and 15 miles of golden sands, head to Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole for a sizzling array of **watersports** and activities this summer.

- In Poole Harbour - the largest natural harbour in Europe - explore the coves, islands and cliffs of the Jurassic Coast on a 70 minute cruise with Coastal Cruises or try wakeboarding,

'ringo-ing', kayaking or jetskiing, the choice of watersports on this stretch of coast is arguably the biggest per square inch in the UK.

- In Bournemouth, fly over the waves on the thrilling pier-to-shore zipline PierZip at activity centre RockReef or hire a beach hut for the day and head to the seaside laden with bucket & spade, picnic and beach games.
- The long stretches of sand at **Hengistbury Head** near Christchurch are ideal for kitesurfing, windsurfing, or paddleboarding - rent boards or get lessons near **Mudford Quay**.
- And for those balmy summer evenings, the Dorset skies will be ablaze with spectacular **free firework displays** throughout the summer holidays on Thursdays at Poole Quay, on Fridays from Bournemouth Pier, Mondays at Weymouth Beach, at Swanage Carnival (26 July to 2 August) and much more, check out where to go [here](#).

Stay Cool with Some Culture

If the outdoors gets too sweltering, plan a day of culture perusing some of Dorset's world-class museums and venues.

- **Russell Cotes Art Gallery & Museum**, overlooking the sea on Bournemouth's East Cliff, hosts a summer of botanical themed activities for children from 19 July-31 August including garden & house trails, workshops including botanical printing, and dressing up in addition to an exhibition on the art and advocacy of May Morris, youngest daughter of William Morris (running until 5 October) as well as its fascinating collection of paintings, antiques and ceramics.
- **Highcliffe Castle**, near Christchurch, is a Grade I listed castle surrounded by beautiful grounds with access to the sandy Highcliffe Beach below and the unspoilt Steamer Point nature reserve. Tour the castle, grounds, and current 'Coast' exhibition by street artist and illustrator Lucanart, before enjoying a cream tea on the outdoor terrace at The Castle Pantry. Throughout the summer there's a series of events including **Pop Up Sundays** featuring live music and vintage cars, outdoor theatre including Alice Through The Looking Glass (24 July) and A Midsummer Night's Dream (14 August) and summer holiday wellbeing activities for children such as crafts and walking trails.

Walking and Wildlife

Take in incredible views of the Jurassic coast and spot its unique wildlife on a coastal walk.

- The Old Harry Rocks 3.5 mile route begins and ends at **Studland Bay**, following stunning cliff top trails and sweeping countryside, with opportunities to spot chalk grassland flowers, Celtic artwork and the iconic Old Harry Rocks and Pinnacle Stack on route.
- Backing on to Studland Bay is **Studland Heath**, a scenic peninsula and nature reserve with summer wildlife opportunities including all six native British reptiles, grass snake, smooth snake, adder, slow worm, common and sand lizards, as well as birdlife such as Eurasian Nightjar and warblers.

Where To Stay...

- **For Sea Views:** [Marsham Court Hotel](#), a 95-room four-star with knock-out sea views and an outdoor heated pool, just five minutes' walk from Bournemouth's beaches. Stay overnight from £126 per room (double, including breakfast).
- **For Family Fun:** Ideally located between Weymouth, Dorchester and Durdle Door, [Warmwell Holiday Park](#) boasts an array of family facilities including an indoor pool with wave machine,

crazy golf, 10-pin bowling and woodland walks. A 3-night stay costs from £468 in a 2-bed lodge sleeping up to 6 guests).

- **For Relaxation:** [Stay In Dorset](#)'s collection includes many charming rural and coastal properties ideal for a relaxing couple's break, including Lynwood Lodge, overlooking the beach in Osmington, a 1-bed apartment with hot tub. From £778 for a 3-night stay.

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For more information on England's Coast visit www.englandscoast.com/en or contact Sheron Crossman, National Coastal Tourism Academy Marketing & Communications: Sheron.crossman@coastaltourismacademy.co.uk.

Notes to editors: The England's Coast project is delivered by the National Coastal Tourism Academy whose partners include: Visit Dorset, Visit White Cliffs Country, Visit Redcar & Cleveland, Visit Essex, Visit East Yorkshire, Visit Portsmouth, Tees Valley, Visit Plymouth, Southampton Forward, Visit Isle of Wight, Visit North Yorkshire, Visit Thanet, North York Moors National Park, Visit Durham, Visit Lancashire, Visit Lincolnshire, Visit Brighton, Hornsea Village, East Yorkshire, The Millstream Hotel, West Sussex, Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole: The Marsham Court Hotel, Coastal Cruises Poole, Adventure Attractions, Poole Museum, Russell Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Highcliffe Castle.

The NCTA was established in 2013 to help job creation and economic growth in the tourism economy of coastal towns. It is a not-for-profit organisation, working with industry, coastal destination partners, government, academia and national coastal organisations. It is the recognised voice of coastal tourism.