



The Great British **STAYCATION**

Practical
Caravan
Practical
Motorhome

In association with



36 pages of hints, tips and inspiration to help you get the best from your next UK tour!

Featuring...



Top destinations



Get active!

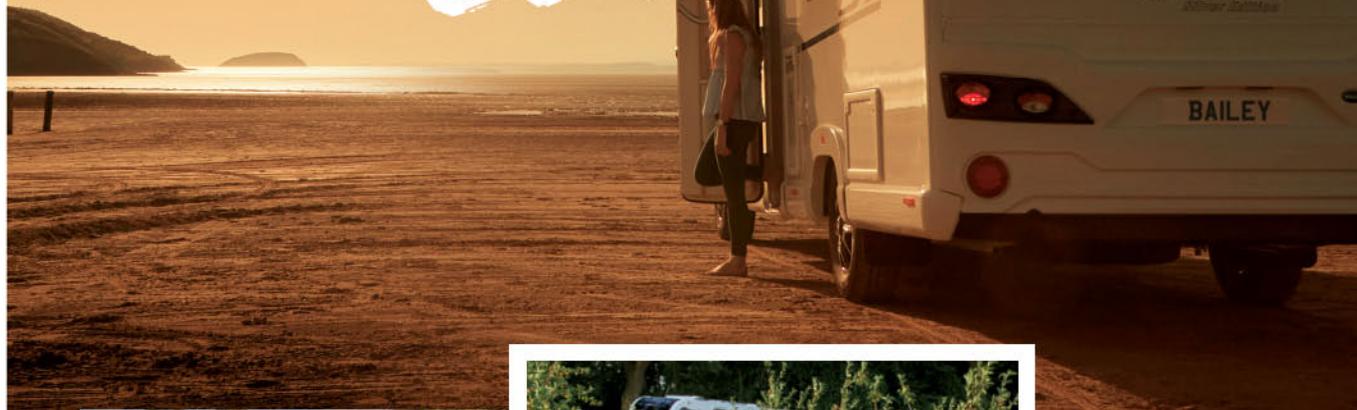


Dream tech



Plan smarter

LET'S MAKE THIS SUMMER COUNT



Missing the feeling of the open road and holidaying in the sun? Soon you'll be able to experience that sense of freedom again.

Wherever you want to go, go safely and... **GO BAILEY!**

Visit our Go Safely page for holiday inspiration and advice at baileyofbristol.co.uk/go-safely





Welcome

The past year has been like no other, and we're all keen to get back out and explore brilliant destinations as soon as we can! What better way to do so than in the comfort and safety of a motorhome or caravan – you'll be able to explore our brilliant British Isles with absolute ease.

And that's where this ebook comes in – within its 36 pages, you'll find brilliant inspirational travel advice, fantastic tech to help you tour better, ideas for new activities, and tips on finding a campsite, keeping your caravan or motorhome safe, and much more.

We've produced this ebook in association with Bailey of Bristol. It was founded in 1948 and produces a wide range of caravans and motorhomes – you're sure to find the perfect one for you. For more information, see www.baileyofbristol.co.uk.

So what are you waiting for? Turn the page now and get planning for your best year ever!

“We at Bailey of Bristol know how fantastic British staycations are, and this year more than ever we'll all be exploring the beauty and history of our shores. With this ebook and a Bailey caravan or motorhome, you have all the ingredients you need to hit the road and enjoy a wonderful year of inspirational tours.”

Simon Howard, Marketing Director, Bailey of Bristol

WHERE TO GO

Cornwall

There's something slightly mystical about Cornwall, a touch of magic that comes partly from its position on the extreme west of the UK's south-west peninsula, surrounded by sea and moor – a place of romance and legend.

Take your pick from north or south coasts. Surfers will love the waves at Newquay, while art lovers will enjoy the galleries of St Ives, including Tate St Ives, and that wonderful crisp light that has attracted artists from around the globe.

Journey south for exquisite fishing villages at Mousehole and Mevagissey or take in a performance at the wonderful Minack Theatre, a beautiful amphitheatre carved into the rock above Porthcurno beach.

At Tintagel, you'll find the romantic ruins of the castle, forever associated with King Arthur, while at Padstow, you have a choice of fantastic fish restaurants. Finally, of course, there's the iconic Land's End and the wild majesty of Bodmin Moor.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ordnance Survey has measured the Cornish coastline to be longer than 600 miles, making it the county with the longest coastline in the UK

5 brilliant sites in Cornwall

■ **Trethem Mill Touring Park**

www.trethem.com

■ **Silver Sands Holiday Park**

www.silversandsholidaypark.co.uk

■ **Polmanter Touring Park**

www.polmanter.com/

■ **Eden Valley Holiday Park**

www.edenvalleyholidaypark.co.uk

■ **Tehidy Holiday Park**

tehidy.co.uk



■ Head for the rugged Cornish coast for big skies and wide vistas

5 top towns and cities

- Bodmin
- Falmouth
- Hayle
- Padstow
- Penzance

5 iconic locations

- Bodmin Moor
- Eden Project
- Land's End
- St Michael's Mount
- Lost Gardens Heligan



5 hidden gems

- Flambards Theme Park
- Minack Theatre (left)
- Cornish Seal Sanctuary
- Bodmin Jail
- Jamaica Inn

Devon

It's home to the English Riviera, and a real family favourite during the summer season: Devon holds a special place in many of our hearts. With cream teas, sea fishing, crabbing, picturesque villages and fine sandy beaches, it is the stuff of memories.

The coastline dominates – the north is a magnet for surfers, drawn by the tidal range of the Bristol Channel and excellent beaches, such as the beautiful sand at Woolacombe. This stretch of coast is also the site of Clovelly, one of England's prettiest villages.

Walkers will gravitate to Exmoor and Dartmoor, which straddle the interior of the county, while to the east are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Blackdown Hills and East Devon.

The South West Coast Path will also attract keen hikers, who along the way, can pause at the lovely towns of Brixham, Salcombe and Torquay to enjoy refreshments and other seaside attractions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Devon has the longest road network in the country – the county council is responsible for 8000 miles, more than any other place in the UK

5 brilliant sites in Devon

- **Ladram Bay**
ladrambay.co.uk
- **Smytham Manor Holiday Park**
smytham.co.uk
- **Lady's Mile Holiday Park**
ladysmile.co.uk
- **Cofton Country Park**
www.coftonholidays.co.uk
- **Appledore Park**
www.appledorepark.co.uk



■ Lynmouth Harbour is a great place for a picturesque Devonian photo

5 top towns and cities

- Plymouth
- Paignton
- Brixham (right)
- Exeter
- Barnstaple



5 iconic locations

- Dartmoor
- Exmoor
- Plymouth Hoe
- Lundy island
- Buckfast Abbey

5 hidden gems

- Babbacombe Model Village
- Tarka Trail
- The Underground Passages
- Exmoor Zoo
- Verity Statue

WHERE TO GO

Dorset

Seaside resorts, Hardy's Wessex, the Jurassic Coast... for a small county, Dorset packs in a lot. Diminutive it may be, it nevertheless remains a favourite with tourers and campers, attracted by the mild climate, beautiful coastline and countryside, and quality campsites.

On the coast, the fine resorts of Bournemouth and Poole dominate, while nearby Sandbanks has become a haunt of the rich and famous. Further west, you'll find Weymouth and the Isle of Portland flanked by Chesil Beach, the 18-mile shingle barrier which featured in Ian McEwan's famous novel.

This area is part of the Jurassic Coast, a UNESCO World Heritage Site famed for its geology and best characterised by the iconic Durdle Door rock formation, in the shape of an archway that juts out to sea near Lulworth Cove.

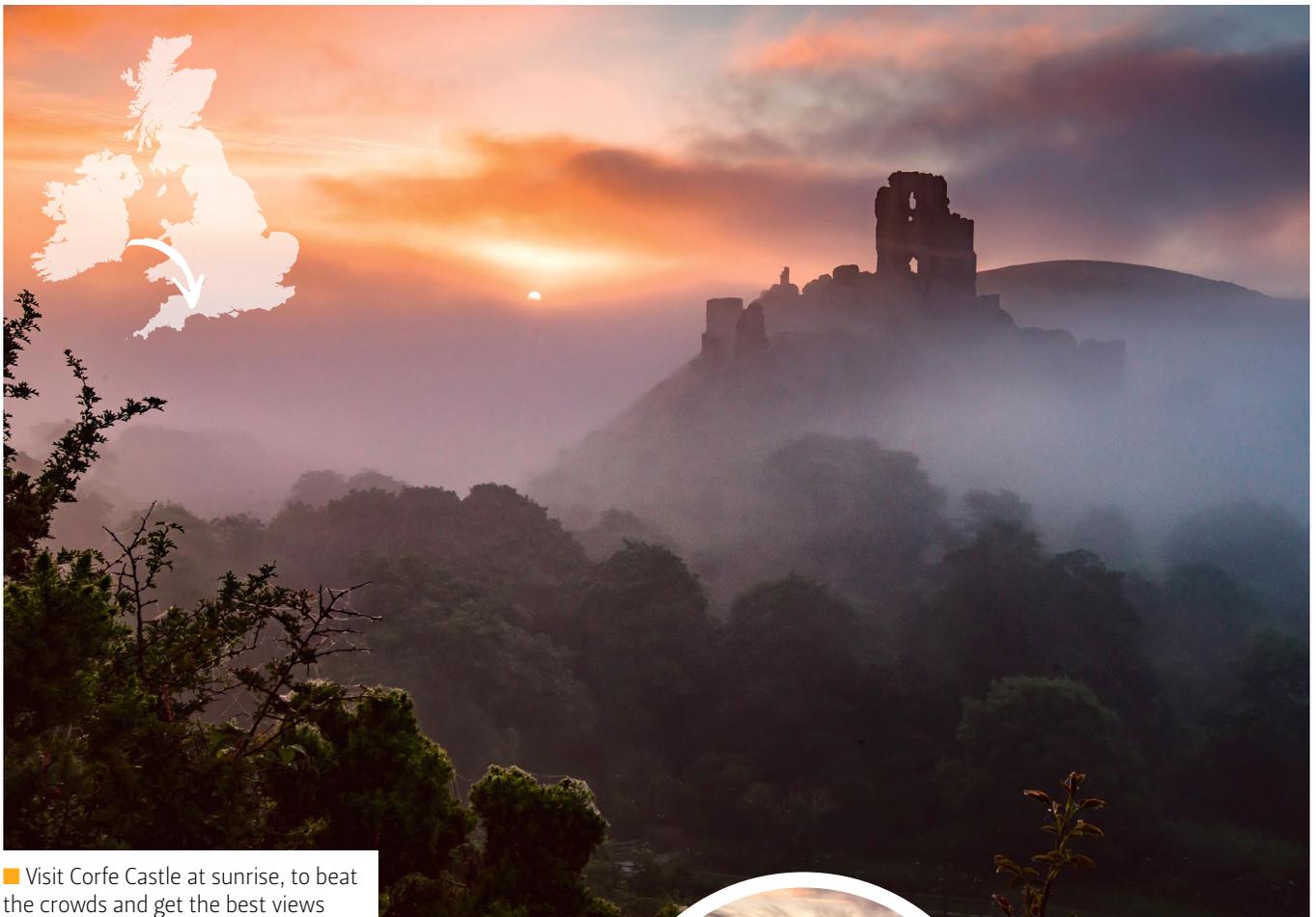
Move inland to explore the ruins of Corfe Castle and the many chocolate box villages throughout the county.

DID YOU KNOW?

The further you travel along the 18-mile-long Chesil Beach, the more the stones change size. Towards Portland they are large, becoming progressively smaller towards West Bay

5 brilliant sites in Dorset

- **Back of Beyond**
www.backofbeyondtouringpark.co.uk
- **South Lytchett Manor Caravan and Camping Park**
www.southlytchettmanor.co.uk
- **Golden Cap Holiday Park**
<https://wdlh.co.uk/>
- **Highlands End Holiday Park**
<https://wdlh.co.uk/>
- **Bagwell Farm Touring Park**
www.bagwellfarm.co.uk/



■ Visit Corfe Castle at sunrise, to beat the crowds and get the best views

5 top towns and cities

- Bournemouth
- Poole
- Weymouth
- Dorchester
- Bridport

5 iconic locations

- Durdle Door (right)
- Jurassic Coast
- Corfe Castle
- Weymouth Beach
- The Cerne Giant



5 hidden gems

- Monkey World
- Poole Harbour
- Bovington Tank Museum
- Maiden Castle
- Dorset County Museum

COMFY IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES

Jack's turn to read the next chapter of the bedtime story to his family in the New Forest



PHOENIX+
Comfortable & capable

The Phoenix+ range is packed with equipment to make this Summer, and many more, the perfect base from which to explore and spend time together. It's spacious, comfortable, lightweight and affordable.

Wherever you want to go, go safely and... **GO BAILEY!**

Find out more about the range at baileyofofbristol.co.uk/phoenixplus

BAILEY
The Nation's Favourite

WHERE TO GO

Somerset, Avon & Wiltshire

This region has what must be the best-known prehistoric monument in Europe – Stonehenge – and some of the finest Roman remains in the world, in the city of Bath.

Ancient stone circles at Avebury, Glastonbury Tor, mystical white horses carved into the hills, and the great medieval cathedrals at Salisbury and Wells will all fascinate historians.

Pull on your boots to walk among wild ponies on Exmoor, follow in the footsteps of poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge in the Quantock Hills, or hike the Mendips to Cheddar Gorge and Wookey Hole.

Weston-super-Mare and Minehead offer seaside family fun, while there's lots to entertain in Devizes, Marlborough, Chippenham and Trowbridge.

Bath brings the stories of Jane Austen to life in the elegance of its Georgian architecture, while in Bristol, history meets contemporary living, with Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge and *SS Great Britain*, and the vibrant regeneration of its wharf areas.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bath is the UK's only UNESCO World Heritage Site that is a whole city. Author Jane Austen lived in the city from 1800 to 1806 and based numerous books there

5 brilliant sites in Somerset, Avon & Wiltshire

- **Warren Farm Holiday Centre**
www.warrenfarm.co.uk
- **The Old Oaks Touring Park**
www.theoldoaks.co.uk
- **Plough Lane Caravan Site**
<http://ploughlane.co.uk/>
- **Bath Chew Valley Caravan Park**
www.bathchewvalley.co.uk
- **Postern Hill**
www.campingintheforest.co.uk



■ Book Stone Circle Experience tickets at Stonehenge for out-of-hours access

5 top towns and cities

- Salisbury
- Bath (right)
- Bristol
- Glastonbury
- Marlborough



5 iconic locations

- Stonehenge
- Glastonbury Tor
- Longleat House
- Salisbury Cathedral
- Wells cathedral

5 hidden gems

- Stourhead
- Silbury Hill
- Dunster Castle
- Haynes Motor Museum
- Cleeve Abbey

South-east England

Whether you're planning a forest, country or coastal break, you can find it all in the South-East, a region blessed with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – the Chilterns, the North Wessex Downs, the Surrey Hills and the High Weald – and two of the UK's newest National Parks, the New Forest and the South Downs. This is the region that once bore the brunt of conflicts with Europe: its coastline is dotted with fortresses; the Cinque Ports make a fascinating tour and a visit to Dover Castle gives vivid detail of its part in the two world wars.

In peacetime it has been the home – Windsor and Hampton Court, as well as London – and playground of sovereigns. Brighton was a favourite of George IV, while Queen Victoria had a sumptuous summer palace built on the Isle of Wight.

The area is also developing a reputation for wine production, in addition to an established brewing industry; both make engaging visits.

DID YOU KNOW?

The white cliffs at Dover are around 136 million years old. Tunnels are hidden within them, carved by prisoners during the Napoleonic Wars

5 brilliant sites in South East England

- **Thriftwood Country Park**
www.thriftwoodcountrypark.com
- **Horam Manor Country Park**
www.horammanorcountrypark.com
- **Concierge Camping**
www.conciergecamping.co.uk
- **Nethercourt Touring Park**
www.nethercourt.com
- **Hurley Riverside Park**
www.hurleyriversidepark.co.uk



■ Sunset and sunrise are great times to photograph Brighton Pier

5 top towns and cities

- London
- Brighton
- Newport
- Winchester
- Broadstairs

5 iconic locations

- Leeds Castle (right)
- Dover's white cliffs
- New Forest
- Hampton Court Palace
- Highclere Castle



5 hidden gems

- Beaulieu Motor Museum
- Blackgang Chine
- Paultons Park
- New Forest Reptile Centre
- Drusillas Park

WHERE TO GO

Heart of England

The heart of England takes in everything from Oxfordshire to the Peak District, and it's an area that is rich in history and natural attractions.

There's something for everyone here, whether you're keen to explore the literary delights of William Shakespeare's home town of Stratford-upon-Avon or plan to take in some of the grand houses to be found across the region, including Chatsworth, Haddon Hall, Kedleston Hall, Sudbury Hall and Bolsover Castle.

For nature lovers, the Peak District National Park is hard to beat, with superb trail walking and cycle tracks available and, of course, the pudding towns of Buxton and Bakewell.

There's also the opportunity to enjoy the many delights of the Cotswolds, where honey-coloured villages brim with charming tearooms and pubs. And finally, don't miss the stunning university architecture of Oxford's dreaming spires.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Peak District was Britain's first National Park, being founded in 1951. It has a resident population of 38,000, but attracts 13m visitors annually

5 brilliant sites in Heart of England

- **Poston Mill Park**
Postonmill.co.uk
- **Love2Stay**
Love2stay.co.uk
- **Ludlow Touring Park**
Morris-leisure.co.uk
- **Eye Kettleby Lakes**
Eyekettlebylakes.com
- **Cartref Caravan & Camping**
Cartrefcaravansite.co.uk



■ Hope Valley in the Peak District offers great wide landscape shots

5 top towns and cities

- Derby
- Stafford
- Royal Leamington Spa
- Bourton-on-the-Water
- Birmingham



5 iconic locations

- Oxford's spires
- Chatsworth House (left)
- Alton Towers
- Blenheim Palace
- Peak District

5 hidden gems

- Gulliver's Kingdom
- National Space Centre
- Radcliffe Camera
- Black Country Living Museum
- Puzzleworld

East of England

Wide sandy beaches with expansive vistas, cycle-friendly topography and an abundance of interesting wildlife make the East of England a natural choice for tourers.

Check out the nature reserves around the Wash en route to King's Lynn and Sandringham, then go on to the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Here you'll find beautiful villages, abundant bird life and, at Blakeney Point, seals.

Nature lovers will also enjoy a trip to Dedham Vale on the Essex/Suffolk border, an area made famous by the Romantic landscape paintings of John Constable.

Visit medieval Lincoln, for its fine castle and cathedral, and for more architectural splendour, don't miss Felbrigg and Holkham Halls.

Keen gardeners should be sure to visit The Beth Chatto Gardens at Elmstead, and foodies will revel in a visit to Mersea island, just off the Essex coast, famed for its delicious oysters.

DID YOU KNOW?

Half of Norfolk's border sits beside water – that equates to more than 90 miles of coastline. The Norfolk Coast walking path runs for around 45 miles

5 brilliant sites in East of England

■ Long Acres Touring Park

www.long-acres.co.uk

■ Run Cottage Touring Park

www.runcottage.co.uk

■ Old Brick Kilns Caravan Park

www.old-brick-kilns.co.uk

■ Walnut Lakes

www.walnutlakes.co.uk

■ Kelling Heath

www.kellingheath.co.uk



■ St Benet's Mill offers a great opportunity for an impressive photo

5 top towns and cities

- Norwich
- Ipswich
- Lincoln
- Ely
- Sheringham

5 iconic locations

- Broads National Park
- Suffolk Coast
- Constable Country
- Cambridge
- Norwich Cathedral



5 hidden gems

- Blakeney Point (left)
- Baylham Rare Breeds Farm
- Southwold Lighthouse
- Jimmy's Farm & Wildlife Park
- Somerleyton Hall

WHERE TO GO

Wales

Wales may be a small country, but it punches well above its weight when it comes to natural attractions, with everything from mountain peaks to glorious beaches and craggy coastal headlands.

Whether you're looking for a simple bucket-and-spade break or an adventurous, adrenaline-pumping weekend, this is the place to be.

Visit Wales promoted 2020 as the Year of the Outdoors and it's easy to see why. With 870 miles of coastline to explore, you are never far from outstanding walks. There are also three National Parks to enjoy – Snowdonia, Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast – for walks, cycle trails and wildlife spotting.

If that's not enough excitement, thrill-seekers can search out Europe's longest zip wire or go surfing at the inland Surf Snowdonia wave lagoon. Scuba diving, pot-holing and coasteering are just a few of the other adventures awaiting you.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wales has five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as well as a trio of National Parks – the latter cover around one-fifth of the country

5 brilliant sites in Wales

- **Woodlands Devil's Bridge**
www.woodlandsdevilsbridge.co.uk
- **South Wales Touring Park/ Llwynifan Farm**
www.southwalescaravansite.co.uk
- **Bron Derw Touring Caravan Park**
www.bronderw-wales.co.uk
- **Tyddyn Llwyn Touring Park**
www.tyddynllwyn.com
- **Tyddyn Du Touring Park**
www.tyddyndutouringpark.co.uk



■ It's easy to escape the crowds by heading for a remote Welsh beach

5 top towns and cities

- Cardiff
- Swansea
- Aberystwyth
- Newport
- Hay-on-Wye



5 iconic locations

- Gower Peninsula (left)
- Snowdonia National Park
- Barry Island
- Raglan Castle
- Principality Stadium

5 hidden gems

- St Fagans Museum
- Pontcysyllte Aqueduct
- Welsh Mountain Zoo
- National Slate Museum
- Clearwell Caves

North-west England

Did you know that England's North-west is the third most populated region of the UK after the South-east and Greater London? It's home to the vibrant cities of Manchester and Liverpool, as well as the bright lights of Blackpool and the ancient city of Chester. It also boasts some of the most beautiful scenery in the country.

The mountain peaks and fells surrounding the breathtaking lakes of Cumbria have been beguiling visitors and writers for many decades. Lakes can be explored by steam cruise and row boat, while there are plenty of written guides on walking the fells. Lancashire is well known for its great Victorian seaside resorts and the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, while Cheshire is home to beautiful gardens, stately homes and one of the country's top zoos.

The North-west also has a great maritime and industrial heritage, so as well as its really stunning landscapes, there's a wealth of history to explore.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Lake District features England's deepest lake – Wastwater, at 74 metres – as well as its longest lake: Windermere, at 10.5 miles in length

5 brilliant sites in North West England

- **Waterfoot Park**
www.waterfootpark.co.uk
- **Meadow Falls**
www.meadowfalls.co.uk
- **Hill of Oaks Caravan Park**
www.hillofoaks.co.uk
- **Silverdale (Holgates Holiday Park)**
www.holgates.co.uk
- **Park Cliffe Camping & Caravan Estate**
www.parkcliffe.co.uk



■ Foreground objects add interest to photographs of Cumbria's lakes

5 top towns and cities

- Manchester
- Liverpool
- Chester
- Lancaster
- Carlisle

5 iconic locations

- Historic Liverpool
- Blackpool (right)
- The Lake District
- Chester Cathedral
- Lancaster Castle



5 hidden gems

- Pendle Woods
- Kendal Castle
- Derwent Pencil Museum
- Blackpool Zoo
- National Football Museum

WHERE TO GO

North-east England

There's a lot to love in the North East of England – vast, wild, craggy, remote areas of the National Parks contrast with the bright lights of Newcastle, Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Leeds and York. The varied coastline is home to some wonderful wildlife, defensive fortresses and Victorian seaside resorts.

Northumberland is the most northerly county in England and the least densely populated; much is taken up by the Northumberland National Park. Inland, you can trace the ancient battlefields of Romans and Picts along Hadrian's Wall. Puffins, grey seals and dolphins can all be spotted on one of the many wildlife-watching boat trips that ply the waters around the Farne Islands, Coquet Island and stunning Lindisfarne island.

In beautiful Yorkshire, explore the stunning Yorkshire Dales National Park, the wonderful seaside resorts of Scarborough and Filey, or stray inland to walk the Howardian Hills.

DID YOU KNOW?

Hadrian's Wall took six years to build, and around 15,000 men were required. Today, you can only see around 10 percent of the original

5 brilliant sites in North East England

- **Jasmine Caravan Park**
www.jasminepark.co.uk
- **Ord House Country Park**
www.maguirecountryparks.co.uk
- **Crows Nest Caravan Park**
www.crowsnestcaravanpark.com
- **Golden Square Caravan Park**
www.goldensquarecaravanpark.com
- **Cote Ghyll Caravan & camping Park**
www.coteghyll.com



■ Denthead Viaduct looks stunning in bleaker, more overcast weather

5 top towns and cities

- York
- Leeds
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- Berwick-upon-Tweed
- Durham



5 iconic locations

- Holy Island (left)
- Yorkshire Dales Nat'l Park
- Bamburgh Castle
- Angel of the North
- Kielder Forest

5 hidden gems

- The Alnwick Garden
- Berwick's Walls
- Kielder Observatory
- Kynren
- Hamsterley Forest

Scotland

The landscapes in Scotland are diverse and stunning, making it an exciting region to tour in. Last year saw the country pay special attention to the unrivalled coastline, rivers, canals and lochs as part of the Year of Coasts & Waters 2020. These things are an intrinsic part of the Scottish way of life and offer some of the most impressive scenery in the UK, including Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, and Dumfries and Galloway's sandy beaches.

Scotland is also a land full of unique traditions and experiences, from Hogmanay celebrations and Highland Games to throwbacks to the Celtic, pagan and Viking influences that permeate the culture, such as Up Helly Aa.

With 700-plus islands, castles galore, and the awe-inspiring Highlands, there's more than enough to make for a memorable tour. Both Edinburgh and Glasgow offer vibrant city breaks and are easily accessible via the M8, while driving routes such as the North Coast 500 promise ever-changing scenery.

DID YOU KNOW?

Elvis Presley stopped at Prestwick Airport for two hours on his return from Germany in 1960 – it was The King's only visit to the UK

5 brilliant sites in Scotland

- **Grantown on Spey Caravan Park**
www.caravanscotland.com
- **Myrus Holiday Park**
<https://myruscaravanpark.co.uk/>
- **Blair Castle Caravan Park**
<https://blair-castle.co.uk/caravan-estate/>
- **Argyll Caravan Park**
www.argyllcaravanpark.com
- **Edinburgh C&MC Site**
www.caravanclub.co.uk



■ Scottish peaks contrast with lowland areas for dramatic images

5 top towns and cities

- Edinburgh (right)
- Glasgow
- Inverness
- Aberdeen
- Dundee

5 iconic locations

- Edinburgh Castle
- Loch Ness
- John o' Groats
- Isle of Skye
- Ben Nevis



5 hidden gems

- Glasgow Science Centre
- North Coast 500
- Blair Castle
- Camera Obscura
- Culzean Castle

WHERE TO GO

Northern Ireland

Okay, so it's not part of Britain, but stunning Northern Ireland definitely deserves its own entry in our guide!

Visitors will find that it's the region's natural wonders that truly endure. Take a tour of the province and you'll be able to enjoy both the exquisite landscapes and the modern attractions.

There's simply so much to see here – journey south for the beautiful Mourne Mountains and exquisite beaches. Then head west for the Fermanagh Lakelands. Finally, turn north to the rugged shores of North Antrim, and be sure to stop and take in the curious magnificence of the columns of the Giant Causeway – truly the stuff of legend!

Also, don't miss a visit to historic Belfast for a warm welcome and a chance to see the city's many fabulous attractions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Filming for *Game of Thrones* took place in Northern Ireland – locations included Cushendun Caves, Downhill Strand, Ballintoy Harbour and Inch Abbey

5 brilliant sites in Northern Ireland

- **Ballyness Caravan Park**
www.ballynesscaravanpark.com
- **Rushin House Caravan Park**
www.rushinhouse.com
- **Sandilands Holiday Park**
www.chestnuttholidayparks.com
- **Delamont Country Park C&CC site**
www.thefriendlyclub.co.uk
- **Mullynascarthy Holiday Park**
mullynascarthyholidaypark.com



■ Head along the Causeway coastal route for numerous iconic sights

5 top towns and cities

- Belfast
- Derry/Londonderry
- Portrush
- Coleraine
- Bangor



5 iconic locations

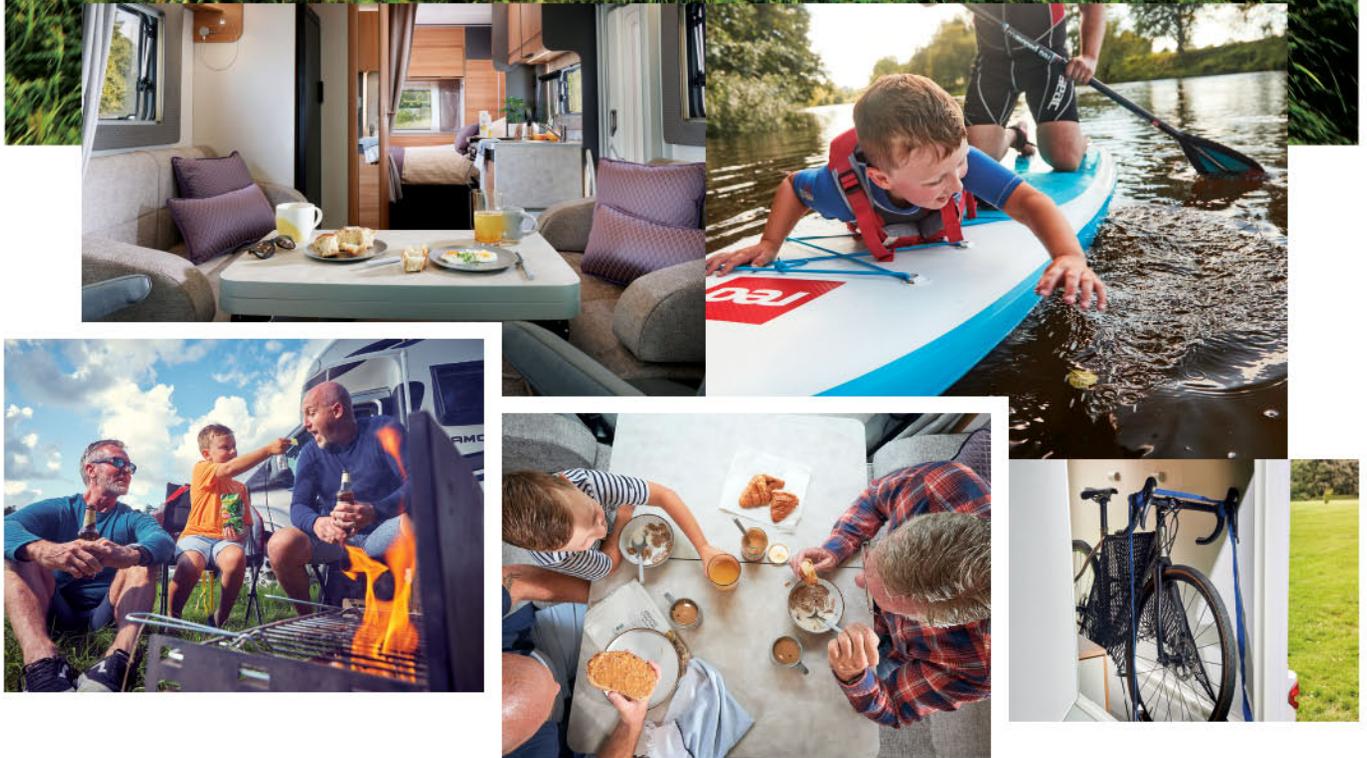
- Giant's Causeway (left)
- Derry murals
- Mountains of Mourne
- Carrick-a-Rede bridge
- Carrickfergus Castle

5 hidden gems

- The Dark Hedges
- Marble Arch Caves
- Ulster Folk Museum
- Slieve Gullion Forest Park
- Downhill Strand



Dave, Will and Seb take off for a lads, dads and grandads weekend on the Wye



Bailey's first ever Euro-style motorhome. Three models feature 4 travel seats, flexible lounge layout, electric drop down beds and generous garage space for all your adventure kit. With automatic transmission the Adamo is ready when you are.

Wherever you want to go, go safely and... **GO BAILEY!**

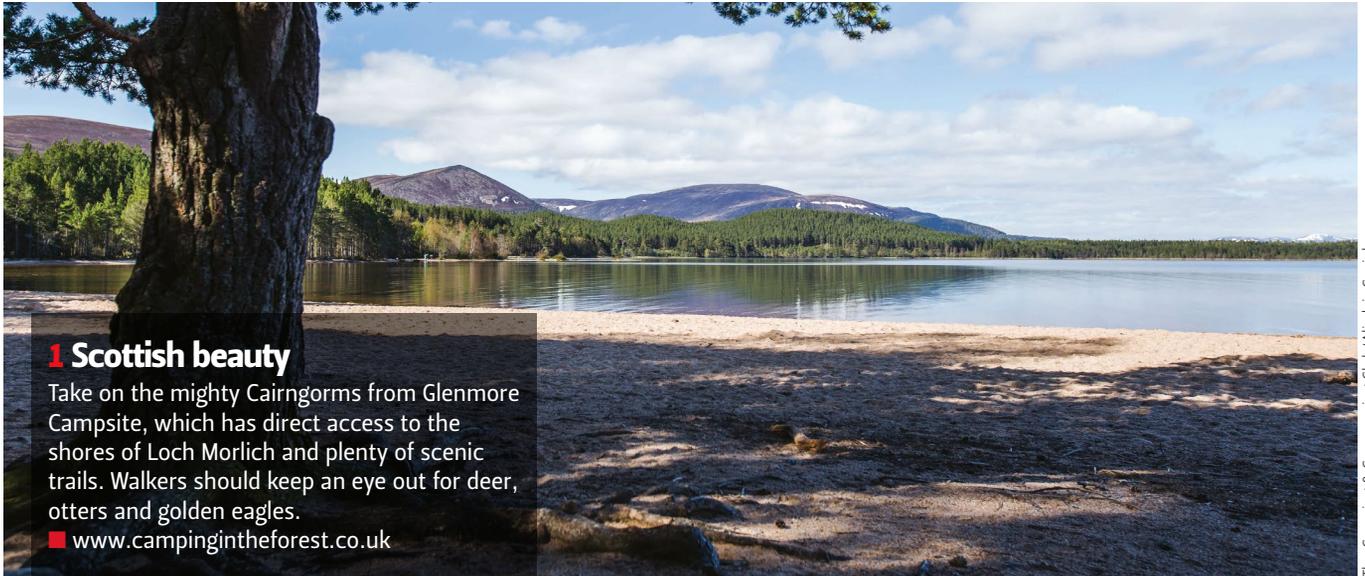


ADAMO
Smart & spirited

Find out more about the range at baileيوفbristol.co.uk/adamo



GET ACTIVE

**1 Scottish beauty**

Take on the mighty Cairngorms from Glenmore Campsite, which has direct access to the shores of Loch Morlich and plenty of scenic trails. Walkers should keep an eye out for deer, otters and golden eagles.

■ www.campingintheforest.co.uk

The Camping & Caravanning Club/Alisdair Cusick

GET ACTIVE

Fresh air & walking

Hiking is a great way to explore the great outdoors! Bryony Symes picks 10 of the best campsites for getting out and about on foot

**2 Dawdle around Dartmoor**

The adults-only Woodland Springs Touring Park is surrounded by farmland in the heart of Dartmoor National Park, where you can stroll the moors accompanied by sheep, ponies and other animals. The site shop can provide local cider for an evening tippie after a long walk!

■ www.woodlandsprings.co.uk

**3 Take in the sights of Snowdonia**

From the charming Graig Wen campsite, there is direct access to the Mawddach Trail, perfect for those wanting to explore the estuary on foot, and the site is surrounded by the stunning scenery of Snowdonia. Tourers are usually welcome from March to January.

■ www.graigwen.co.uk



4 Worth the wait

You can't get a better location for the Pembrokeshire Coast Path than Newgale Campsite, which is just off a mile-long sandy beach. Unfortunately, this site isn't open all year, but you're sure to enjoy a wonderful summer tour here.

■ www.newgalecampsite.co.uk



5 Scenic Shropshire

Situated right on the border between England and Wales, Daisy Bank Caravan Park has the backdrop of the Shropshire Hills to provide plenty of great walking trails to choose from. Plus, the site is open all year for those who are feeling brave enough to face the winter chill.

■ www.daisy-bank.co.uk



6 Fell walking

Moss Side Farm is a family-run site in the southern fells of the Lake District National Park, with no shortage of stunning scenery, and lots of footpaths that lead from the farm itself. It's also open all year, and Broughton-in-Furness is a 30-minute walk.

■ www.mossidefarm.com



7 Farm fresh

As a busy working farm, Gillside Farm campsite promises a truly rural experience, with the fells of the Lake District providing some spectacular views. You can even buy milk and eggs from the farm.

■ www.gillsidecaravanandcampingsite.co.uk



8 Après hike

The Waterloo Inn is in the heart of Derbyshire's dramatic Peak District, surrounded by excellent walking and adjacent to the Tissington Trail. Plus, the cosy country pub is just a few steps from your van, so you can enjoy a pint after your hike.

■ www.waterlooinnbiggin.com



9 A touch of luxury

Perched on the edge of the South Downs National Park, Concierge Camping has luxury facilities to refresh you after a long day of walking, including fabulous Emperor pitches, with day-living Safari tents for cooking and lounging away from the confines of your caravan or motorhome.

■ www.conciergecamping.co.uk

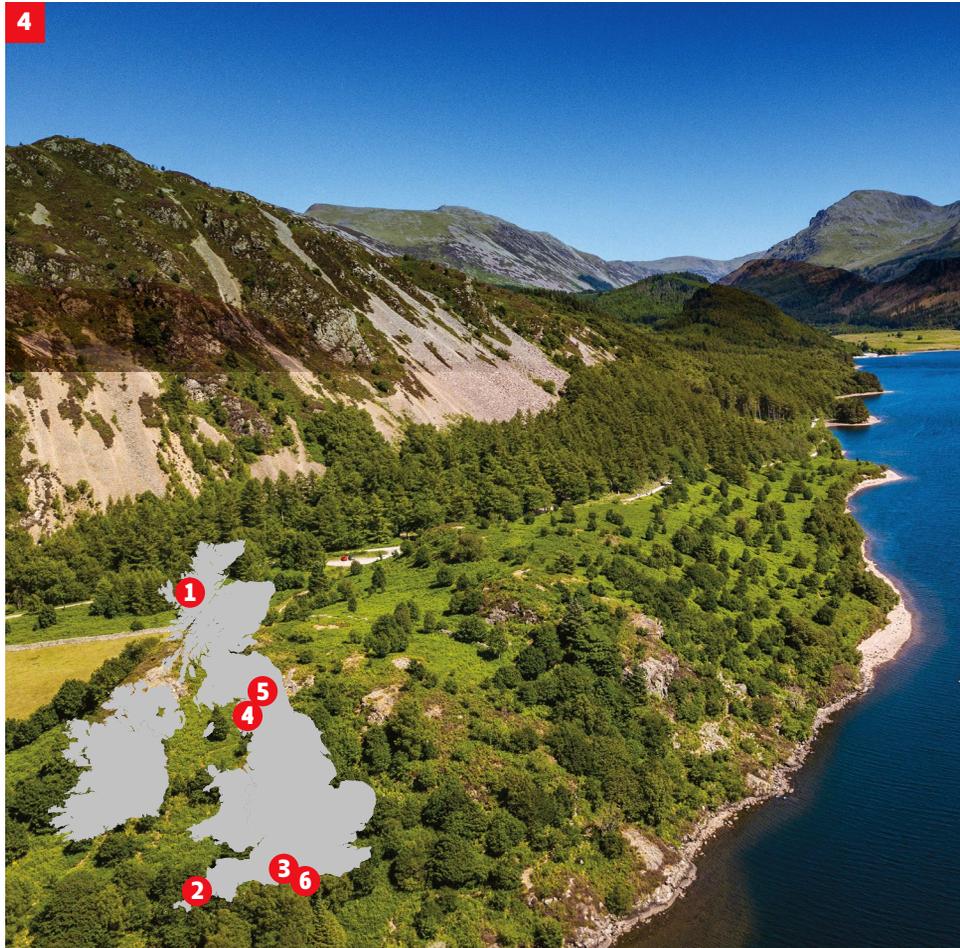


10 Child-friendly Cheddar

For a slice of the slow life, pitch up at Petruth Paddocks, a relaxed campsite with a true live-and-let-live vibe. Some of the very best of Somerset's glorious walking routes and the stunning vistas of Cheddar Gorge are right on your doorstep, ready to be enjoyed all year round.

■ www.petruthpaddocks.co.uk

GET ACTIVE



GET ACTIVE

On your bike

Marcus Leach reveals some brilliant UK areas for keen cyclists

From the Lake District, Cambrian Mountains and Scottish Highlands to the Brecon Beacons, the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales (and many more such places in between), we in the UK are spoiled for choice when it comes to cycling-friendly destinations. Here are just some of my favourites.

1 Applecross Peninsula

Those familiar with the west coast of Scotland will know that this just has to be, without doubt, one of the most strikingly beautiful parts of the UK. A combination of rugged coast roads and quintessential highland landscapes makes for some dramatic riding, with the bonus of the challenging climb of Bealach na Bà for those who like heading upwards on their rides.

The peninsula forms part of the North Coast 500 route and while this is not the easiest place to get to, it really should be on everyone's bucket list.

Stay at Kinlochewe C&MC Site

■ www.caravanclub.co.uk

2 Camel Trail

Cornwall is blessed not only with miles and miles of stunning coastline, but also with one of the country's best family-friendly cycling trails. The Camel Trail, which runs from the picturesque

seaside town of Padstow to the foot of Bodmin Moor, is perfect for riders of all ages and abilities.

The route, on a disused railway line, runs through some of Cornwall's most breathtaking countryside, and is a ride of contrasts and changing scenery. Rocky shorelines and golden sandbanks give way to woodland before morphing into granite-studded moors, all the while offering numerous places where you can stop to enjoy Cornwall's finest ice-cream.

Stay at Trewethett Farm C&MC Site

■ www.caravanclub.co.uk

3 New Forest

The delightful, gently undulating landscape of the New Forest National Park is best enjoyed on the network of off-road cycle routes that criss-cross the region. With more than 100 miles of signposted traffic-free trails, there are few better places for a family-friendly cycling holiday.

In addition, those of you seeking a rather more strenuous challenge will find plenty of excellent routes from which to choose. Brockenhurst, regarded as one of the region's most picturesque villages, also has an independent bike shop where you can hire all manner of bicycles and stock up on any supplies that you might need before setting out to lose yourself



CYCLING GEAR

Marcus has some key advice before you head for the hills

The bike

As growing numbers of cyclists seek traffic-free routes away from the roads, there has never been a better time to have a bike that covers all terrain. Ribble's CGR, for example, is an excellent option, and what's more, it is available as an ebike, too, if you're looking for a little assistance. Haibike also has a great range of ebikes, suitable for everything from gentle touring, right through to downhill mountain biking.

The kit

At a time when the traditional coffee and cake stop might not always be possible, why not carry your own with you? The Apidura Racing Handlebar Pack (don't be put off by the name) is perfect for taking plentiful supplies of cake and a flask of coffee with you, with room enough for keys, phones and even some spare clothes.

The route map

I love just heading out and seeing where the road or trail takes me, but sometimes we all need a route to make the most of our time and ensure we see the best of an area. In my opinion, there is no better mapping service than komoot (komoot.com), which combines state-of-the-art technology with user-generated recommendations to allow you to plan the perfect ride.

(figuratively speaking!) among the trees and the wildlife.

Stay at Hollands Wood

■ www.campingintheforest.co.uk

4 Lake District

My introduction to the pleasures of cycling in the Lake District came one Sunday morning in 2016, when I agreed to join some friends to take on the Fred Whitton Memorial Ride, which at the time, sounded fairly innocuous.

Little did I know that it is regarded as one of the toughest rides in the UK, taking in the region's most revered, and feared, climbs.

As hard as it was, that day ignited my passion for riding in this majestic corner of the world, despite seeing my heartbeat go over 200 at the summit of Hardknott Pass. Although the region is best known for its mountainous routes, there are family-friendly options available, so don't be put off by the contours you can see on the map.

Stay at Park Cliffe Camping

■ www.parkcliffe.co.uk

5 Kielder Forest

Kielder has something for everyone, from short leisurely rides

with the little ones in a trailer or on their first bikes, through to black run bike trails. What's more, it is traffic-free, with lots of trails and Forestry Commission tracks offering vast areas to explore. The adventurous can step back in time with a (challenging) ride to the border with Scotland, where the Bloody Bush Toll, dating back to the early 1800s, still stands. The huge reservoir and miles of forest also provide loads of other activities for those who are not keen on cycling.

Stay at Kielder Waterside Caravan Park

■ www.caravanclub.co.uk

6 Isle of Wight

It might not be a particularly obvious destination for cycling, but the Isle of Wight should not be overlooked. It is home to some of the UK's most varied landscapes, with half of the island designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Combining quiet roads (if you can avoid the peak summer months), pristine trails and stunning views, this is a must-see.

One of the most popular routes is the full loop of the island, a trail totalling some 65 miles, although there are many shorter alternatives.

Stay at The Orchards

■ www.orchards-holiday-park.co.uk

GET ACTIVE



GET ACTIVE

UK swim spots

Whether you're practising your front crawl in a river, taking a dip lakeside or sea bathing, reap the benefits of glorious outdoor swim at these locations



1 The Serpentine Lido, Hyde Park, London

Over 150 years old, the Serpentine Swimming Club (who are allowed to swim here every day between 5–9.30am) is the oldest in Britain. Having hosted the swimming section of the Olympic triathlon in 2012, the lido is popular with triathletes too. But you don't need to be a pro to experience this watery nirvana. The plethora of plant life means the water is clean and clear, so you can enjoy wild swimming in the heart of central London.

Stay at Crystal Palace C&MC Site

■ www.caravanclub.co.uk

2 River Thames, Pangbourne, Berkshire

The River Thames might conjure up images of murky, polluted waters snaking through the capital that you wouldn't even think of dipping your toe into, let alone your head. But the famous waterway has more picturesque settings earlier along its route before it reaches the Big Smoke. Located on the edge of the Chiltern Hills, this section is unspoilt and a lot cleaner. Parts of the river are wooded for a more secluded dip.

Stay at Swiss Farm Touring & Camping

■ <https://swissfarmcamping.co.uk/>



3 Bude Sea Pool, Bude, Cornwall

Want a salty hit and protection from the unpredictable current? This spot is for you. This beautiful, part natural, part man-made tidal swimming pool is set into the rocks at Summerleaze Beach. Constructed in 1930, it has provided safe bathing in Bude for almost 90 years. The pool, which measures around 91m long and 45m wide, is topped up by the sea each day. But be careful when entering – as it's part natural, it's hard to give an exact depth, particularly as the environment changes with the tide.

Stay at Upper Lynstone Caravan & Camping
 ■ <http://upperlynstone.co.uk/>

4 Loch Morlich, near Aviemore, Scotland

Scotland's open access laws make the thousands of freshwater lochs in Scotland a haven for wild swimmers. In the heart of the Cairngorms, this loch is surrounded by stunning views. You might have to dodge a few windsurfers and kayakers, but popularity brings great amenities – you can hire wetsuits (yes, the water is a little fresh!), and warm up afterwards at the shoreline café.

It also boasts Scotland's only award-winning freshwater beach, so you can catch some rays between dips too.

Stay at Glenmore Campsite
 ■ www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk

Swimming
 can burn more
 than 300 calories
 in just 30
 minutes!



5 Kailpot Crag, Ullswater, Lake District

Like the 'wild' side of open water swimming? This high, craggy cliff beneath Hallin Fell plummets into deep water, making this lake ideal for snorkelling. Or for those looking for a more serene swim, you can access the water via the shingle beaches that pepper the shoreline. Thanks to glaciation (the process of being covered by glaciers or ice sheets), Ullswater has excellent water quality, and as it faces west, it means you can enjoy the sunset.

Stay at Park Foot Holiday Park
 ■ <https://parkfootullswater.co.uk/>

6 Rhossili Bay, Gower Peninsula, South Wales

Voted the best beach in Wales and third in the UK in the TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards, this is a must-swim. This impressive stretch of Celtic coastline offers three miles of breathtaking views, which takes in one of Gower's most famous landmarks, Worms Head. Shaped like a giant sea serpent, it marks the most westerly tip of Gower. Tides can be vicious though, so if the sea looks churned up, don't swim.

Stay at Pitton Cross Caravan & Camping Park
 ■ www.pittoncross.co.uk

LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS

The Johnson's spoil themselves rotten on the South Coast



If comfort, style and clever tech are your priorities then the Alicanto Grande loaded with Alde heating, Solar panels, USB charging and a full equipment spec as standard take luxury to a new level. At 8ft wide and with 10% extra floor space larger beds and seating make this the ultimate tourer or seasonal choice.

Wherever you want to go, go safely and... **GO BAILEY!**



ALICANTO GRANDE

Luxurious & limitless

Find out more about the range at baileofbristol.co.uk/alicantogrande

BAILEY
The Nation's Favourite

Dream touring tech



DrySparkle Waterless Wash

Developed in the UK, the unique eco-friendly yet exceptionally effective Dry Sparkle formula is suitable on all bodywork, acrylic windows, alloy wheels, bumpers, paint and GRP. Spray and wipe to remove grime and leave a protective finish – no water required! Available for both caravans and motorhomes. **Price** £15



GasStop Emergency Shut-off Valve and Level Indicator

Easily fitted in-line to your gas bottle regulator, GasStop is a simple automatic safety device that instantly and shuts off the flow of gas in the event of a leak. The device also includes an easy-to-read gas pressure indicator to gauge when the bottle needs refilling. **Price** £39.99

Milenco Precision Noseweight Gauge

Understanding noseweight is important to keep your towing outfit safe and legal. The Milenco Precision Gauge is the only Noseweight Gauge approved and calibrated to the British Standard. The scale is clearer, easy to read, and is accurate to within 2kg. **Price** £38.95



Swiss Luxx Low-Wattage Kettles and Toasters

Swiss Luxx's range of compact low-wattage toasters and kettles is perfect for smaller kitchen areas where space and power-consumption are at a premium. Matching sets are available. **Price** From £13.95



Avtex Tourer Two Sat Nav

Avtex have packed the Tourer Two full of the latest navigational technology, plus lifetime free European maps and traffic data. Input your outfit details and the sat-nav will optimise the route to suit, avoiding height, width and weight restricted roads. Also includes pre-loaded touring data including exclusive site data from the C&MC, TripAdvisor POIs, and more. **Price** £349.99



Truma Gas Level Check

Reliably check your gas levels with this pocket-sized device from Truma. The detector uses ultra-sound to read the level and displays this clearly with a red or green light. The integrated LED torch is handy for checking gas in the dark. **Price** £61.99

For all these products and more, see www.primaleisure.com

DREAM TECH

Cadac BBQs

Meet the Cadac family – some of Britain’s best-loved gas BBQs. The whole range is compact, portable and easy to clean: perfect for trips away



Safari Chef

- 30cm gas BBQ
- Lightweight at only 4kg
- Legs fold down and the complete kit packs into a storage bag.
- QR Low Pressure version comes complete with a quick-release valve, Grill Plate and Flat Plate (**Price** £135)



Grillo Chef

- 40cm gas BBQ
- Lightweight at only 6kg
- Detachable legs for easy storage
- Chef Pan Combo comes complete with Chef Pan and Grill Plate (**Price** £220)



Carri Chef

- 50cm gas BBQ
- Detachable legs for easy storage
- Modular system
- Plancha Combo comes complete with Plancha Plate (**Price** £250)



2 Cook

- Dual burners with modular cooking surfaces
- Grill, fry or boil on either side
- Compact size with storage bag
- Pro Deluxe version offers Pietzo ignition and quick-release tailpiece (**Price** £135)

For all these products and more, see www.primaleisure.com

Cadac accessories



Cadac Smoker Box

Fragrance your food with authentic with smoke using this nifty smoker box. Designed to fit snugly in the fat pan of the round Cadac range, but suitable for any gas BBQ. **Price** £10



Cadac Tapas Sets

Unleash your creativity with these small non-stick pans which conveniently separate food and allow you to cook a complete meal – perfect for breakfasts! Unleash your creativity with omelettes, pancakes, eggs and more. **Price** £22



Pizza Accessories – Pizza Stone Pro & Pizza Lifters

Use your BBQ to cook up authentic pizza using a professional pizza stone (available in different sizes) and take your cooking to the next level with a pizza lifter, to make serving a breeze. **Price** £22 & £15



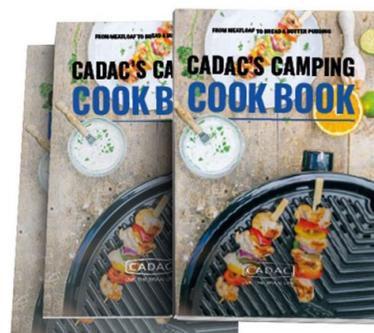
Burger Press

What could be more fun on holiday than making your own burgers? This stainless steel press allows you to get creative with recipes and deliver perfectly shaped burgers for the barbeque. **Price** £10



Signature Skewer Set

Fine-tune your kebabs with this hardwearing skewer set that looks the part, too. The skewers have distinctive end shapes for easy identification. **Price** £8



Cadac Cook Book

For more inspiration, dig into Cadac's brand new cook book which is sure to spark ideas for delicious al-fresco feasts. **Price** £10

For all these products and more, see www.primaleisure.com

DREAM TECH

Truma iNET



The Truma iNet System gives you remote access to your Truma or Alde boiler so you can control and monitor the heating and hot-water system wherever you are.

With the complete Truma iNet system you can:

- Turn heating and hot water on remotely
- Quickly set a one-off timer for the boiler to come on
- Monitor temperature within the vehicle and receive alerts
- Check gas levels and remaining levels in kilos, percentage and number of days.

Installing iNet

The iNet Control Box is a small device that needs to be wired into the caravan or motorhome's electrical system, then connected to the boiler, control panel, and any other compatible accessories such as air-con.

Control your heating and hot water remotely

The Truma App allows you to turn on the heating or advance the hot water via Bluetooth (for local control) or anywhere in the world by installing an optional SIM card.

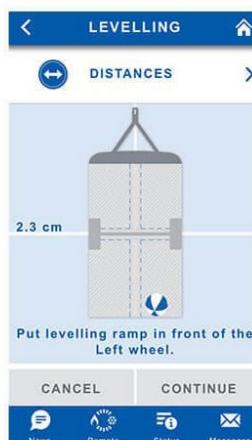
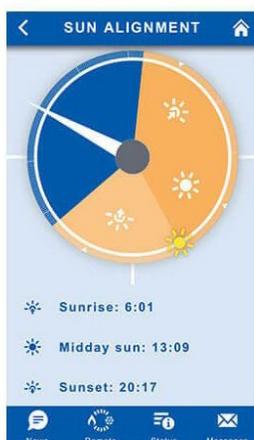
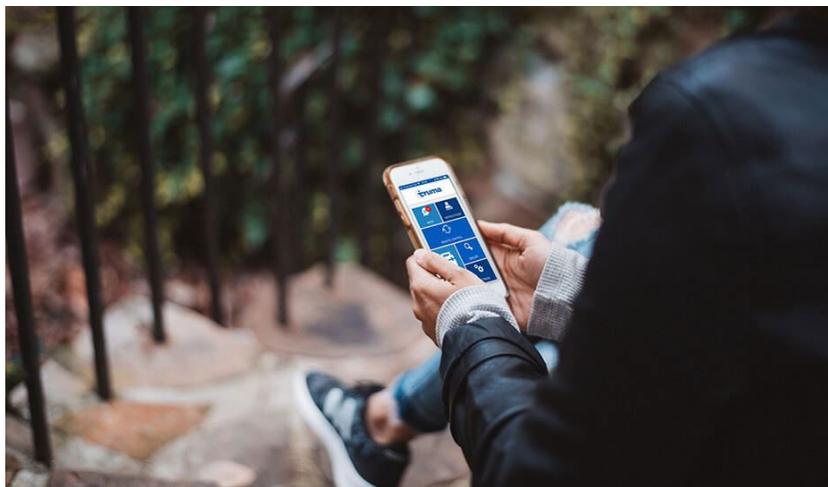
iNet gives you a hot shower immediately after a winter walk, and allows you to turn the heating on from the comfort of the bed. You can immediately enjoy a warm caravan when you arrive on-site, and know exactly what the temperature will be.

Monitor your gas level

You can check your gas level remotely through iNet using the Truma Gas Level Control – a small device sold separately that fits to your gas bottles magnetically.

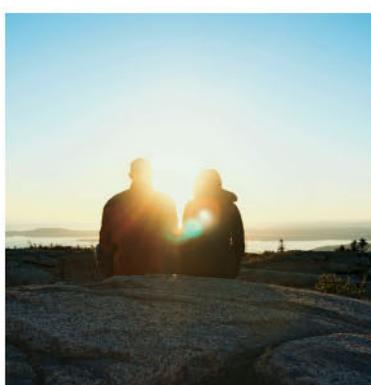
You can use the app to check the fill level on your gas levels and understand exactly how much gas you have left, and how many days it will last. You will also receive alerts direct to your phone if your gas level becomes too low, so you know when you need a new bottle or a refill.

Price (Truma iNet System) £199



For all these products and more, see www.primaleisure.com

SOCIAL DISTANCING WITH THE NATION'S FAVOURITE



With staycations as the predicted major holiday trend across the nation, the social distancing that caravanners and motorhomers have always enjoyed is set to become a habit for many more. But there's plenty of freedom, adventure or peace and quiet to go around.

Wherever you want to go, go safely and... **GO BAILEY!**



Visit our Go Safely page for holiday inspiration and advice at [baileyofbristol.co.uk/go-safely](https://www.baileyofbristol.co.uk/go-safely)



PLAN SMARTER

Choosing a campsite

Pick a great campsite and you're guaranteed a brilliant holiday! Here's everything you need to think about – location, facilities, cost, adults-only and more – to ensure the perfect trip

Start by considering the needs of your family. A family with two young teenagers will require quite a different set-up to one with under-10s to keep happy, or one that comprises just adults.

Interests are important, too. Will it be the coast, rivers, lakes, countryside, moorland, mountains or towns that offer the most opportunities to keep everyone enthralled? Your idea of a break might be one where there are few decisions to make because activities are laid on and meal solutions are readily available within a holiday park environment, so you can just relax.

Alternatively, you might prefer a campsite that is located deep in the countryside or on the coast, where you make your own fun.

Low on the readies?

Budget is another important consideration. If the coffers are low, you might prefer a low-facility, environmentally friendly campsite.

Low season is always a good time to go touring on a budget, and you can quite often find some really excellent deals for midweek touring, too. A stay of seven nights or more can sometimes earn you an extra night for free.

What about pets?

Owning a leisure vehicle means they don't have to go into kennels, you can take them with you, even to Europe with the correct documentation.

You just need to find a pet-friendly campsite with space to exercise your animal, either on site or on walks nearby. Some sites even have outside dog showers, so you can hose down your pet after a muddy outing. Most insist on dogs being kept on leads, which ensures comfort and safety for all guests, and some will limit the number of dogs per unit.

Join a club

Becoming a member of one or both of the major UK touring clubs – the Caravan and Motorhome Club and The Camping and Caravanning Club – gives you access to 4500 campsites. The Clubs list sites they own, affiliated sites, and those designated Certificated Site/Location (CS/CL).

CSs and CLs are small, independently owned sites for members only, which take just five units.

The important stuff

Make a list of what you require from a campsite. If you are in a motorhome and stopping for just one or two nights, it might be as simple as having a nearby pub where you can get an evening meal.

Motorcaravanners will also likely want to choose a site that has a motorhome service point where you can





empty your grey water and fill up with fresh. Caravanners, meanwhile, might like to check that awnings are allowed.

Washroom facilities on the majority of sites will include showers, toilets and basins, with family rooms and some specifically for wheelchair users; many have dishwashing and laundry facilities. If these facilities are important to you, check the website for descriptions and reviews, or give the site a call direct before booking.

Reviews and awards listed on websites are very good indicators of how well a campsite is run. For eco-friendly credentials, look for the David Bellamy Awards symbol.

Super-clean washroom facilities can earn themselves a Loo of the Year Award. Visit Britain and the AA grade campsites, and for people's choice awards, go to our annual *Top 100 Sites Guide*, where the campsites have been voted for by their guests (to download your free copy, go to www.practicalcaravan.com/top100-archive).

Adventure, theme, location

Enjoyment of outdoor activities might guide your campsite choice. Adventure Campsites (www.adventurecampsites.com) lists sites across the British Isles that offer adventures close by, such as walking the Brecon Beacons, or coastal or lake-based watersports.

Alternatively, selecting a specific location – the regional tourist board website will have a section on accommodation – or picking a particular theme, such as following Scotland's famous whisky trail, could be the way to go.

Touring further afield

If you're thinking about travelling further afield, there's plenty of information to be found online.

The Caravan and Motorhome Club and The Camping and Caravanning Club can arrange and book ferries and campsites abroad. If you are touring in low season, pick up an ACSI camping card (campingcard.co.uk), which can gain you savings of up to 60% at participating sites across Europe. The Eurocampings website (eurocampings.co.uk) lists 9854 sites inspected annually by ACSI.

Europe, especially France, is particularly motorhome friendly. If you are venturing across the Channel, arm yourself with *All the Aires* guidebooks by Vicarious Media (vicarious-shop.com), which list motorhome overnight stops, and France Passion (france-passion.com), which lists farms and vineyards that welcome members with self-contained motorhomes for an overnight stay. Membership is annual.

There's plenty of help to be had, you just need to decide where you want to go – for a good place to start, try reading *Practical Caravan* and *Practical Motorhome's* travel features, where you're sure to find inspiration!

PLAN SMARTER

How to go off-grid

With many great off-grid sites charging single-figure nightly fees, going back to nature can not only save a fortune, it will also land you on some of Britain's very finest pitches. John Sootheran explains

The camping X-factor

By definition, off-grid caravanning or motorcaravanning means that you use no electric hook-up, Wi-Fi or those other luxuries that we've come to expect. Most often, a lack of site facilities forces you to rely on your van's washroom, too.

Running out of gas or battery power does little to enhance a caravanning holiday, so we've pulled together some top tips to make sure your next off-grid trip is a success.

Gas

Ensure that you have sufficient gas for your outing. This can be a bit awkward without investing in a second gas cylinder, so that you've always got a full one. You really don't want to be swapping a third-full bottle for a full one with your Calor distributor.

One solution to this quandary is to invest in a self-refill system, such as Safefill or Gaslow. Both involve buying the bottle(s) – and in the case of Gaslow, the installation – which you can then fill up yourself at any of the UK's 240 LPG Autogas fuel stations. You can find out more at drivelpg.co.uk.

Not only can you top up your cylinder at any time, but the gas costs significantly less. When we looked, Calor cost around £2 a litre, while Autogas was just 60p a litre. If you can find a domestic gas supplier, you can also knock the VAT off that.

You have a choice of two types of bottled gas: butane or propane. One litre of butane contains 12% more energy than

one litre of propane, but the most important difference is the minimum temperature at which they operate.

Butane vaporises at temperatures down to minus 2°C, while propane vaporises as low as minus 42°C.

Electricity

With no mains hook-up, you're going to be relying on your leisure battery for all of your electric power. This is the main reason why many serious off-gridders will often install a second leisure battery, fitted with manual or auto switchover.

The NCC (thencc.org.uk) has set up a Verified Leisure Battery Scheme, which offers clear guidance on a battery's capacity.

- Category A batteries have higher storage capacity and are designed for those who camp away from an electric hook-up.
- Category B batteries are for those who typically stay on pitches with an electric hook-up, but also need greater power for devices such as motor movers.
- Category C batteries are designed for use over a short time to power basic, low-demand equipment.

It's important to keep batteries properly charged through the off-season and when in storage. Use a smart charger where possible, or remove the battery from the van and store it in a

well-ventilated room, checking its power levels periodically. Remember that trackers and alarms rely on leisure battery power, so check before you remove it.

For ultimate performance, it's best to keep non-sealed batteries topped up with fluid, and to ensure the battery posts are clean and the clamps are fitted tightly.

Finally, remember that leisure batteries are less efficient in cold conditions (their power figure is calculated at 25°C). As a rule, every 1°C fall below 25°C results in a 1% decline in performance.

Solar panels

Solar panels can keep your leisure battery topped up with power, so are perfect for off-grid caravanners and motorcaravanners.

Photovoltaic panels create electricity from all light, not just direct sunlight, so they will generate current in winter; albeit a fraction of what they'd make on a bright summer day.

They can be fixed to the van roof (either bonded or bolted on), or they're available in portable metal frames, which can be moved around to make the best use of available sunlight. Remember to move them at night during the summer, so they can make the most of the early morning sunlight before you rise.

Buy a good brand from a reputable dealer. Look for a panel with international IEC 61215 quality certification, and buy from a dealer offering a good warranty. Solar Technology International (solartechnology.co.uk), for example, offers buyers a 25-year performance warranty.

The angle of your panel hugely affects its performance. The optimum angle varies, depending on location and time of year. The best angles have been calculated and can be seen online at solarelectricityhandbook.com/solar-angle-calculator.html.

All panels over 18W will require a voltage regulator/controller. We recommend buying a (slightly more expensive) Maximum Power Point Tracking charge controller, because these can eke out 20% more power from your system.

Aim to fit a solar panel that is capable of keeping your system charged; typically this will be a 100–200W set-up.

Water

All but the most extreme off-grid sites will have a water supply, but we would always recommend taking a large canister of drinking water with you, especially for campsites that you haven't visited before.

Save power

You can take steps to limit the amount of power you use. A van with LED lighting uses a fraction of the power consumed in one with traditional tungsten bulbs. LED light conversions are a relatively easy job for the keen DIYer. Likewise, modern LED TVs consume less power than other types.

Avoid activating your water pump every time you turn on a tap to wash your hands, by taking a bottle of hand sanitiser.

Hot summer days often lead to cool evenings. Rather than flicking the heating on, consider taking some 'unseasonal' clothing along, such as bedsocks, for inside the van. Alternatively, take a firepit (if allowed by the site) and sit outside the van later into the evening. Try to avoid using any caravan motor mover, as this consumes a lot of battery power.

Powered by 12V

Lots of electrical appliances that would be powered by 240V mains electricity at home are available in 12V versions, and these are perfect for off-grid fans. For example, 12V kettles, toasters and hairdryers can be obtained.

Inverters

Inverters turn 12V DC battery power into a 230V AC output. This allows you to run household appliances in your van when off-grid. There are two types of inverter: quasi (or modified) sine wave inverters and pure sine wave inverters.

Quasi versions power most appliances, including microwaves, kettles, hairdryers and hair straighteners, but some thyristor-controlled equipment will only run from a pure sine wave inverter.

Calculate the maximum power consumption you'll need (in watts) and choose an inverter accordingly.

Save cash

A typical night rate at a mainstream campsite is around £25. A top-notch small site with fewer facilities and no hook-up costs £10–£12 per night; sometimes as little as £8. Both will offer discounts for a week-long booking, so the totals might typically be £150 versus £65.



PLAN SMARTER

Safe and secure

Whether your caravan or motorhome is on tour or in storage, there are simple steps you can take to keep it protected

People quickly become very attached to their motorhome or caravan; they're almost part of the family. And like any family member, you'll want to protect your motorhome or caravan and keep it safe.

The threat of theft is very real. "We have seen a rise in motorhome thefts in the past 12 months," says Craig Thompson, marketing director of specialist insurer Caravan Guard (www.caravanguard.co.uk). "Caravan theft is also on the rise."

Fortunately, there are steps that you can take to keep your home-from-home secure.

Storage

Most touring units spend far more time in storage than they do out on the road. So when choosing where to store your motorhome or caravan, security should be a top priority.

A friendly local farmer might rent out the corner of a disused barn, but if the closest thing to security is a geriatric sheepdog, you'd be better off choosing specialist storage. Features to look out for include CCTV, 24-hour on-site security, robust perimeter fencing, security lighting and controlled access.

"Perimeter fencing is better when it is made of durable and reliable materials, such as solid metal fences that are over 6ft tall, or palisade fencing, when it has wiring or spikes along the top. And fencing that is alarmed will be even better still," says Thompson.

"It's important to see if the gates really are locked 24 hours a day, to control access to and from the site at all times. We've found so many storage locations where the gates are only locked overnight.



"Even better are sites with airlock-style gates – this is where you have to wait for the first gate to close before the second one can open.

"Check that getting out is via a similar procedure – thieves could enter the facility on foot, so you want it to be hard for them to get motorhomes or caravans out, too."

Start your search for secure storage at CaSSOA (the Caravan Storage Site Owners' Association). Any of the 400+ sites listed on the CaSSOA website (www.cassoa.co.uk) must achieve a minimum level of security, which is independently assessed every five years (unless security concerns prompt an earlier visit).

There are three levels of security: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Expect to pay in the region of £350 to store a single-axle unit for a year, although costs will vary from site to site.

You'll also find that twin-axle caravans and larger motorhomes will cost more to store than smaller vehicles.

Undercover storage – which helps to protect your motorhome or caravan from the elements as well as thieves – will also cost more.

However, don't rule out a particular storage facility just because it isn't part of CaSSOA, suggests Thompson.

"Remember, there are some good storage sites that are not CaSSOA-accredited," he says. Judge a site by its security features, not just membership of the leading industry association.

At home

Of course, one of the most appealing things about caravanning and motorcaravanning is the ability to pack up and head off on

**KEEP OUT
TRESPASSERS WILL
BE PROSECUTED**



tour whenever the mood takes you. But that's not so easy if your motorhome or caravan is in a storage site 20 miles away.

If you have space, keeping your motorhome or caravan at home is a convenient solution. But unless you take certain precautions, it can also be all too convenient for thieves.

"You must invest in some good security," recommends Iain Geddes, senior technical advisor at The Camping and Caravanning Club (www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk). "Hitchlocks on caravans, for example, are not very effective until the hitch is on something, so a security post with a ball on the end could be really effective, as you lock the caravan to this, then install a wheel clamp and augment with steady-leg locks, too.

"Posts are great with motorhomes as well, and there's a good choice of wheel clamps and steering wheel locks."

When choosing a security device such as a wheel lock, look for one that has been certified Sold Secure Silver or Gold, preferably Gold. A handful of products achieve the even higher Diamond standard.

Some examples of wheel locks and clamps that have performed well in independent testing include Al-Ko's Secure Caravan Wheel Lock (www.alko-tech.com) and Milenco's Compact C Wheelclamp (www.milenco.com).

Touch wood, locks and clamps should be enough to prevent any theft. But as another tier of security, consider a tracker such as those available from Bulldog Secure (www.bulldogsecure.com), so there's a chance you'll get your motorhome or caravan back if it is stolen.



"Of caravans that were recovered following theft since 2016, 44% were due to the tracking device," says Thompson. Trackers are assessed by the insurance industry body, Thatcham. Categories S7 and S5 cover these devices.

Insurance providers are likely to insist on a minimum level of security, such as an axle- or wheel clamp. The more valuable the caravan or motorhome, the more particular insurers are likely to be, so check the policy wording carefully.

Go beyond the minimum required and your insurer might give you a discount, too.

On tour

Owners need to be vigilant on holiday, as well as at home. It's not just your caravan or motorhome that might be at risk, but the possessions inside.

"Don't have any big-ticket items on show," says Geddes. "There are aftermarket safes available that you could secure inside a locker."

Window locks are also worth considering to make it harder for a thief to gain access to the inside of the tourer or motorhome. Lock M Out (www.lock-m-out.co.uk) produces 11 security devices for different types of window catch.

Stay safe on the road

It's important to keep yourself safe when you're out touring, too, so breakdown assistance is recommended – that way, should you suffer any mishap on the road, you can rest assured that help is only a phone call away.

Conclusion

Anyone whose motorhome, caravan or possessions have been stolen will tell you what a miserable experience it is. But by investing in the best storage and security products, you can greatly improve the odds of beating the thieves – and you could save on insurance costs, too.





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