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Devon & Cornwall's Top 10

Many miles of wonderful coastal scenery, spectacular beaches, wild moorlands and great gardens make this the place to be outdoors. Indoors, you can see the painting and architecture the landscape has inspired.



▲ **Dartmoor.** Devon's storehouse of ancient monuments, ponies and rare wildlife ranges from moorland to steep wooded valleys and secluded villages. See page 46.



▲ **Dartmouth.** This handsome Devon town is the pride of the Navy, where the Britannia Royal Naval College trains officers to rule the waves. See page 32.



▲ **Lynmouth Cliff Railway.** Designed by a student of Brunel, this marvel of Victorian engineering links Lynmouth with Lynton on the cliff above. See page 66.



▶ **Tate St Ives.** A sister of the London galleries, this is one of several great art centres in this Cornish fishing village that's been a magnet to artists. See page 96.



▲ **Surfing.** Surfers head for Fistral Bay near Newquay – the best surf beaches in Britain are here along Cornwall's north coast. See page 100.

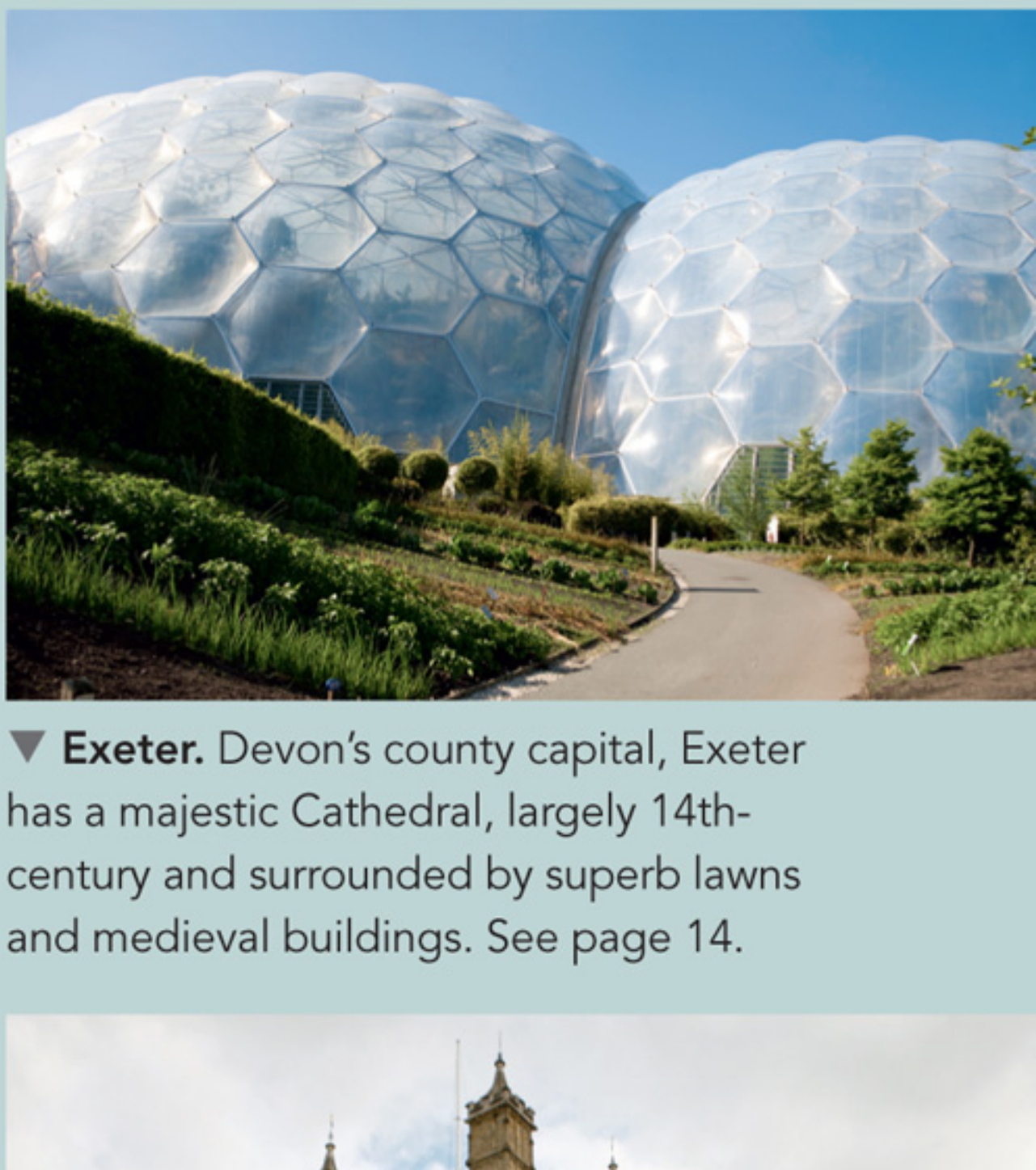
▼ **Tintagel.** Feel the power of myths at King Arthur's legendary Cornish castle, set on a wild headland. See page 104.



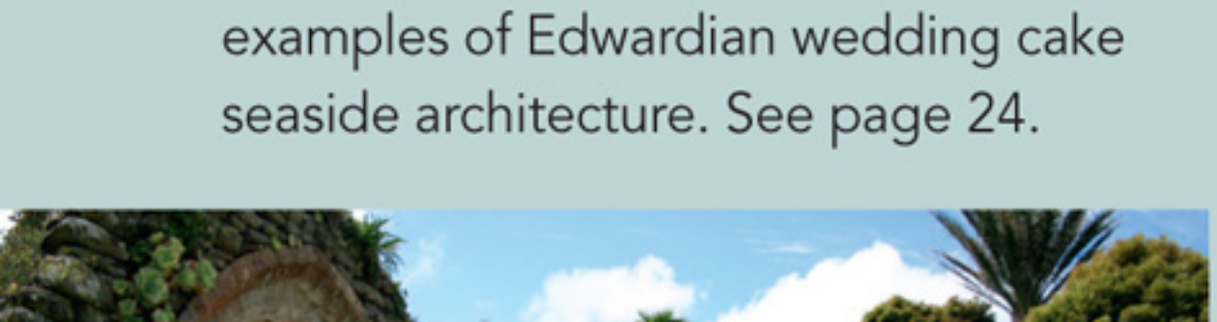
▼ **Eden Project.** Cornwall's most popular attraction, where vast domes provide the right climate for a dazzling variety of plants. See page 78.



▲ **Torquay.** Queen of the English Riviera, Torquay is an elegant resort with perfect examples of Edwardian wedding cake seaside architecture. See page 24.



▼ **Exeter.** Devon's county capital, Exeter has a majestic Cathedral, largely 14th-century and surrounded by superb lawns and medieval buildings. See page 14.



▲ **Tresco Gardens.** Lush and vibrant, these exotic, tropical-looking gardens flourish year-round in the mild climate of the Scilly Isles. See page 110.


A typical scene of rural Cornish countryside.

Overview

A West Country Welcome

Warm, sometimes wet, always wonderful, this peninsula of high cliffs and moors, cream teas and thatched cottages has some of the most spectacular scenery in Britain.

Devon and Cornwall are holiday haunts par excellence. The beautiful, dramatic seascapes of high cliffs, delightful coves and broad, sandy beaches sweep along the extensive coastlines north and south. Fishing villages sit snug in coves, and river estuaries sigh with the ebb and flow of the gathering Atlantic tide. Small wonder artists have settled here.

If Cornwall inspires painters, Devon, the county that *Country Life* magazine declared the best in Britain in which to live, attracts writers. 'Deepest Devon' is an environmentally aware, agricultural land of thatched cottages and cream teas, run through with dancing river valleys and blind, winding lanes.



LEGEND AND REALITY

Covering 1,376 sq miles (3,563 sq km), Cornwall is a little over half the size of Devon. But this is the land of King Arthur, big on legend and fantasy, with pixies, smugglers, pirates, wreckers and saints, underpinned

by haunting relics of mysterious and ancient cultures. On misty moorland and along its rocky coast, prehistoric stone circles and burial chambers, cliff castles and hill forts punctuate the landscape, along with gaunt ruins from disused mines. Tin has been found and traded here since Phoenician times.

CLIMATE

Mild and sunny, warmed by the prevailing southwesterly wind – which also brings rain – the region is hospitable all year round. Flowers flourish everywhere; hedgerows are nature's gardens, while Devon violets and Cornish daffodils are among the first seasonal blooms in the shops each year. Spring comes early to the far west, and autumn lingers until late into the year.

When moisture-laden Atlantic winds hit the coast and swirl up to the exposed moors, they let go their load. Dartmoor, at 2,037ft (600m) the highest part of southern England, and Exmoor not far behind, each re-

A clifftop wild-flower carpet.



Green and Gorgeous

After decades in the doldrums on the economic front, the two counties have been revitalised with a focus on sustainable development. There are revitalised docklands in both Exeter and Plymouth, wind farms, green hotels and houses coupled with a shift towards walking, cycling, boating, bus and train travel, recycling and shopping in farmers' markets. Large-scale projects such as the Eden Project and the groundbreaking Wave Hub – the world's first large-scale wave energy farm off the north Cornish coast – have highlighted a collective desire to protect the region's resources. But while schemes like these dominate the news headlines, there are hundreds of accommodation providers, restaurateurs, food producers and community groups across the two counties working hard to keep Devon and Cornwall green and gorgeous. For more information: www.greentraveller.co.uk and www.green-tourism.com.



Bronze statue honouring Cornish fishermen lost at sea, on the waterfront in Newlyn, Cornwall.

ceives up to 90ins (230cm) of rain a year. Rivers can swell and burst their banks with disastrous results.

But this is also the location of the English Riviera, in South Devon. The balmy, sheltered, palm-tree-lined resorts of Torbay hold the record for the warmest and sunniest days in Britain, with average September temperatures of 17.5°C (63.5°F).

The north coast is more inhospitable, and it shares with Cornwall a reputation for being a ships' graveyard. But that means good surfing too – some of Britain's best surf beaches are to be found here.

SEAGOING HERITAGE

The South Devon coast has a variety of safe anchorages, creeks and estuaries that in their day attracted traders and ship-builders. Crusades and *Mayflower* pilgrims set off from these southern shores. Devon was the birthplace of the Elizabethan buccaneers Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh, and many Devonians have travelled widely in the merchant navy or in the armed forces, both of which have bases in the county, at Plymouth and Dartmouth.

Cornwall's maritime past is vital to its identity. Along 300 miles (482km) of varied coastline the spirit of 'free traders' is enshrined in the names of hidden coves, secret tunnels and caverns, and in the history of wonderful old inns. Cornwall's fishing activity fascinates the visitor at busy harbours such as Newlyn, Mevagissey and Looe, and the county's noble tradition of lifesaving is enshrined in lifeboat houses and coastguard lookouts.

ECONOMY AND TOURISM

Tourism is vital to the economies of these two counties, where natural

resources are scant, and major commercial centres a long way away. Businesses tend to be small and self-employment is high.

Wage levels as a whole are among the UK's lowest. Traditional industries such as agriculture, forestry and fishing are low down on the list of money-making activities. However after the economic recession and several poor summers, visitor numbers for 2014 saw substantial growth for the region.

Devon alone numbers some 100,000 self-employed people, while receiving more than six million visitors annually. The county, along with neighbouring Cornwall, is turning increasingly to new enterprises, such as further enhancing the production of locally sourced food and drink and employing green energy solutions. Initiatives are supported by the South West Tourism Alliance (www.swtourismalliance.org.uk).

Cornwall's remoteness meanwhile creates economic difficulties. The old Cornish industries have long been in decline; tin and copper mining are no longer viable, despite a conviction that Cornwall still holds vast mineral wealth in deep deposits. Of the old extractive industries, only a limited form of china clay and quarrying survive.

Cornwall's other great traditional industry, fishing, is struggling, and the people must progressively rely on tourism. More than five million visitors arrive annually, generating a quarter of the county's GDP.

WARM HOSPITALITY

Independence is at the heart of the local character. According to surveys, a West Country accent is one of the most desirable in Britain. Cornwall, once with its own language – at present undergoing a revival – retains a rebellious streak. But you will find the friendliest of hosts, and people who still have time to stop and chat. Don't be surprised if they call you 'my lover' or 'my handsome'. And if a Cornish person says *Dynargh*, they are only offering you a 'Welcome'.

Guide to Coloured Boxes

Eating
Fact
Green
Kids
Shopping
View

This guide is dotted with coloured boxes providing additional practical and cultural information to make the most of your visit. Here is a guide to the coding system.

The revitalised quayside in Exeter, Devon.

