

The Holiday Ferret's Guide to South West England

England's South West begins approximately 80 miles west of London in Wiltshire and includes the counties of Gloucestershire, Bristol, Somerset, Devon, Dorset and Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly, and the urban centers of Bath, Bournemouth and Poole. Occupying the peninsula between the English Channel and the Bristol Channel, the region offers 702 miles of coastline. The area is home to the annual Glastonbury Festival and Clifton Village's original May Day celebration and holds two national parks and four World Heritage Sites, including Stonehenge. Dartmoor National Park in Devon has 450 miles of walking paths, on- and off-road cycling, and climbing, backpacking and geocaching opportunities. Exmoor National Park, straddling Somerset and Devon, has 267 square miles of moorland and woodland where, in addition to walking and cycling, stargazing, country sports, and canoeing are popular pastimes.

Bristol

Bristol, the largest city in the region, has many attractions to both entertain and educate family members of all ages. Board the world's first great ocean liner, Brunel's SS Great Britain, or dress like a



pirate, and join Pirate Pete as he takes you on the one-hour Bristol Pirate Walk through Harbourside. Visit Bristol Zoo Gardens to view its exotic plants and animals, and let the children try the playground and water play area, special activity center and the ZooRopia ropes course. Walk the underwater tunnel surrounded by sharks, see the giant octopus, and attend the learning lab, featuring newborn sea creatures, at Bristol Aquarium.

Annual events include the Bristol International Balloon Fiesta in August, offering free admission, day and night mass ascents, fireworks, and the chance to book a ride on a balloon. Bristol Tour open-top buses carry you directly to popular attractions, sightseeing and shopping. Hop on, hop off passes are available, and kids ride for free.

Wiltshire

Wiltshire is home to the Castle Combe Circuit, one of the UK's fastest courses. Attend on one of the facility's Driving Experience Days, and you can drive a race car around the track. Drive your own car on



the course on Track Days, or ride alongside an experienced race driver. Experience the rally course, 4x4 driving course, skid pan or kart track. Off-road driving experiences are available for all ages, including Saturday Grand Prix sessions, individual and group instruction.

Visit the prehistoric World Heritage Site at Stonehenge, which includes a gift shop and cafe, or tour the countryside to view the eight white horse chalk figures around the county. At the estate at Longleat House, near Warminster, visitors can drive through Safari Park to experience close encounters with exotic animals, play at the animal-themed Adventure Park, and tour the stately home, a prime example of high Elizabethan architecture.

Cornwall

Famous for its natural beauty, the county's terrain ranges from the woods and wildflowers of Golitha Falls Natural National Reserve to Stowes Hill and surrounding ancient sites on Bodmin Moor and the Lost Gardens of Heligan near St Austell. Chosen as the Nation's Favorite Garden by viewers of the BBC's



Gardeners' World, the Lost Gardens feature garden sculpture, jungle plants, and wildlife on view.

Cornwall is an ideal spot for outdoor sports. Relax with a scenic round of golf, or get your heart racing as you engage in adventure sports such as climbing, coasteering, mountain boarding and sand yachting. Experience kite surfing, windsurfing, kayaking, water skiing and paddle boarding on the sea. Many of Cornwall's beaches have earned the international Blue Flag Award for water quality and management. Try Polzeath Beach for surfing, Gyllyngvase Beach for rock pooling, or the family beaches of Porthowan and Porthminster. August brings the annual Boardmasters Surf Festival to Newquay, Falmouth is home to the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, and Land's End at Porthcurno offers amazing clifftop views along the Cornish coast and the open-air Minack Theatre.

For South West England holiday rentals follow the link: [South West England](#)