

# Travel

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## SMALL WORLD...

### CAMERA READY

Stanfords map and travel bookshop is holding a photography Masterclass on Tuesday 19 May staged by Insight Guides to promote its 2009 Travel Photography competition. Reserve a place online at [www.stanfords.co.uk](http://www.stanfords.co.uk). Tickets £2. JO FERNANDEZ



Isle be there: left, Mont Orgueil Castle, on Jersey. Above, Abbey Gardens on Treco, the Isles of Scilly



Creation comforts: above, the lounge at the Hell Bay hotel on Bryher

# Treasured islands

## ISLES OF SCILLY

There's something mystical and otherworldly about the Isles of Scilly it may be to do with their fairytale status: they lie at the southwestern extreme of the British Isles, clustered in the ocean. It might also have something to do with their mythological past, associated with the lost land of Lyonesse and King Arthur's bones.

Most of these islands — there are almost 150 of them — are so small that you can walk around the coast from any point, and within a couple of hours be back where you started.

On Bryher, the quietest and least domesticated of the five populated islands, the sense of proportions being slightly askew is bolstered by odd details such as the waist-high Shetland ponies that graze on the hillside and the purple foxgloves, which stand taller than a man. The weather changes so fast that you feel even time has gone awry.

Everyone in the Scillies spends part of their day chugging about on boats: it is the only way to get around. Try the Island Hotel on Treco for a posh lunch or The Seven Stones pub on St Martin's for an unequalled sandwich and "the best view in Britain".

Steer clear of touristy St Mary's. The best hotel in the Isles of Scilly is Hell Bay on Bryher but the most spectacular attraction is the Abbey Garden on Treco. Now when the plants are in flower, is the perfect time to see it alive with all manner of weird and colourful tropical species. Hell Bay, Bryher (01720 422947, [www.hellbay.co.uk](http://www.hellbay.co.uk)). Doubles from £360, half-board.

Island Hotel, Treco (01720 422883, [www.islandhotel.co.uk](http://www.islandhotel.co.uk)). Doubles from £280, half-board; lunch about £40.

The Seven Stones, St Martin's (01720 423560). Lunch about £14.

## JERSEY

The sandy bay bordering Jersey's St Clement is the southernmost inhabited part of the British Isles. Mainland Britain lies some 100 miles to the north; France is less than a dozen miles away.

This quirky, pretty island is engagingly foreign, all the more so for its street names in the Jersey patois known as "Jèrriais", still spoken by elderly residents. Jersey has its own issue of sterling, including a £1 note.

The pound may be suffering but that just adds to the appeal of England's undervalued islands, say Jonathan Bastable and Harriet O'Brien

With narrow, hedge-fringed lanes inland, picture-book castles on the coast (Mont Orgueil in the east, Elizabeth Castle in the south) and a speed limit of 40mph, Jersey's anachronistic charm is palpable, particularly in early summer when the island is swash with flowers and butterflies. At this time of year you'll have much of the place to yourself: the wild north, with its craggy cooves and granite tors, the beaches in the south, and the western dunes and marshland.

Despite its blue-rinse image, the island has an energetic vibe. The little capital of St Helier has a contemporary-chic waterfront development appropriate to what is an international financial centre. And despite the global downturn, Jersey so far remains dynamic and upbeat, buzzing with restaurant and hotel openings.

The sleek, five-suite Cardington House, above St Aubin's Bay, was completed last summer. In March, the old Queens Hotel in St Helier reopened as The Inn, with a new, very stylish interior. At Gorey, The Bass & Lobster has rapidly become a local favourite since its opening, also in March, and on the beachfront at St Brélade's Bay the highly regarded Oyster Box restaurant, not yet a year old, has recently been joined by the cheerful Crab Shack café and brasserie.

The Inn, St Helier (01534 722239, [www.theinnjersey.com](http://www.theinnjersey.com)). Doubles from £109.  
Cardington House, St Brélade (01534 748000, [www.cardingtonhouse.com](http://www.cardingtonhouse.com)). Doubles from £154.50.  
The Bass & Lobster, Gorey (01534 859590, [www.bassandlobster.com](http://www.bassandlobster.com)). Dinner about £45.  
Oyster Box, St Brélade's Bay (01534 743311, [www.oysterbox.co.uk](http://www.oysterbox.co.uk)). Dinner about £35.  
Crab Shack, St Brélade's Bay (01534 744611, [www.crabshackjersey.co.uk](http://www.crabshackjersey.co.uk)). Lunch about £25.

## ISLE OF WIGHT

The Isle of Wight is the essence of England, deliciously reduced. You get a proper castle, a royal palace, some fantastic rural pubs and lots of the countryside and coastline. There

are even some local customs that, if you were a foreigner, you would find charmingly exotic. Among them is the Old Gaffers' Festival, which is a kind of nautically themed village fête in Yarmouth each June.

And June, or thereabouts, is the best time to go, before the peak-time holiday crowds arrive. Early in the season you have a much better chance of getting a table in the fabulous but tiny Pond Café in leafy Bonchurch, or to stay in the hip little Hambrough hotel up the road. Then there is the Priory Oyster, a terrific beachside restaurant attached to the Priory Bay Hotel; the romantic Boathouse at Steephill Cove, which looks like it is constructed from the timbers of shipwrecked galleons; there are the hot crab pasties sold at the back door of the Wheeler family's cottage. And, above all, there is the landscape itself, rucked and rumpled like an unmade bed. Every walk on Wight leads you through this lovely lumpy country and brings you soon enough to the island's edge and the shimmering sea.

The Hambrough, Ventnor (01983 856333, [www.thehambrough.com](http://www.thehambrough.com)). Doubles from £150.  
Priory Bay Hotel, Seaview (01983 631446, [www.priorybay.com](http://www.priorybay.com)). Doubles from £140; dinner at the Priory Oyster, about £50.  
The Pond Café, Bonchurch (01983 855666). Dinner about £50.

The Boathouse Seafood Restaurant, Ventnor (01983 852747). Lunch about £40.

## LUNDY

The island of Lundy, lying low in the Bristol Channel, is as flat and green as a snooker table. There are just 26 properties on the island, each as different and varied as a medieval castle, a fisherman's cottage, a defunct lighthouse or the "radio room", with which the island once kept in touch with the mainland.

There are no restaurants, just the pub and a "well-stocked corner shop", offering everything from logs to Lundy stamps. Activities include yomping up to the North

Light and back: a road trip of about six miles; rock-climbing (Lundy has some of the best sea-cliffs in Britain) or looking out for the local fauna. In June, with a bit of luck, you might see puffins, sika deer, Soay lambs, grey seals, all in the space of a single day. The Landmark Trust (01628 825925, [www.landmarktrust.org.uk](http://www.landmarktrust.org.uk)) has two-bed properties from £57 per night, except at Whitsun (weekly bookings only). The ferry to and from Lundy operates 13 times per month in May and June. [www.lundystand.co.uk](http://www.lundystand.co.uk).

■ All lunch/dinner prices for two without wine. The full version of this article can be seen in the June issue of Condé Nast Traveller on sale from tomorrow.



June Issue!

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