

More things to do in the Channel Islands

Jersey

Cosmopolitan Jersey is the largest Channel Island and has sweeping sandy beaches, historic sites, a buzzy capital for shopping and a thriving food scene. Direct flights from across the UK and regular ferry services from Poole or Portsmouth (from £50 one-way; ddfs.com) also make it the easiest to visit and there's an excellent bus network to get you around while there.

South coast resort hotels such as the Grand Jersey Hotel and Spa attract a fly-and-flop crowd. The five-star property overlooks St Aubin's Bay and has a seafront terrace, a champagne lounge and a large spa (room-only doubles from £117; handpickedhotels.co.uk). Alternatively, stay in the capital, St Helier, to be near covered markets, boutiques, the marina and museums, including the interactive Maritime Museum (£15; jerseyheritage.org). The Club Hotel & Spa has a subterranean spa, a suntrap roof terrace and the Michelin-starred restaurant Bohemia, which serves boat-fresh seafood (B&B doubles from £105; theclubjersey.com).

Check out the Havre des Pas beach and take the ferry to the 16th-century Elizabeth Castle on a tidal island in St Aubin's Bay (£25; jerseyheritage.org). Try the newly opened Slovenian restaurant Ob Mizi on the harbour (mains from £18; obmizi.je), or find the hidden door at Liberty Wharf for cocktails in the 1920s-style speakeasy bar the Blind Pig (drinks from £7; theblindpig.co.uk).

La Mare Wine Estate is a mostly flat half-hour cycle from the capital and has tastings, a vodka distillery and a shop (£20, open March 12-October 31; lamarewineestate.com). Blow away the cobwebs with a stomp across La Mielle de Morville nature reserve with its cliff paths, sand dunes and grasslands.

Guernsey

The second-largest island, Guernsey, is a hiker's dream with coastal trails, woodland paths, ancient sites and

harbour towns (visitguernsey.com).

It's easily reached on a three-hour ferry from Poole or Portsmouth (one-way from £45; condorferries.co.uk) or on direct flights from UK airports. British Airways launches direct daily flights from Heathrow on April 19 (britishairways.com).

The pretty capital, St Peter Port, is the best place to be for restaurants, shops and galleries including the new Art For Guernsey in the Old Quarter (free; artforguernsey.com).

The Old Government House Hotel & Spa is nearby and the island's only five-star property. Rooms have a traditional feel with fabric-covered walls, antique furniture and original artwork and many have sea views. There's also an outdoor heated pool in attractive gardens, a wellness centre with fitness classes and a steam room, a brasserie and an Indian restaurant and two bars serving vintage wine from the hotel's own estate in South Africa (B&B doubles from £230; theoghhotel.com).

Head out on the 39-mile Guernsey Coastal Path, a circular route from the capital that takes in sandy bays, Second World War sites and clifftop scenery.

Or walk in the footsteps of Turner and Renoir along dedicated trails marked with empty picture frames in the spots the artists depicted in their paintings. Don't miss the crab sandwiches at the beachside kiosk at L'Ancrese (@lancresekiok) and seasonal fine dining at Vraic, which opened last July and was awarded its first Michelin star earlier this year (12-course tasting menu £145; vraic.gg). In Fauxquets Valley, try the award-winning Rocquette cider (tours £27; rocquettecider.com).

Sark

Car-free Sark is a 45-minute ferry ride east of Guernsey and about 80 minutes by ferry from Jersey, to the southeast (from £18 one-way; sarkshipping.gg).

It's popular with day-trippers, but as it was named the world's first dark sky

island in 2011 stay overnight for unspoilt star-speckled skies. The 18th-century 23-bedroom Stocks Hotel is in the heart of the island and has a small gym, a solar-heated outdoor pool and a restaurant serving produce from Sark's first organic permaculture garden. It also offers horse and carriage island tours (B&B doubles from £225, two-night minimum stay; stockshotel.com).

There are no paved roads at all here but paths cross the island and circle the coast. Attractions include the 18th-century manor La Seigneurie Estate, with its flower-filled gardens and maze (£8; laseigneuriedesercq.uk) and Sark Observatory (£10; darkskysland.co.uk).

Herm

Between Guernsey and Sark, and a 20-minute boat ride from Guernsey, is tiny, pretty car-free Herm (from £18 return; traveltrident.com). Sheltered beaches, coastal paths and outdoorsy activities are here in abundance to while away your time. There's one campsite, a smattering of holiday cottages and one hotel, the White House Hotel, with an outdoor pool, a fire-warmed bar and sea-view rooms without TVs for maximum unwinding. It's only open from April 24-September 30 (B&B doubles from £195; booking.com).

Spot puffins, seals and dolphins on a Rib tour (from £35; islandribvoyages.com) or explore by kayak (from £15; outdoorguernsey.gg); see the 11th-century St Tugual's Chapel, built by Norman monks who lived on the island, and the white-sand Shell Beach. A kiosk serves lobster and ice-cream sundaes. Spend an evening at the lively island institution the Mermaid Tavern, which doubles as the grocery store.

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