

1 — Rame Peninsula, Cornwall

Clinging to the cliffs above Whitsand Bay, The Edge is a romantic cedar-clad beach cabin for two, with crisp blue-and-white interiors, log burner and sun deck with hot tub and uninterrupted sea views. It's one of nine "cliffhanger" chalets marketed by Unique Homestays in an area nicknamed Cornwall's "forgotten corner". Clamber down the steep path to the vast golden sands of Whitsand beach for surfing, swimming and rock-pooling. *The Edge sleeps two, from £2,995 per week; uniquehomestays.com*



2 — Jurassic Coast, Dorset

Ever since amateur palaeontologist Mary Anning uncovered the remains of a 205-million-year-old ichthyosaur in 1811, the beaches around Lyme Regis have been a magnet for fossil hunters. You can book guided fossil walks via the Lyme Regis Museum, which reopened last summer after a £1.5m extension. With its sheltered beaches, maze of atmospheric streets and historic "Cobb" harbour wall, Lyme Regis is an enduringly popular resort. Stay at the Alexandra Hotel, which has breezy coastal decor and harbour views (even the pillow chocolates are in the shape of ammonites). Its restaurant specialises in locally caught seafood - or you can venture out to the acclaimed HIX Oyster and Fish House. Alternatively, rent a cottage along the coast, such as the Beach House, a dreamy thatched bolt-hole close to the seaside hamlet of Seatown. *Doubles at the Alexandra Hotel cost from £180; hotelalexandra.co.uk. The Beach House sleeps up to six, from £989 for a long weekend; boutique-retreats.co.uk. For information on fossil hunting see jurassiccoast.org*

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4 — Scotland's North Coast 500

Taking in 516 miles of dramatic coastal scenery, the North Coast 500 has been billed as Scotland's answer to Route 66. Starting in Inverness, the circular route skirts the northernmost fringes of the mainland, taking in pristine white beaches, towering sea stacks, ruined castles and remote seaside villages. *A seven-night "Premier North Coast 500" itinerary with tour operator McKinlay Kidd costs from £1,425pp (based on two sharing), including accommodation in four- and five-star hotels. Car hire is extra; mckinlaykidd.com*

3 — Gower Peninsula, South Wales

The Gower Peninsula is home to some of the UK's finest beaches, including Rhossili Bay, a glorious three-mile stretch of golden sand. The prime beachfront spots on this part of the coast are occupied by campsites rather than upmarket hotels, so if you really want to wake up to the sound of surf and seabirds, the best way to do it is to hire a camper van.

In Bristol, Quirky Campers has a fleet of creatively customised vans with hand-crafted interiors, including "Priscilla" (pictured below), a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter stylishly kitted out with reclaimed wood, natural textiles and sheepskin rugs. After picking up your van, head west across the Severn Bridge, and within 90 minutes you could be at the Three Cliffs Bay campsite, overlooking the sublime bay of the same name. Hire boards and wetsuits from Sam's Surf Shack in Rhossili and, after testing your skills on the gentle breaks at Llangennith or Caswell Bay, head for brunch at the Bay Bistro, a popular surfer hangout. *From £707 for a week's rental of Priscilla; quirkycampers.co.uk. A camper-van pitch at Three Cliffs Bay costs from £27 per night; threecliffsbay.com. For more Gower campsites, see coolcamping.com*



5 — Southwold, Suffolk

Southwold is big on seaside nostalgia, from its quaint ice-cream-coloured beach huts to its quirky end-of-the-pier amusements - which makes the bold makeover of the Swan Hotel, one of the town's oldest inns, seem all the more radical. Owner Adnams Brewery has spent £6m bringing the 400-year-old hotel into the 21st century with colourful, contemporary interiors and a reinvigorated Still Room restaurant, where chef Ross Bott serves a six-course tasting menu. *Doubles from £200 per night, B&B; theswansouthwold.co.uk*

6 — Whitby, Yorkshire

It would be hard to think of a more dramatic location for a coastal retreat than that enjoyed by Whitby's lighthouse, on a towering cliff-top above the North Sea. Galatea cottage is one of 32 converted lighthouse-keeper cottages in England and Wales managed by Rural Retreats. It makes a cosy and comfortable base for exploring the historic harbour town and nearby beaches of Sandsend and Robin Hood's Bay. *From £1,270 per week, sleeping five; ruralretreats.co.uk*

7 — Eilean Shona, Inner Hebrides

It's just a 15-minute boat transfer from the Scottish mainland to the small island in Loch Moidart, but stepping on to the wooden jetty here feels like leaving the real world behind. Owned by Vanessa Branson, Eilean Shona is home to a large 11-bedroom house and seven self-catering cottages. The most remote is South Shore Cottage, a few minutes' walk from the silver sands of Shoe Bay, where you can spot seals, sea otters, dolphins and minke whales. *A week at South Shore Cottage, sleeping two, costs from £650; eileanshona.com*

8 — Camber Sands, East Sussex

The powder-soft sands, rolling dunes and timber-clad beach houses of Camber have earned it the nickname of the "British Hamptons". Stay at the Barefoot Beach House - a breezy New England-styled holiday home with white walls, shuttered windows and a wooden deck leading straight on to the sand - and the comparison certainly rings true. *Three-night stays at Barefoot Beach House, sleeping eight, from £2,175; uniquehomestays.com*

9 — Bamburgh, Northumberland

Standing in splendid isolation on a crag overlooking a vast, beautiful white-sand beach, Bamburgh Castle is one of Northumberland's most iconic sights. Eighteen months ago, the castle's Neville Tower was converted into a unique and luxurious holiday apartment, giving guests far-reaching views to Holy Island and free run of the castle grounds after the day trippers have gone home. *From £970 per week, sleeping four; crabtreeandcrabtree.com*

10 — Isles of Scilly, Cornwall

A new helicopter link between mainland Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will launch in May, offering a novel way to start the holiday - and a journey time of just 15 minutes. Hell Bay Hotel on the island of Bryher has won a reputation for its fresh seafood and friendly service, and is a good base for enjoying the mild climate, aquamarine seas and white-sand beaches that the Scillies are famous for. *Doubles from £175; hellbay.co.uk. Helicopter transfers from Land's End airport (near Penzance) from £215 return; islesofscilly-travel.co.uk*