

BRITAIN

# Dartmouth: Great British Breaks

Enjoy a cream tea, crafts and a castle in serene south Devon

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Follow the river to Dartmouth Castle  
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## Why?

Set sail for this natty nautical town on the River Dart, south Devon. It's been a hive of boating life since the Celts settled here more than 1,000 years ago, and its cobbled streets are now home to artists, trainee naval officers and yachties. It's not short of royal heritage, either, from its medieval castle to its naval college: the site of a momentous 20th-century meeting.

## What you do

Get your bearings on the steep half-mile climb from the harbour up to **Jawbone Hill**. Stand on the grassy slope and look out to sea, down on the boat-studded Dart and across to the pastel-hued streets of **Kingswear**, on the opposite shore.



Old school: Britannia Royal Naval College  
 SEBASTIAN WASEK/LOOP IMAGES

Head back through streets lined with Tudor, Georgian and Victorian buildings, past shops and galleries, and through the **Old Market Square** (markets Tuesday, Friday and every fourth Saturday). At **Studio Dix Neuf**, on Foss Street, Lys Flowerday sells mixed-media art (from £120) and Gilles Bourlet lamps, crafted from junk-shop finds (from £350; [studiodixneuf.com](http://studiodixneuf.com)). **Baxters** is the place for homegrown greetings cards, jewellery, pottery and coasters ([baxtersgallery.co.uk](http://baxtersgallery.co.uk)); and at the **Devon Canvas Factory**, you can watch smart waxed canvas holdalls and bags being made (from £48; [canvas-factory.co.uk](http://canvas-factory.co.uk)).

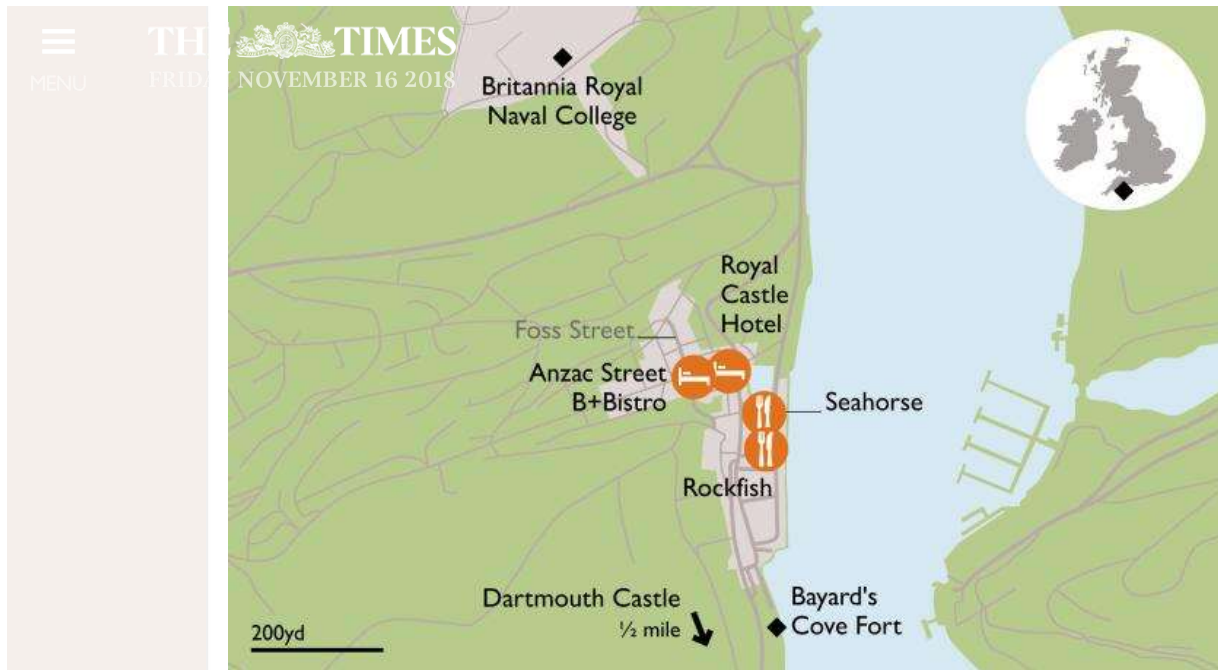
Shopping done, make your way to the waterfront to admire the red-brick exterior of the **Britannia Royal Naval College**, built in 1905 by Sir Aston Webb, who also did Buckingham Palace's facade. It was on the tennis courts here that the teenage Princess Elizabeth first met Prince Philip, and where, years later, Charles and William did their officer training. Tours take place every few days and must be booked in advance (£13; 01803 677565).



Blackpool Sands  
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From here, take the easy one-mile river walk or the ferry (Easter to late October; £2.50; [dartmouthcastleferry.co.uk](http://dartmouthcastleferry.co.uk)) to 14th-century **Dartmouth Castle** (£6.80; [english-heritage.org.uk](http://english-heritage.org.uk)). Kids and Game of Thrones fans will be enthralled by the clockwork woodblock map that you wind to show a 3D version of the castle rising through the decades. On the walk back, poke your head into the crumbling stone walls of **Bayard's Cove Fort** (free; [english-heritage.org.uk](http://english-heritage.org.uk)), where the Mayflower stopped for repairs in 1620, en route to America. Alternatively, head the other way along the coast and after four miles you'll hit the seaside delights of **Blackpool Sands**. The No 3 bus will get you back to town in 15 minutes.

You can't leave Dartmouth without messing about in a boat, so book a private cream tea on the **Picnic Boat** (from £140 for up to four people; [thepicnicboat.com](http://thepicnicboat.com)). Board at the harbour and you'll go upriver past the college, the docks and pretty fishing villages. You might see a dolphin; you'll definitely see buck's fizz and scones with clotted cream and jam, slathered on in that order — this is [Devon](#), after all.



### Where you eat

Book ahead for the **Seahorse**, Mitch Tonks's harbourside flagship, where prawns, Dover sole and monkfish are grilled over an open fire (mains from £16; [seahorserestaurant.co.uk](http://seahorserestaurant.co.uk)). Don't miss the slow-roasted vegetables, either. Tonks also owns **Rockfish**, once voted the best independent chippie in the UK (from £5.95; [therockfish.co.uk](http://therockfish.co.uk)). For pub grub, try the **Bayards Cove Inn**, a wonky Tudor building by the river that serves seafood favourites with a twist, including *moules frites* with chorizo cooked in cider (mains from £14; [bayardscoveinn.co.uk](http://bayardscoveinn.co.uk)).

### Where you stay

The crenellated **Royal Castle Hotel** has been a hub since the 17th century thanks to its lively bars and restaurant. In its 24 rooms, though, all is quiet (doubles from £112, B&B; [royalcastle.co.uk](http://royalcastle.co.uk)). **Anzac Street B+Bistro** is a Polish restaurant offering three simply furnished bedrooms and delicious breakfasts (doubles from £95, B&B; [anzacbistro.co.uk](http://anzacbistro.co.uk)).

*Jill Starley-Grainger was a guest of [visitsouthdevon.co.uk](http://visitsouthdevon.co.uk) and [visitengland.com](http://visitengland.com)*



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