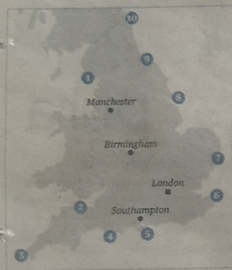


Travel

Quiet coast England's best beaches to avoid the crowds



Want to hit the beach but not the sunbathers? Take your pick from these 10 blissfully tucked-away stretches of coast, says **Clare Gogerty**

1 Haverigg beach, Duddon estuary, Cumbria

The Cumbrian coastline is often forgotten as visitors pile inland, into more-familiar Lake District destinations. This means that the Duddon estuary, with its 30-mile shoreline comprising sand, saltmarsh, dunes and mudflats, has plenty of room for roaming in solitude. The gently sloping shingle beach at Haverigg, at the mouth of the estuary, expands into a seemingly never-ending sandy stretch, fringed by dunes with views of distant Lake District fells. A walk along the old sea wall passes a lagoon - once an iron ore mine now Hodbarrow RSPB nature reserve - and a restored lighthouse. **Where to stay** Cockleshell Cottage is on Haverigg harbour and the Cumbrian Way and has views of the estuary. Sleeps 4, from £665 a week, simplyseaviews.co.uk.



2 Bossington Beach, Porlock Bay, Somerset

This huge shingle arc stretches between the Bristol Channel and the farmland and hills of Exmoor and offers masses of mind-clearing space. Start your visit in the hamlet of Bossington, gawp at the pretty cob and thatched cottages, and leave the car at the National Trust car park (the beach is part of its Holnicote Estate). The beach is on the South West Coast Path and there are walks to the rocky promontory of Hurlston Point and around wildlife-rich Porlock Marsh, passing chunky concrete remains of second world war pillboxes on the way.

Where to stay Exmoor Owl and Hawk Centre in Allerford, near Minehead, has three rooms in its farmhouse. Doubles from £90 B&B, singles from £70, exmoorowlhawkcentre.co.uk.



3 Porthledden Cove, Kenidjack valley, Cornwall

Leave the car at the National Trust car park at Cape Cornwall, and head off along the South West Coast Path to the less-visited Porthledden Cove at the end of Kenidjack valley. Brush past scented gorse and scrubby heather beside the stream that once powered 50 tin mining waterwheels, to the sheltered beach. There, find masonry relics of Cornwall's industrial past slumbering beside sculptural, multicoloured boulders and a small shingle beach. An abundance of rock pools, hollowed from chunks of granite by the sea, is revealed at low tide.

Where to stay Boslow Cottage in St Just has sea views from the garden. Sleeps 6. From £724 a week, cornishcottageholidays.co.uk. Limited availability in July and September. The Commercial Inn is a comfortable hotel in the market square at St Just. Doubles from £89 B&B, commercial-hotel.co.uk, plenty of availability - reopens 6 July.



few beaches. At the bottom of a long flight of concrete steps and tucked between three cliffs, is a sheltered, safe and secluded place to swim and snorkel. This is a shingle beach; debris from the quarrying of Portland Stone, now rounded into pebbles by the tide, has replaced the sand.

Where to stay The Old Boathouse has views over Portland Bill from a hot tub with sea views. Sleeps 4, £1,299 per week starting 18 July, cottages.com.

4 Church Ope Cove, Isle of Portland, Dorset

At the end of Chesil Beach, the tidal island of Portland is much less visited than the postcard-familiar sites along the Jurassic Coast. Church Ope Cove, on its eastern side, is one of the rocky outcrop's

planting to the coastal path. A steep descent pitches you out onto the sandy beach where it's all about beach huts, deckchair hire and pretty holiday cottages converted from a former lighthouse, a boat house and fishermen's cottages. Some fishing boats still sail to catch lobster and crab served up in pasties from shoreside cafes.

Where to stay In a barn conversion at Bank End Farm near Ventnor, seven nights from £555 per week (sleeps 2) to £2,137 (sleeps 8), bankendfarm.co.uk, limited availability. Try cottages at Steephill Cove, various prices and room sizes but booking up quickly, steephill-cove.co.uk.



6 Kingsgate Bay, near Broadstairs, Isle of Thanet, Kent

Thanet's sandy beaches pull in plenty of visitors on warm, sunny days, but most head for Margate's cafe-rich stretch or Broadstairs' amenities-aplenty Joss Bay and Botany Bay. Kingsgate Bay (between the two) is a little less accessible - there is no car park and no toilets - and consequently much quieter. A short walk at low tide from Botany Bay through a chalk seacliff arch is all it takes to shake off the crowds. There's nothing much to do on arrival except settle with a picnic, go for a swim in the shallow, sheltered sea, or peer into a rockpool. Which,

