



## Your Complete Guide to **Torquay, Devon**

*The English Riviera, Sea, Style & So Much More*

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### **Welcome to Torquay**

Welcome to Torquay, the jewel of Devon's English Riviera. Curved bays, palm-lined promenades, a working harbour buzzing with boats, and a backdrop of red Devon cliffs; it's the kind of place that makes you wonder why you ever go abroad. Whether you're here for a long weekend, a family summer holiday, or an extended stay for work, Torquay has far more depth than its postcard reputation suggests.

As your hosts at The Hosting Company, we want your time here to feel genuinely special, not just well-slept, but well-lived. That's why we've put together this guide: packed with the places we'd recommend to friends, the tips the locals keep to themselves, and everything you need to make the most of this remarkable corner of England.


***And remember, if you'd like us to arrange anything during your stay, from restaurant reservations and boat trips to activity bookings and local experiences, just ask. We're here to make every detail feel effortless.***

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## Getting Your Bearings

Torquay sits at the northern tip of Torbay, a sweeping natural bay it shares with Paignton and Brixham. Together, these three towns make up the 'English Riviera', a name earned not just by the mild microclimate and Mediterranean feel, but by the genuine warmth of the welcome you'll find here.

The town centre sits close to the harbour and marina, with the main shopping streets (Fleet Street and Union Street) a short walk inland. Torre Abbey and its meadows sit to the south, while the headlands of Hope's Nose and Berry Head frame the bay to north and south. The hills behind the town offer spectacular viewpoints, and some surprising countryside, within minutes of the seafront.

 **Local Tip:** *Torquay railway station is less than a mile from the harbour. If you're arriving by train from Exeter, it's a scenic final stretch along the coast that's well worth the journey.*

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## Beaches & The Seafront


Torquay has seven beaches, each with its own character, all within easy reach of the town centre. Here's our run-down of the best:

### Torre Abbey Sands

The main town beach, curving beneath the red cliffs in the heart of Torquay. Broad, sandy and well-served with cafés and facilities, it's ideal for families and first-timers. The beach huts here are a quintessential English seaside sight.


### Meadfoot Beach

Our favourite. Tucked around the headland from the main promenade, Meadfoot is quieter, rockier at the edges and feels almost secret by comparison. The café here is lovely, and the sea is noticeably calmer. A ten-minute walk from the town centre, and worth every step.

 **Local Tip:** *Meadfoot is a favourite with local swimmers and paddleboarders. On a calm morning, the water is crystal clear.*

### Babbacombe Beach & Oddicombe Beach

Head north along the coast for a completely different feel. These are reached via the famous Babbacombe Cliff Railway, a funicular that has been running since 1926, and feel a world away from the busy town beaches. Oddicombe in particular is a hidden gem, with a beach café, golden sand and translucent water.

 **Local Tip:** *Take the cliff railway down and walk back up through the woods via Walls Hill, a spectacular loop and takes about 45 minutes at a leisurely pace.*

## **Anstey's Cove**

For something more rugged and wild, Anstey's Cove is a stunning shingle cove nestled between limestone cliffs. No crowds, no facilities, just the sea, the rocks and the sound of oystercatchers. The snorkelling here is exceptional.

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## **Eating & Drinking**

Torquay's food scene has grown up considerably in recent years, and you'll find everything from brilliant local fish and chips to genuinely accomplished restaurants and independent cafés. Here's where we'd point you first:

### **Restaurants & Evening Dining**

#### **The Elephant Restaurant**

Torquay's flagship fine-dining destination, run by acclaimed chef Simon Hulstone. The focus is on Devon produce, particularly superb seafood, prepared with precision and care. Book well ahead; tables go fast and for good reason. This is a genuine special-occasion destination.

#### **No. 7 Fish Bistro**

A beloved Torquay institution. Relaxed, unpretentious and wholly focused on fresh local fish and shellfish. The fruits de mer platters are legendary. A short walk up from the harbour, follow your nose.

#### **Rockfish**

Founded by Mitch Tonks, Rockfish champions sustainably-sourced British fish. The Torquay branch sits right on the waterfront and the fish and chips are among the finest you'll find anywhere in Devon. Superb lobster rolls, too.

## **Babbacombe Coryton Cove Café**

A hidden gem above the sea at Babbacombe. The food is simple, flatbreads, salads, good coffee, but the setting, perched above a private cove, is extraordinary. Best enjoyed at sunset.

## **Cafés & Daytime Spots**

- [Hanbury's Famous Fish and Chips \(Harbour\), the classic choice and rightly so](#)
- Moby Dick's, great ice cream overlooking the marina
- Caffè Cipriani, excellent espresso and pastries on the harbourside
- Babbacombe Model Village Tea Room, charming with a lovely garden

## **Pubs & Bars**

- [The Hole in the Wall, Torquay's oldest pub full of character and local ales](#)
- The Crown & Sceptre, a proper community pub up at St Marychurch with real ales and a great atmosphere
- The Terrace Bar (Grand Hotel), for cocktails with a sea view this is hard to beat

***We're happy to make restaurant reservations on your behalf during your stay, particularly for popular spots like The Elephant where demand can outstrip availability. Just let us know your preferred date and party size and we'll sort it.***

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## **Things to Do & See**

Beyond the beaches, Torquay has a remarkable depth of things to experience, including history, nature, culture and adventure, all within easy reach.


## **Culture & History**

### **Torre Abbey**

Founded in 1196 and one of the best-preserved medieval monasteries in the South West. The abbey now houses an impressive art collection, beautifully restored historic rooms, and the Agatha Christie Gallery, a wonderful tribute to Torquay's most famous daughter. The grounds are glorious in summer.

## **Agatha Christie's Torquay**

Christie was born and raised here, and the town wears the connection with pride. The Agatha Christie Literary Festival takes place each September, and the Agatha Christie Mile is a self-guided walking trail taking in key sites from her life in Torquay, including her birthplace on Barton Road and the Grand Hotel, which inspired Bertram's Hotel. Pick up a trail map from the tourist information centre.

 **Local Tip:** *The Agatha Christie Mile is a lovely way to spend a morning, particularly with young readers who may be discovering Christie for the first time.*


## **Babbacombe Model Village**

A Torquay institution since 1963 and genuinely delightful for all ages. Over 400 models across four acres of miniature England, with a light show after dark. Far better than the name might suggest, this is a real highlight.

## **Kents Cavern**

One of the most significant prehistoric sites in the whole of Britain, and right on Torquay's doorstep. These ancient limestone caves were home to some of the earliest humans ever to inhabit these islands, with human remains found here date back over 40,000 years, making Kents Cavern older than Stonehenge and the Egyptian pyramids combined.

The guided tours are genuinely fascinating, taking you through dramatic underground chambers filled with stalactites and stalagmites that have been forming for hundreds of thousands of years. It's atmospheric, educational and surprisingly accessible for all ages, and younger visitors in particular tend to find it utterly captivating.

 **Local Tip:** *Book the evening torch-lit tours if you can, as exploring the caves by torchlight is a completely different, rather magical experience.*

## **Active & Outdoor**


### **South West Coast Path**

One of Britain's great long-distance footpaths runs right through Torquay, offering everything from gentle clifftop strolls to more challenging headland walks. The stretch from Torquay to Babbacombe via Hope's Nose is particularly

scenic, with dramatic limestone cliffs, hidden coves and extraordinary views across Lyme Bay on a clear day.

## Kayaking & Paddleboarding

The calm, sheltered waters of Torbay are ideal for kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding. Several operators run hire and guided tours from the beach near the harbour. Paddling out to explore the sea caves around Anstey's Cove and Long Quarry Point is unforgettable.

 **Local Tip:** *Early morning is the best time to paddle, the water is glassy calm and you often have the coves entirely to yourselves.*

## Sailing & Boat Trips

Torquay Marina is one of the largest on the South Coast and an excellent base for getting out on the water. You can charter sailing yachts with or without a skipper, join group sailing experiences, or take one of the regular sightseeing boat trips around the bay. Ferry services also run seasonally between Torquay, Brixham and Dartmouth.

## Scuba Diving & Snorkelling

Torbay's waters are a marine conservation zone and remarkably biodiverse. The limestone reefs, kelp forests and sea caves around Hope's Nose are home to cuttlefish, seahorses, rays and a dizzying variety of reef fish. Several local dive clubs and operators offer guided dives and PADI courses. Anstey's Cove is ideal for snorkelling, even for beginners.

## Cycling

The Torbay Velopark at Clennon Valley offers mountain biking trails, and the wider area has good cycling on the coast road. Electric bike hire is available in town for those who want to explore more of the bay without too much effort, and the circuit from Torquay to Brixham via Paignton is a wonderful half-day ride.

## Golf

Torquay Golf Club sits on the hillside above the town with sweeping views across the bay. There are also several other courses within easy reach, including the championship links at Bigbury-on-Sea and the scenic course at Shaldon.

## Day Trips from Torquay

Torquay is an outstanding base for exploring the wider South Devon and Dartmoor region. Here are the day trips we'd recommend most strongly:

### Dartmouth


One of England's most beautiful estuary towns, Dartmouth sits about 30 minutes south by road (or an hour by the seasonal ferry service). Wander the ancient Butterwalk, visit Dartmouth Castle, take the little passenger ferry across to Kingswear, and eat very well indeed. The Dart River itself is one of Devon's great natural treasures.

### Salcombe

About 45 minutes south-west, Salcombe is a glamorous sailing town set in a stunning estuary. The beaches at South Sands and North Sands are exceptional, the shopping is excellent and the seafood is superb. Best arrived at by boat if possible.

### Dartmoor National Park

The high moor is less than an hour from Torquay, and the contrast is extraordinary. Haytor Rocks, Widecombe-in-the-Moor, the Dartmoor Inn at Lydgate, all within easy reach for a half-day or full-day excursion. On a clear day, the views from the tors extend all the way to the coast.

 **Local Tip:** *Combine a Dartmoor morning with lunch in Totnes on the way back, one of Devon's most characterful market towns, with great independent shops and restaurants.*

### Totnes

Only 20 minutes inland, Totnes is worth at least a half-day. It's one of Devon's oldest towns, with a Norman castle, a wonderful high street of independent shops, excellent Saturday market, and a lively food and arts scene. The river trip from Totnes down to Dartmouth is one of the great Devon experiences.

### Buckfast Abbey

A working Benedictine monastery set in beautiful grounds on the edge of Dartmoor. The abbey church is genuinely magnificent, the gardens are peaceful,

and the monastic shop sells an extraordinary range of produce, including the famous Buckfast Tonic Wine, honey and beeswax candles.

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## Our Local Tips

These are the pieces of advice we'd give to any friend staying in Torquay, things that make the difference between a good holiday and a great one:

- Go to Meadfoot Beach on a weekday morning, you'll often have it virtually to yourselves
  - The Babbacombe Cliff Railway is a genuine delight and worth the trip just for the descent
  - Pick up fresh crab and lobster from the fishermen on the harbour early in the morning
  - The walk from Torquay Harbour to Hope's Nose takes about an hour and is spectacular in both directions, wear good shoes
  - Park at the outer car parks and walk in, the town centre parking fills quickly in summer
  - The Saturday market on the harbourside has excellent local produce, including Devon cheeses and smoked fish
  - Visit Torre Abbey at opening time on a weekday, it's almost always quiet and the gardens are at their best in morning light
  - For the best sunset view in Torquay, head to the top of Waldon Hill, a short walk from the town centre and worth it every time
  - The seafront promenade is lovely for an early morning run or walk before the town wakes up
  - If you're visiting between May and September, look out for the Agatha Christie events and guided walks, as they fill up quickly
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## We Can Arrange It For You

Part of what makes staying with The Hosting Company different is that we're not just here to hand over the keys. We're your local hosts, and that means we genuinely want your experience to be exceptional, from first arrival to final morning.

If there's something you'd like to do, see, eat or experience during your time in Torquay, just ask us. Whether it's a last-minute table at a restaurant that's usually fully booked, a private sailing charter for a special occasion, or simply a recommendation for the best spot to watch the sunset, we're here.

## Things We Can Help Arrange

- Restaurant reservations, including at harder-to-book spots like The Elephant
- Boat charters, sailing days and fishing trips
- Kayak, paddleboard and surf hire
- Guided coastal walks and Dartmoor excursions
- Scuba diving courses and guided dives
- Private golf tee times
- Spa days and wellbeing treatments
- Grocery and provisions deliveries before arrival
- Baby and toddler equipment hire
- Private chef for an evening at the property
- Local taxi and transfer bookings
- Event tickets, Agatha Christie Festival, sailing regattas, concerts

***There's no obligation and no booking fee, we simply enjoy helping. Get in touch at [hello@thehostingcompany.uk](mailto:hello@thehostingcompany.uk) or call us on 01803, and we'll take care of it.***

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## Practical Information

### Getting Here

- By car: Torquay is approximately 3.5 hours from London, 2 hours from Bristol, and 45 minutes from Exeter
- By train: Direct services from London Paddington (via Exeter St Davids). Torquay station is a short taxi ride or walk from the harbour
- By bus: National Express coaches serve Torquay from major cities. Local Stagecoach buses connect Torquay with Paignton, Brixham and Dartmouth

### Getting Around

- The town centre, harbour and main beaches are all walkable from most central properties
- The Torbay Road Train runs seasonally along the seafront, great fun for families
- Taxis: several local firms operate 24 hours. We're happy to recommend reliable drivers
- Electric scooter and bike hire is available near the harbour

## Useful Numbers & Contacts

- Torquay Tourist Information: Visit Torbay Tourism Hub, The Strand
- Torbay Hospital (A&E): Newton Road, Torquay TQ2 7AA
- Non-emergency police: 101
- The Hosting Company: hello@thehostingcompany.uk | 01803

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## A Final Word from Us

Torquay is a town that rewards those who look a little deeper. Beyond the ice cream and the candy floss (both worth having, by the way), there is history, natural beauty, exceptional food and a coastline that can genuinely take your breath away.

We hope this guide gives you a head start, and we hope your stay is everything you're hoping for. If there's anything we can do to make it better, you only need to ask.

*With warm wishes,*

### **The Hosting Company Team**

*Hosting Homes | Welcoming Guests*

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