

The world's best beaches: UK and Europe

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In the final instalment of our search to find the world's best beach, we look closer to home and find a selection of beaches in the UK and Europe that give those of the Caribbean and Indian Ocean a run for their money.

- [Part one: the best beaches in the Americas, Caribbean and Bahamas](#)
- [Part two: the best beaches in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Indian Ocean and Australasia](#)
- [Stunning photographs of the world's best beaches](#)

Croatia

Zlatni Rat, Brac One of the most spectacular beaches of the Adriatic is the V-shaped golden shingle sand bar at Zlatni Rat (Golden Horn). The beach changes shape and position depending on the wind; a pine forest provides welcome shade.



Getty

One of the most spectacular beaches of the Adriatic is the V-shaped golden shingle sand bar at Zlatni Rat, Croatia

England

Bamburgh, Northumberland

Overlooked by Bamburgh Castle, this beautiful stretch of wild coastline offers clear seas and huge sands that stretch to Seahouses, three miles away. On a clear day you can see out to Lindisfarne and the Holy Island.



Getty

Dogs Bay, Galway is a good place to spot dolphins

France

Conche des Baleines, Île de Ré

There are spectacular beaches along much of the south and west coasts of the island, but this vast, untamed curve of sand, bathed in bright Atlantic light and backed by dunes, is perhaps the best. Sunsets are magnificent, as are the views from the imposing Phare des Baleines lighthouse.

Germany

Kampen, Sylt

This white-sand beach with its backdrop of a red cliff and its bracing air is on the fashionable North Sea island of Sylt. Go native and grab yourself a Strandkorb (giant wicker beach chair).

Greece

Myrtos beach, Kefalonia

Perhaps the most dramatic of all the Ionian beaches. A huge sweep of white limestone pebbles, set in a deep, wide bay. Viewed from the road above, it forms the perfect crescent that you might recognise from guidebook covers.

Ireland

Dogs Bay, Roundstone, Galway

On the westernmost shores of Europe, this mile-long stretch of silvery-white sand is imbued with the wildness of Connemara. Set below a grassy headland and lapped by clear turquoise Gulf Stream waters, it's a good place to spot dolphins.

Italy

Chia, Sardinia

A slice of the Caribbean a little closer to home, with towering dunes, crystalline waters flanked by juniper trees and traces of the ancient Phoenician city of Bithia, on which Chia now stands.

Lithuania/Russia

Curonian Spit

This extraordinary sliver of land on the Baltic Sea curves up from the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad to the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda. Famed for its spectacular dunes, dark-green pines, silver birches and its amber.

Malta

Ramla Bay, Gozo

The red sands of Ramla Bay are at the bottom of a fertile valley. A half-hour ferry ride from the main islands, Gozo is steeped in Roman history.

Northern Ireland

Portstewart Strand

Bounded at one end by low basalt cliffs and at the other by the River Bann, the two-mile-long Strand has dunes 100ft high that lend it an air of wildness and mystery.

Portugal

Sagres, Algarve

Dominated at its western end by a white fort (this was thought to be the end of the world before Portugal's seafaring days), the fine undeveloped beach is backed by orange cliffs, with impressive rollers attracting surfers from around the world.

Scilly Isles

Rushy Bay, Bryher

With its sub-tropical climate, wildflowers and migrant birdlife, this is one of a series of glorious beaches on Bryher. Can this really be part of Britain?

Scotland

Luskentyre, Western Isles

Hidden at the end of a winding road on the wild north-west coast of the Isle of Harris is this long stretch of brilliant sand, washed by shallow, startlingly turquoise water. Farther out are the steel-grey rollers more often associated with Scotland, studded with empty, windswept islands.

Spain

El Palmar, Costa de la Luz

South of Cádiz, Spain's Atlantic coast is edged with vast golden beaches that make you want to leap for joy. El Palmar is one of the best for children, with decent surf, lots of potential playmates and a string of inexpensive open-air bars and restaurants in the village.

Sweden

Tofta, Gotland

In the summer this sleepy island becomes a haven for beautiful young Swedish things. Head to the northern end of Tofta beach if you are after peace and quiet; to the southern end if you want to party.

Turkey

Patara, Turquoise Coast

Dunes, dunes and more dunes. This 12-mile stretch of soft-sanded Mediterranean coastline is flanked by incredible mountains of sand. A nesting area for the endangered loggerhead turtle, it remains undeveloped thanks to its national park status.

Wales

Marloes Sands, Pembrokeshire

It is a half-mile walk from the car park to this magnificent National Trust-managed beach, but it's worth it for the crystal-clear water and dramatic sandstone cliffs, the views of outlying islands, the fossils, rock pools, seals, surf and space.

Your view

Do you agree? Nominate your favourite beaches below.

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