

Now YOU Travel

**THIS WEEK'S
HIP HOLIDAY**

Cool Cornwall

Surf's up as the southwest gets a chic makeover

Martine
filmed Echo
Beach near
Newquay

WHY IT'S HIP NOW

The surfing crowd's always loved it, but Britain's southwestern corner is now famous as the haunt of partying royals, celebrity chefs and the location of TV's Echo Beach. The Champagne Coast is booming, as chintzy hotels and guesthouses are transformed into designer 'apart-hotels', trendy studio flats called surf-pods and hip waterfront properties.

WHAT TO DO IN THE DAY

Watergate Bay, two miles north of Newquay and the location for Echo Beach, is a heady mix of crashing waves and hot surf dudes. The Extreme Academy (01637 860840, extremeacademy.co.uk) will help you brush up your surfing from £25 for half a day, but if you prefer to just bronze on the beach, then try Porthminster Beach in St Ives, a Mediterranean-style crescent of golden sand fringed by palm trees.

The surfing village of Polzeath is a favourite of Princes William and Harry, but if you want to escape the crowd, experience botanical bliss in The Lost Gardens of Heligan (01726 845100, heligan.com) or explore Looe, a fishing village on the south coast. For lunch, head north to one of Rick Stein's four restaurants in Padstow (01841 532700, rickstein.com), while burger fans should head south for Blas Burgerworks in St Ives (01736 797272, blasburgerworks.co.uk).

WHAT TO DO AT NIGHT

Dine at Jamie Oliver's restaurant Fifteen Cornwall (01637 861000, fifteencornwall.co.uk) on Watergate Bay, where the decor

– a mix of fine art and graffiti – is as creative as the grub. The evening's five-course tasting menu costs £50 a head. Or sample the chilled out ambience of Newquay's Chy Bar + Kitchen (01637 873415) before heading next door to The Koola Klub for live bands and DJs. Another hip bolthole is Porthtown's Blue Bar (01209 890329, blue-bar.co.uk).

WHERE TO STAY

For hippy chic, you can't beat St Ives; Primrose Valley Hotel (01736 794939, primroseonline.co.uk) was the first Cornish hotel to win green accreditation for its efforts to protect local beauty. It overlooks Porthminster Beach, so it's bed to beach in seconds. The Edwardian villa has 10 designer bedrooms, each adorned with silky cushions, luxury throws and gleaming en suites. Tempting touches include a bar, picnic lunches on request, sumptuous cream teas and lavish full English breakfasts. Room rates start from £85 with suites from £175.

West of Penzance is Lamorna, where you'll find The Cove (01736 731411, thecovecornwall.com), a boutique-style hotel-cum-apartment complex built from old Cornish stone. Each of its 13 trendy self-catering apartments features a spacious sitting room,

well-stocked kitchenette and king-size beds. Room rates from £214 per night.

Set on the sands of Watergate Bay, Waves Apartments (01637 861005, beachretreats.co.uk) were home to Martine McCutcheon and the rest of the cast and crew of TV soap Echo Beach during filming. Fusing modern minimalism with surfer cool, many of the 31 waterfront pads have ocean views. Two-bedroom apartments start from £490 per week.

For something really different, try camping in a tipi (01208 880781, cornish-tipi-holidays.co.uk). This eco-escape consisting of 40 tents is located in 16 acres of woodland around the disused Tregildrans quarry, near Port Isaac Bay, and arranged around a beautiful lake where you can paddle, swim and fish. Each canvas tipi is furnished with Turkish floor rugs, bed-rolls and North African lanterns. Coolboxes and camp stoves are supplied, firewood is delivered daily and you can enjoy a 'green' shower in water heated by solar and wind power. Prices start from £225 for three nights.

GETTING THERE

If you don't live close enough to drive to Cornwall, check out these low-cost airlines for direct flights to Newquay from about £50 return: Air Southwest (airsouthwest.com); Ryanair from London (ryanair.com); and BMI Baby from Manchester (bmibaby.com).

Chill out at Lamorna's boutique hotel The Cove