

Escape to white beaches and deserted islands just a few miles off Cornwall

# Isles of Scilly

Exploring the archipelago off the coast of Cornwall makes for a dreamy staycation, says *Lisa Kjellsson*

**G**azing out over turquoise waters and a cluster of green islands, it's hard to believe this little slice of paradise is part of the UK. Just 28 miles off the Cornish coast await the Isles of Scilly.

Each island has its own character – car-free Tresco is immaculately kept, with sprawling botanical gardens, while neighbouring Bryher has a more untamed beauty. Here you can enjoy Scilly's finest uninterrupted sunset views at Shipman Head on the north end of the island and a sea swim at Popplestone Bay, a few minutes' walk from chic Hell Bay hotel.

It's the perfect base for a long weekend spent island hopping. Few places leave you feeling fully recharged in the space of just a few days, but the sea air and gentle pace on the Isles of Scilly will do the trick. Who needs faraway escapes when we have idyllic islands like this so close to home?

## THE ESSENTIALS



### STAY

Hell Bay Hotel on Bryher's rugged western shore is a welcoming hideaway with eclectic art and a fine dining restaurant serving local delicacies like lobster and roast partridge. [hellbay.co.uk](http://hellbay.co.uk)



### SEE

Explore Tresco Abbey Garden, a subtropical oasis where palms, pines and exotic plants from around the world form a verdant wonderland you'll want to get lost in. [tresco.co.uk](http://tresco.co.uk)



### EAT

Scallops, mussels and woodfired pizza are served at cosy Ruin Beach Café and you'll find more seafood and gourmet pub grub at The New Inn, both on Tresco. [tresco.co.uk](http://tresco.co.uk)



### DO

Rent a kayak from Bryher-based Hut 62 and paddle over to Samson, the largest uninhabited island in the Scillies and a protected wildlife site teeming with rare bird species. [hut62.co.uk](http://hut62.co.uk)



### BUY

Pop into Gallery Tresco in New Grimsby Harbour to browse their collection of paintings by local artists. Inspired by the Scillies' light and landscapes, it's a perfect memento. [tresco.co.uk](http://tresco.co.uk)

**BOOK IT:** Catch the train to Penzance ([gwr.com](http://gwr.com)) and then the new helicopter service to Tresco, from £129.50 one way. [penzancehelicopters.co.uk](http://penzancehelicopters.co.uk). Stay at Hell Bay hotel, doubles from £95 per person per night, B&B. [hellbay.co.uk](http://hellbay.co.uk) ■