

VISIT ISLES OF SCILLY 2020 PRESS PACK
FEATURE STORY IDEAS AND TOPLINE INFORMATION

ISLES
^{OF}
Scilly

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ESCAPE TO THE ISLES OF SCILLY

The Isles of Scilly... a Distinctly British island escape.

Perfectly perched at the foot of England, just 28 miles of the rugged coast of Cornwall, lie the magical Isles of Scilly. 140 isles in total, five of which are inhabited, this compact cluster of wild little islands offers all you need for escape and adventure. Wild landscapes, footprint-less expanses of snow-white sandy beaches and gentle swirls of crystal clear, glittering sea surrounds these jewels of the Atlantic Ocean.

The ebb and flow of daily life is a little slower, more relaxed, and perfectly in tune with the seasonal nature of the isles. Feel refreshed, recharged and totally at one with the natural world. Swim with seals, gaze at the stars and take a breath of fresh, pure air.

“Scilly’s islands promise sparkling turquoise sea, silver-sand beaches, a slow-lane atmosphere and enticing food – from porcelain-white crab to crusted clotted cream and some of the best strawberries you’ll ever eat”

Olive Magazine

SOME SCILLY FACTS

Among the 140 or so uninhabited islands and islets, there are five inhabited islands; **St. Mary’s, Tresco, St. Martin’s, Bryher and St. Agnes**. They each have their own distinctive character and you can island hop between them in a matter of minutes.

2,200 people live on this tiny archipelago. 1,800 are based on the largest, St. Mary’s; with about 110 each on Tresco and St. Martin’s, and between 80 and 90 on Bryher and St. Agnes.

The beaches are not only some of the most beautiful in the UK, but also the finest in the world.

Scilly enjoys one of the mildest climates in the UK.

The entire archipelago is designated as an **AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**.

There’s a whole host of events each year, all distinctly Scillonian and offering visitors a taste of real island life.

Scilly welcomes around 100,000 visitors per year – a combination of holidaymakers, day trippers from Cornwall and passengers from visiting cruise ships.



ISLAND ADVENTURES

Island Hopping;
the ultimate island adventure.

“The archipelago’s subtropical microclimate draws British beachcombers to the warm waters of Pentle Bay, where hemmed-in city-escapees seek out ocean views and salty air”

Luxury London

The beautiful turquoise waters that surround the islands are a daily part of Scilly life. With each island in such close proximity to one another, jet boats and day-tripper vessels ferry to and from islands every day of the year.

Start a new adventure every day with a map tucked into your pocket and a stroll down to St Mary’s quay, scrolling the blackboard for the daily Boating schedule. No matter which island you choose to stay on, it’s easy to visit all of the others. Jumping on and off the colorful boats, with cheery and knowledgeable boatman, explore Scilly’s authentic charm and discover each island’s distinct character. In addition to the day tripping schedule, there are lots of excursions and opportunities to explore on the water; including the wonderful Wildlife Safaris. Depending on the time of year, you’ll spot dolphins, puffins, cormorants, razorbills and many other seabirds - plus the guarantee of a friendly Atlantic grey seal popping up to say hello.

Likewise, hire your own boat, paddleboard or kayak and navigate the isles at your own pace. Eateries such as Hugh Street café will make up picnics ready for a day on the water, pack your sun cream and towels and set off for a meander, anchoring up off one of the many secluded beaches.





DARK SKIES & STARGAZING

Following their incredible first year in 2019, the St. Martin's observatory is keeping up momentum following their launch, with the announcement of 'Dark Skies Week', a totally new event for 2020, dedicated to our glorious galaxy.

With some of the clearest skies in the United Kingdom, Scilly is perfectly placed for stargazing and experiencing first-hand astronomical 'wow' moments; gaze upon the gas giants of Saturn and Jupiter and their surrounding moons, peer through a solar scope at Mercury and wonder at the vastness of the universe all from a tiny cluster of islands in the middle of the ocean.

The inaugural Dark Skies Week will take place from the 3rd – 10th October, a week of astronomy-related activity with visiting speakers, meteor showers, a programme of special events and, of course, lots of stargazing.

THE COMMUNITY OBSERVATORY on St. Martin's

The Community Observatory on St Martin's opened in April 2019, the result of more than three years of fundraising by a group of local amateur astronomers. This island observatory is one of the most remote and certainly the furthest South West in the UK.

The Observatory has two observation domes, one housing a 14-inch Meade telescope suitable for deep sky viewing; the other a versatile 5-inch Altair telescope ideal for viewing the planets sits alongside a solar telescope, which is used for observing the Sun during the day. The observatory has a well-equipped warm room and includes computer equipment for astro-imaging.

"There is virtually no light pollution on the islands, making it the ideal bolthole for intrepid stargazers in search of unspoilt skies"

Spectator LIFE





FOODIE ISLANDS; SUSTAINABLE, LOCAL PRODUCE

When it comes to the very best in local produce and the number of food miles travelled, the Isles of Scilly is tough to beat. Nowhere is local produce more local – or as pure, simple and authentic. Just as nature intended.

On this tiny community, island produce is in abundance. Just about around every corner on every island you'll come across a local farmer or fisherman; fudge maker or baker; brewer or winemaker and more.

“I'd heard about all the lovely local produce grown and nurtured on the islands... this microcosm of sustainable living and lifestyle – it spoke my language, and I couldn't wait to get stuck in!”

Melissa Hemsley

Chef, author and British Vogue & Telegraph columnist.

A FEW TO FIND ON FOOT

Island fish

The Pender Family have been fishing out of Bryher for hundreds of years, supplying quality fresh lobster, crab, fish and shellfish across the Isles of Scilly.

Salakee Duck

a small enterprise on St. Mary's raising only free-range, small batches to ensure the highest-welfare ducks.

Veronica Farm

Family-owned and run farm using local ingredients including St Agnes milk, butter and clotted cream, to produce the most delicious, buttery vanilla fudge, all made by hand in the farm kitchen

Hillside Farm

Five acres of organic farm, growing fruit & vegetables alongside Devon cattle for beef, grass fed year-round for tasty, low environment impact beef, sold at the farm gates.

Troytown Farm

Considered the UK's smallest working dairy farm with 9 milking cows, Troytown produces and sells milk, clotted cream, yoghurt and ice cream.

Westward Farm

a small family farm on St. Agnes, they grow botanicals for their distillery producing premium gin (plus apple juice and cyder) and range of soaps using essential oils.



A SPOTLIGHT ON...

Seaside Cocktails on the beach

Situated on St. Mary's popular Porthmellon Beach, The Beach is Scilly's first and only beachside BBQ restaurant, specializing in seafood and rare breed meats. Watch the sun dip behind the sea, cocktail-in-hand from their balcony, before tucking into juicy local mussels and a chocolate martini to finish.

Fine wines and Vineyards

Learn about English winemaking with the two island vineyards. Situated in the tranquil Holy Vale on St. Mary's, Holy Vale vineyard offers traditional wine tasting alongside their iconic 'lobster lunch', a romantic and thoroughly unique experience set al fresco within the vines. St. Martins Vineyard is a smaller affair, offering a charming look at a family run enterprise... one with perhaps the best sea view a vineyard could have.

Hell Bay Hotel and Crab Shack

An award-winning hotel on the beautiful island of Bryher with an exclusive dinner option – fresh caught Bryher crab, freshly landed fish and scallops prepared and cooked to order in an intimate setting.



Island Gin Distillery

Still a relative newcomer to the island, only arriving last year, Scilly Spirit offer something completely new for visitors.

The only distillery on Scilly with a dedicated and purpose-built gin-school, owners and founders Arthur and Hilary work together on all aspects, doing everything from distilling to bottling,

Secret Supper Club at Tanglewood Table

Another husband and wife enterprising success, Tanglewood Table is a totally unique and original dining experience.

Their deli selling local produce and luxury ready-meals throughout the day, come night, turns into a 'secret supper club'. Set in the old sorting room of the Islands post office, the original Post Office sorting table becomes a dining area for 8 guests - the ultimate island supper club.



TASTE OF SCILLY FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL

“When it comes to local produce and food miles, Scilly is in a league of its own”

Cornwall Today



Every September sees the culmination of the year-round efforts, with the month-long dedicated food and drink festival ‘Taste of Scilly’. Taste of Scilly is packed with events that showcase the unique low-food miles, slow food culture of our famously unspoilt islands 28 miles off the coast of Cornwall. There is a fresh foodie experience to savour every day – from lobster feasts to Scillonian produce markets as well as beach barbecues and pop-up crab shack evenings, paella nights, Scillonian taster menus, local ales and wine pairing dining experiences.

The evening programme will be supplemented with working family-farm tours and tastings (including island reared duck and tantalizingly tasty ice cream) across St. Mary’s, Bryher, St. Agnes and St. Martin’s; gin tastings from Westward Farm at Tanglewood Kitchen, baking competitions and afternoons learning how to crimp your own pasties. Across the islands, there’ll be lots of special Taste of Scilly offers and stories to be shared



amongst all our passionate local producers, be they bakers, brewers, chefs, farmers, fishermen or fantastic foodie producers.

For a truly Scilly experience, roll up your trouser legs and pad barefoot through the sand to the sandbank between Tresco and Bryher for the Low-Tide Festivals that take place on a Spring low-tide (four in 2020). This ultra mini-food festival that serves up bowls of locally harvested garlic mussels, seafood paella dished directly from a beached fishing boat, Tresco salt beef and Scilly mackerel baps washed down with fabulous gin cocktails and prosecco whilst being serenaded with live music – an experience not to be missed! popular demand this year.



2020 EVENTS & EXPLORATION

Eleven unmissable events and activities on the islands for the year ahead.

WALK SCILLY

This 10-day festival from 1st to 10th April features 40 walks and boat trips across nine islands; the five inhabited islands and several of the uninhabited ones. All are led by the very best expert guides and local islanders to really bring the treasures and hidden gems of Scilly to life. Energetic island hikes, sunrise strolls, wildlife discovery tours, food foraging forays, beachcombing, star gazing and top to toe rambles.

You can also catch the newly named Wild Scilly, a long weekend from 1st – 5th October for some bracing sea air and the very best of the Spring programme, packed into one exciting long weekend.

WORLD PILOT GIG CHAMPIONSHIPS

This year it takes place on 1st-3rd May with over 150 men's and women's teams, with veterans and super-veterans from across the UK, Europe and beyond to compete for



the most coveted prize in pilot gig-racing... and celebrate long into the night!

TRESCO ABBEY GARDEN

Tresco Abbey Garden is a botanical paradise planted among the ruins of a Benedictine priory. Its incredible 20,000 plant species have been collected from as far and wide as New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and South America. Red squirrels were introduced to the garden in 2013, and it's also home to the Valhalla Museum – a collection of figureheads gathered from shipwrecks around the islands.



ISLAND WELL-BEING WITH ADVENTURE SCILLY

For early birds seeking to kick start spring, Adventure Scilly continue their hugely successful “Re-boot & Revitalise” Well-being Breaks in March and October (28th – 31st March 2020). Restorative Wild Yoga, Sunrise Meditation and Trail Runs, invigorating sea swims and adventurous yomps across the boulders, all designed to refresh your mind, body and soul.



ÖTILLÖ SWIMRUN ISLES OF SCILLY

Taking place on the 13th and 14th of June, the Ötillö Swimrun world series qualifier is an amazing spectacle with an incredible vibe. The Swimrun tests the best of elite and keen endurance athletes to the edge of their limits as they run the islands and swim between them.

SNORKELLING WITH SEALS AND MORE

Scilly Seal Snorkelling gives you a magical opportunity to meet some Atlantic grey seals up close and personal in the clear-blue waters off St. Martin's. These charismatic creatures often let their curiosity get the better of them, which means you might just turn around to find one gently nibbling your flipper. If you prefer life at the surface, explore the myriad coves and islets by kayak or stand-up paddleboard, or get blown away on a windsurfing or sailing excursion.



CREATIVE SCILLY

Thirteen days of island whimsy and intrigue with pop-up theatre, an immersive setting, workshops with local artists and an open studio trail to explore taking place between the 11th and 20th May. Have a go at stained glass painting, lino printing or simply sit back and enjoy an evening with a



famous author...this festival is full of island wide delights and surprises for all the senses.

SCILLY FOLK FESTIVAL

A jolly, spirit-lifting festival of song held on the 21st-26th May. All who join this lively Whitsun weekend of song and dance are encouraged to bring an instrument and join in... much frivolity and fun to be had!

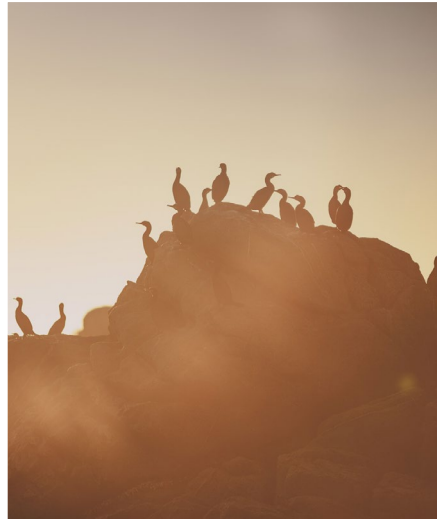
WILDLIFE WALKS AND BOAT TRIPS

The guided walks and boat trips organised by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust offer a window onto Scilly's stunning natural environment. There are weekly wildlife safaris in summer, taking in seals and seabirds, and regular strolls on the beach delve into the intriguing world of rock pools.



“England’s answer to a sub-tropical paradise”

Evening Standard



CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TOURISM

Scilly Wildlife Trust work year-round as the ‘Champion of Nature’ on the islands. One ongoing project is their inspiringly innovative ‘Plastic boardwalk’ –an intuitive they are incredibly proud of; it has a huge impact environmentally and socially. Replacing the old, often rotting wood of boardwalks and bridges in wetlands and vulnerable surrounding areas, the Trust is using recycled plastic to create long-lasting walkways... having already saved 273,000 plastic bottles from landfill!

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

From shipwrecks to treasure, and from Bronze Age burial chambers to deserted villages, the history of Scilly is utterly compelling – especially as it mingles so tantalisingly with modern-day life on the islands. Scilly’s tiny land mass is home to 239 scheduled monuments, which means there is a greater density of historical sites here than anywhere else in the British Isles. Scilly has its very own dedicated Island archaeologist, Dr Katharine Sawyer and Maritime expert Richard Larn.

For more details and a full listing of events, go to:

 [visitislesofscilly.com](https://www.visitislesofscilly.com)



TRAVELLING TO SCILLY

“Getting to Scilly, by air or sea is all part of the adventure”

Reaching the islands by air is possible via two routes this year; the Skybus Twin Otter plane operated by Isles of Scilly Travel and new for 2020; the much-anticipated launch of the Penzance Helicopter service launching on March 17th, flying direct from the newly built Penzance Heliport.

The Helicopter service, operated by Sloane Helicopters, will fly to both Tresco and St. Mary’s – taking just 15 minutes, with up to 17 scheduled flights a day in peak season and flying year-round. The Skybus Twin Otter propeller plane flies to St. Mary’s from Land’s End airport taking 20 minutes, Cornwall Airport Newquay taking 30 minutes and from Exeter Airport in Devon, taking 1 hour. National and International connections are available from Newquay and Exeter airports.

Or you can opt to sail at leisurely pace aboard the Scillonian passenger ferry, enjoying the scenery around you as you pull out of Penzance Harbour. The boat sails up to seven days a week from March to November with a journey time of two hours and 45 minutes. Sailing around the Cornish coast offers wonderful views from the deck and is also a great way to spot sea life, with the ferry regularly escorted by pods of dolphins - and even on occasion, Minke whales!

For more travel information, visit:

 islesofscilly-travel.co.uk

 penzancehelicopters.co.uk





BOOKING A PRESS TRIP

The Islands' Partnership (Visit Isles of Scilly) hosts a limited number of press trips to the islands each year.

Skybus flights from Land's End, Newquay or Exeter airports or tickets on the Scillonian passenger ferry from Penzance harbour, are provided by Isles of Scilly Travel. Helicopter flights are provided by Penzance Helicopters. Travel is complimentary for the journalist and a guest. Decisions on travel discounts for any further guests are based on the angle of the feature. Accommodation on the islands is tailored to the focus of the piece.

If needed, we'll aim to negotiate press train tickets from London Paddington with GWR, though these are not guaranteed. In addition, we'll pull together a suggested itinerary for your stay.

Complimentary travel, accommodation and activities are dependent on mentions in the piece and credits in the fact box. The URL for the visitor information website, [visitislesofscilly.com](https://www.visitislesofscilly.com), must also be included in the fact box.

 [visitislesofscilly](https://www.visitislesofscilly.com)

 [@visitIOS](https://twitter.com/visitIOS)

 [visitislesofscilly](https://www.visitislesofscilly.com)

Journalists are asked to post on social media during the trip, with links to Visit Isles of Scilly.

The Visit Isles of Scilly website provides the definitive guide to the islands:

 [visitislesofscilly.com](https://www.visitislesofscilly.com)

A selection of images can be found on the Visit Isles of Scilly Flickr account:

 [flickr.com/photos/visitislesofscilly/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/visitislesofscilly/albums)

Credit the images with either the name of the photographer or Visit Isles of Scilly.

Travel to and from Scilly is weather-dependent. Flights can sometimes be affected by low-lying cloud or strong winds. Sailings can also be cancelled due to bad weather conditions. If bad weather is forecast, it may be advisable to reschedule your press trip.



YOU CAN VIEW THE
2020 ISLES OF SCILLY
GUIDE [HERE](#)

