

ENGLISH RIVIERA

MEDIA BRIEFING FACT SHEET

ENGLISH RIVIERA GLOBAL GEOPARK

The Geopark

Geoparks, like National Parks, are special places that enrich our lives through their stunning natural landscapes and heritage. Specifically, they are sites recognised by UNESCO for their geological significance, and at the moment there are only 77 in the world, and only 9 in the UK and Ireland.

The English Riviera was designated a Geopark in 2007 due to its rich geological, historical and cultural heritage. Its geology has created the beautiful coastline we see today, which links the rich diversity of landscape with wildlife, people and culture. It is also the backdrop for a multitude of exciting sports and leisure activities that stem from the natural and marine environments. As the first urban Geopark in the world - that's to say, others are in rural areas – the English Riviera has it all. Diving, sailing, kayaking, fishing, cycling, wild food and local crafts, plus plenty of beaches and a holiday atmosphere thrown in!

Geopark Discovery Packages

For those seeking to explore the Geopark, there are a number of exciting NEW packages that have been developed by the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust.

1. Geopark Thrill Seekers

If you're in search of an adrenalin rush there's no better way to explore the Geopark coast than through this thrill seekers adventure! You'll experience the exhilaration of coastering with an experienced instructor, negotiating rugged coastlines, swimming across inlets, climbing on some of our spectacular cliffs and – for the more adventurous - taking part in adrenalin-fuelled jumps into deep water.

2. Geopark Survival

Join an expert for a day in bush craft survival techniques including fire lighting, shelter building, wild food foraging and more. This event will be held in the beautiful and historic Domesday Book village of Cockington.

3. Canoe the Coves

Explore the coastline on this memorable canoe adventure – the perfect way to discover the Geopark’s stunning marine wildlife and geology. You’ll be kitted out and shown canoeing techniques by an experienced instructor, then take to the water and begin your sea voyage - accompanied by a marine ranger to help spot seals, dolphins and seabirds. We’ll stop in a secluded cove to enjoy a beach picnic and a brief rockpooling session.

4. Geopark Explorer

Explore the Geopark on foot with this guided geological excursion. First, we step back 400 million years at Kents Cavern, Britain’s oldest prehistoric home. Then we’ll walk to Torquay harbour before catching a ferry to Brixham. There, we’ll climb the South West Coast Path to Berry Head National Nature Reserve, where we’ll enjoy lunch with panoramic sea views before taking a tour around the site.

5. The Geopark From Sea to Plate

Join Simon Hulstone, Head Chef of the Michelin-starred Elephant Restaurant, on this culinary journey from sea to plate. In the morning you’ll be taken out on a fishing boat to test your angling skills catching local mackerel. Later, you’ll visit the Elephant Restaurant to watch as Simon demonstrates cooking techniques and delicious masterpieces using local fish, before enjoying a two-course seafood lunch.

6. Mussels By Moonlight

Enjoy an unforgettable evening boat trip exploring the spectacular Geopark coastline with a marine ranger, while an expert chef cooks up delicious local mussels sourced from the Brixham Sea Farm. The mussels of Tor Bay are renowned for their quality and delicious flavour!

All the packages are organised by the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust.

For the Free Spirits

All year round independent adventures – diving, sailing, kayaking, fishing, sight-seeing cruises, hiking, cycling and more – can be organised through a range of providers that hire equipment and offer adventure breaks. Information can be found on the Geopark Leaflet produced by the ERTC.

Geopark Gateway Sites

For an in-depth understanding and appreciation of just what the Geopark is all about, visitors can go to one of the four key gateway sites. These are:

- Kents Cavern: Devon's most ancient secret! One of the most important Stone Age cave sites in Europe and the Ice Age home of Britain's earliest humans.

www.kents-cavern.co.uk Tel: 01803 215136

- The Seashore Centre: A great place to explore the coastal life of the English Riviera Geopark!

www.countryside-trust.org.uk Tel: 01803 528841

- Berry Head National Nature Reserve: An internationally-acclaimed heritage site, home to a fascinating array of wildlife and history.

www.berryhead.org.uk Tel: 01803 882619

- Royal Terrace Gardens and Rock Walk: Landscaped gardens on the side of the cliff face with stunning views out to sea, newly-restored in 2010 and featuring a magnificent illuminated staircase.

Other Sites of Interest

There are a number of other key sites linked with the Geopark: Occombe Farm, Cockington Court, Torquay Museum, and Brixham Heritage Museum.

Festivities

Every May/June the English Riviera hosts the Geopark Festival, a celebration of all things Geopark. More information on the events is available online at

www.englishriviera.co.uk.

English Riviera Tourism Company Welcomes Journalists

We host a number of familiarisation visits throughout the year and tailor each itinerary to suit your perfect story. We are always happy to welcome journalists to the English Riviera, if you are interested in visiting please contact:

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Launched in October 2010 the ERTC is a new private sector led public/private tourism partnership leading on the official promotion of the English Riviera as a leading UK resort and overseeing the effective delivery of the 2010-2015 Turning the Tide for Tourism in Torbay Strategy. To download a copy of the strategy please visit:

www.englishriviera.co.uk/ertc Please note that the ERTC is a company controlled by the council of the borough of Torbay.