

TRAVEL



Edited by
NIGEL THOMPSON

email traveldesk@reachplc.com
X @MirrorTravel @TravelEdNigel
@LissamanVicky

GET CLOSER TO GUERNSEY

The Channel Island has sunshine, good food and charm, says **Jessica Molyneux**, along with a whole lot of history

As we approach the island in a small propeller plane, I press my face against the window to take in the most magnificent view. Arcs of white sandy beaches stretch across the north coast, giant cliffs form a mighty wall in the south, and a ribbon of bright blue water encircles it all.

Flying to Guernsey gives you that feeling of escaping to an equatorial oasis, but this Channel Island jewel is just 30 miles west of France's Normandy coast.

The largest island in the Bailiwick of Guernsey, which includes five other inhabited islands – Alderney, Herm, Jethou, Lihou and Sark, as well as many small islets and rocks, is easy to reach with Channel Islands-based Aurigny airline operating flights from 10 UK airports.

Flying with Aurigny, it's a few steps up on to a small aircraft, which is pretty much like stepping on to a private plane, er, I imagine. Then after just one hour in the air I was landing in an

CONTINUED OVER THE PAGE



YACHT A SIGHT
Sunrise in St Peter Port

BIG DEAL

No-fly British Isles cruise from £1,099pp: join Balmoral in Rosyth on June 7 for a 10-night round-trip calling at Lerwick, Shetland; St Mary's, Isles of Scilly; Falmouth, Dartmouth and Portsmouth. Includes shows, talks, dance classes, cookery demos. fredolsencruises.com

Cruise news

BY NIGEL THOMPSON

Sushi at sea is on a California roll for Holland America. The 152-year-old line is expanding its intimate Morimoto By Sea dining experience to four more ships in addition to Nieuw Amsterdam.

Chef Masaharu Morimoto, the brand's Global Fresh Fish Ambassador, will showcase his 12-passenger extra charge venue on Rotterdam,

Koningsdam, Nieuw Statendam and Eurodam from now through to June.

Passengers can taste a selection of sushi, sashimi, rolls and dishes such as tempura, poke bowls and the Angry Lobster Pad Thai. hollandamerica.com

Celestyal is refreshing its winter 2025-26 Persian Gulf itineraries with extra stops in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha plus Ras Al Khaimah as a new port of call. Prices start at £279 per person for a three-night voyage, cruise-only. celestyal.com

Drew Barrymore will be the Godmother of MSC's new US flagship MSC World America.

The Hollywood star will be smashing the bubbly on the bow and naming the ship on April 9 in Miami, alongside British actor Orlando Bloom.

After the ceremony, the 6,762-passenger World America will sail a celebratory three-night inaugural voyage to Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve, the line's private island in The Bahamas. msccruises.co.uk

BIG DEAL

New York City from £337pp: the four-star New York Hilton Midtown hotel on 6th Avenue is walkable to Central Park and features Herb N' Kitchen where dishes are made with honey from the hotel's rooftop hives, plus Lobby Lounge and Bridges Bar. hilton.com

DMIST

TRAVEL

Access all

FOR TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES
BY VICKY LISSAMAN

TUI is opening hotel sensory rooms to help neurodivergent guests and their families.

Launching at TUI BLUE Nausicaa Beach in Larnaca, Cyprus, on April 15, and TUI BLUE Aura, Ibiza, on May 1, the spaces have been specially designed to provide calming, low-stimulation environments for guests who may feel overwhelmed.

They will feature soft lighting, sensory equipment or quiet zones to encourage relaxation, plus staff will have enhanced neurodiversity



awareness training. Louise Bates, managing director and hotel concepts at TUI, said: "TUI is committed to making holidays accessible for all. Overstimulating environments can be challenging, so we are taking steps to make our hotels more inclusive."

"These new sensory rooms will provide a calm and comfortable space, helping families enjoy a truly relaxing holiday." tui.co.uk

Buy of the week

BY NIGEL THOMPSON

It may still be 'all four seasons in a day' time but sandals weather is close. These women's contoured fit open-toe, machine washable ones have an adjustable in-step strap, foam cushioning and shock-absorbing insole. They have Aquagrip lug pattern rubber to avoid slips and anti-odours technology and contain recycled PET plastic. In Black/Star White, Martini Olive/Granite Green, Plum Perfect/Dubarry, KEEN Women's Leiki OT sandals, £90, keenfootwear.co.uk



CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

island paradise bathed in sunshine.

You're never far from anything on Guernsey, which measures just 24 sq mi, and it was lovely to be checking into my hotel, the St Pierre Park Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort, just three miles north of the airport, so soon after arriving on the island.

Guernsey's largest hotel and set within 35 acres of gardens, this luxury abode has 131 bedrooms, an award-winning spa, gym facilities and nine-hole golf course.

The friendly team makes an effort to get to know their guests and show pride in the island, suggesting their favourite places to visit throughout my stay.

My room, a deluxe, with sweeping garden and lake views, boasts a large balcony, a flatscreen TV, a hospitality tray, and a cashmere mattress, so I enjoyed some very restful nights.

Beneath the twinkle of the chandeliers in the hotel's restaurant that night, I enjoyed a beautiful Guernsey Blue Bottle gin and nori-cured salmon, and there's a mouthwatering selection of main courses, including pan-fried cod loin with Guernsey lobster risotto.

The dining room is named after Victor Hugo, who wrote Les Misérables and The Hunchback of Notre Dame, and lived in Hauteville House, overlooking the capital St Peter Port with his family during his 15-year exile from 1856.

To complete the luxury experience, during my stay I visit the hotel's outdoor Jacuzzi near the tennis court and take a relaxing swim in the indoor pool.

The hotel's luxury spa includes a dual-aspect volcanic stone sauna, a marble steam room, as well as five treatment rooms.

Handsome St Peter Port is just a mile away and, with cobbled streets, colourful bunting, floral displays and historic buildings, it's a charming place for a stroll. A tax-free island, it's also an ideal place to shop at a discount.

And if you choose to pay in cash, you could find yourself with a Guernsey pound note in your change, a souvenir in itself. But if you really want to get to know the history of the island, go with someone who knows...

Gold-accredited Guernsey tour guide Gill Girard is an excellent host and storyteller. Meeting at the Victorian Candie Gardens, Gill has signed autographs from The Beatles with her from over 60 years ago. Her father was



ALL RISE Morning in the capital



HISTORIC Tower honours Queen Victoria's royal visit



the promoter who arranged for the band to perform on the island before they skyrocketed to fame and there is now a mural at the gardens to commemorate their 1963 performance. The restored 19th-century pleasure gardens also house some of the oldest greenhouses in the UK and offer

Mirror TRAVEL

Just Go HOLIDAYS

PIRELLI

4 DAYS
SELF-DRIVE
FROM ONLY
£899
PER PERSON

BRITISH F1 GRAND PRIX SPECTACULAR

Departs 4th July 2025

Be there for every second of the action at the Formula 1 British Grand Prix at Silverstone, the Home of British Motorsport! The British Grand Prix 2025 will be a must for Britain's F1 fans, see Lewis Hamilton in the red Ferrari for the first time in the UK, will Lando Norris maintain his winning streak in the McLaren or will George Russell push it to the limit?

Saturday starts with Qualifying as the drivers reach tremendous speeds when they battle it out for that ever-important Pole Position. We're back again on Sunday to enjoy all the buzz and excitement, watching in anticipation as the lights go out and the ultimate race begins. What are you waiting for? Get yourself to Pole Position and book your British F1 Grand Prix Spectacular break, today!

YOUR BREAK INCLUDES

- 3 nights at the 4 star Leonardo Hotel, Hinckley Island with breakfast plus one dinner
- 3-day weekend admission ticket to the F1 British Grand Prix on Friday, Saturday and Sunday (General Admission ticket)
- Coach transfers to and from the hotel to Silverstone on the Saturday & Sunday

For some of the best sightlines around the circuit, upgrade to Luffield Grandstand available £250pp

Single supplement £150

Also available by coach - 2 days from £649^{pp}
Includes: Return coach travel | Overnight 3 or 4* hotel accommodation with breakfast | 2 day general admission ticket | Coach transfers to and from Silverstone
Please call or go online for details



justgoolidays.com/mirror

03332 342 465 Quote MIRROR

Operated by Just Go Holidays Ltd. Self-drive breaks are subject to Just Go Holidays Ltd terms and conditions. Your booking is protected by Bonded Coach Holidays (BCH) and the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT); this is a government approved consumer protection scheme. Prices are per person, based on two people sharing a room & based on bookings made up to 7 days after departure packages, else standard rate apply. Return coach travel from a network of pickup points throughout England & Wales, a small number incur a supplement. Please see website or call for further details.



GLORIOUS Sunny view over the city



XXX 151 4 2025

email traveldes@reachplc.com
 X @MirrorTravel @TravelEdNigel
 @LissamanVicky

THIS PORTING LIFE



Travel test

BY NIGEL THOMPSON

WHAT: Eurostar high-speed train in Premier class.
WHERE: London St Pancras International to Lille Europe, from £209 return. eurostar.com.
EXPERIENCE: A "turn left" railway experience starts in the same way as an airline with the delight of a priority check-in lane, fast-track security and access to a swish lounge for a tea or coffee, drinks, snacks and newspapers and magazines to pick up.

On board the state-of-the-art e320 train - which is almost a quarter of a mile long and capable of 199mph/320kmh, hence the name - the reclining Premier seats are firm but comfortable and pleasingly spacious for relaxing or working.

Passengers can choose from reclining solo seats, facing pairs (a great option for couples), twins and fours, all with tables.

You get a power point at each seat, but half are continental and half UK (check what your seat has on the online train plan), and also a USB socket. I connected easily to the wi-fi on my phone.

A 9.01am departure meant a breakfast menu served at your seat and, having already had a pain au chocolate and ginger and turmeric shot in the lounge, I stuck with the lighter selection of Bircher muesli with quince, berry smoothie, apple and pear plate, croissant and cup of tea. Coffee and tea was regularly offered by the excellent, friendly crew, along with sparkling or still water.

Cloud-laden Kent flew by and in the blink of an eye, the train emerged from the Channel Tunnel into welcome French winter sun and raced to Lille.

Just one hour and 23 minutes - exactly on time - after leaving London, the many charms of the historic capital of the Hauts-de-France region awaited.

QUIBBLES: None.
VERDICT: High-speed train travel at its very best. **10/10**

BIG DEAL

Dorset from £445: save 15% on a three-night self-catering stay at Grade II listed 200-year-old thatched Primrose Cottage (sleeps two) in Moreton, near Dorchester. Arrival on March 27. Wood-burning stove, secluded patio area. dorsthideaways.co.uk



LUXURIOUS
 St Pierre Park Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort



TRANQUIL
 Victorian Candie Gardens

DELIGHT
 You'll love handsome St Peter Port

The tour group then heads into the concrete maze, which is built under a low hill in the heart of the Guernsey countryside, and we learn about wartime life on the island and the impact it had on a generation. The tunnels also played backdrop to 1973 drama *Blockhouse*, starring Peter Sellers and Charles Aznavour.

If you're looking for a place for dinner, there are plenty of hotels on the island which have wonderful restaurants to sample.

During my stay, I visited the Fermain Valley Hotel, sister to St Pierre Park, which has 49 bedrooms - including four treehouse suites where guests can be immersed in nature, as well as a 25-seat cinema and an escape room.

Here I sample the delights of one of their three restaurants, the Buho Mexican restaurant, vibrant in its decor, music and classic dishes. I recommend a margarita and the pork burrito, finishing off with churros and chocolate dip for dessert.

Before heading to the airport, I make one last stop at what becomes my favourite place in Guernsey.

“Decorated in broken china, I've never seen anything quite like the Little Chapel”

spectacular views across St Peter Port harbour and Guernsey's sister islands. From there, Gill leads our group on a tour of St Peter Port city and Castle Cornet, an 800-year-old castle standing at the mouth of the harbour.

At the royal fortress, visitors can gen up on hundreds of years of history in its museums and stroll around its pristine period gardens. There are daily reenactments of stories from Guernsey's past by the History In Action Company and, for kids, the chance to take on the role of a king, princess or a knight - with free costume hire.

Also in the summer months, it hosts concert nights and BBQs. Another standout attraction for a history fan like me is the Victoria Tower, a monument erected after Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's visit to the island in 1846.

Offering panoramic views of

Guernsey, the narrow staircases lead up to an unforgettable photo opportunity. But what surprises me most was that, on entering, visitors themselves are entrusted with the key and responsibility to open, lock up and return it to the Guernsey Museum in Candie Gardens.

It's a novelty I've never experienced visiting any other landmark.

The second part of my Guernsey tour takes me to the German Underground Hospital and Ammunition Store, the largest structural reminder of the Second World War occupation existing in the Channel Islands.

It's almost invisible from the surface, except for the entrances, and while it's cold and dark down there, don't let that put you off.