





Government House, a five-star hotel which is a great base for a stay on the island. The historic building, set in the heart of St Peter Port, is just a five-minute walk from the quay. Steeped in history, it was once the official governor's residence for the island and the bailiwick, but was occupied by Germany and became the general staff headquarters during World War II.

Today, the hotel offers individually designed rooms filled with striking artworks, and manicured gardens with views across St Peter Port and beyond. (Classic Double Rooms for £281 per night, based on two adults staying in summer 2025: [theoghhotel.com](http://theoghhotel.com).)

Food lovers should book a table at the new Vraic, set to open this summer and run by renowned chef Nathan Davies. This 25-seat restaurant, named after the local word for seaweed, will focus on seasonal, locally sourced produce and seafood, cooked over an open flame using a custom-built grill.

**W**hether it's the raw beauty of Sark, the gentle charm of Guernsey, or the historic intrigue of Alderney, the Channel Islands promise an idyllic break less than an hour's flight from Gatwick. Closer to France than the UK, each island has its own unique identity and culture, offering an ideal location for an island-hopping adventure.

Although usually referred to as the Channel Islands, this group of islands in the English Channel is actually split into two separate states – neither being part of the UK nor the EU, but both British Crown Dependencies. The Bailiwick of Guernsey includes Guernsey, Alderney, Sark and Herm, while Jersey stands alone. Each bailiwick has its own parliament, currency and laws, giving each island a distinctive character. Even the smallest islands retain a sense of independence: both Sark and Alderney have their own parliaments, preserving traditions that stretch back centuries.

#### ARRIVING IN GUERNSEY

Guernsey's blend of French and British culture is evident the moment you arrive. French place names pepper the road signs, and the scent of fresh croissants drifts from cafés. The island's narrow country lanes are lined with hedgerows where locals sell homegrown veg on honesty boxes.

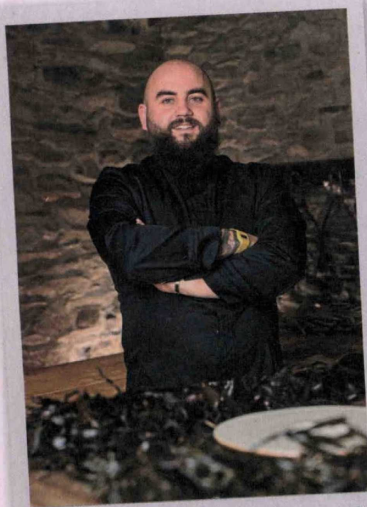
St Peter Port, Guernsey's bustling capital, is a delight to explore. Wander its cobbled streets and browse independent shops, or head down to the marina for waterside dining. Nearby you will find The Old











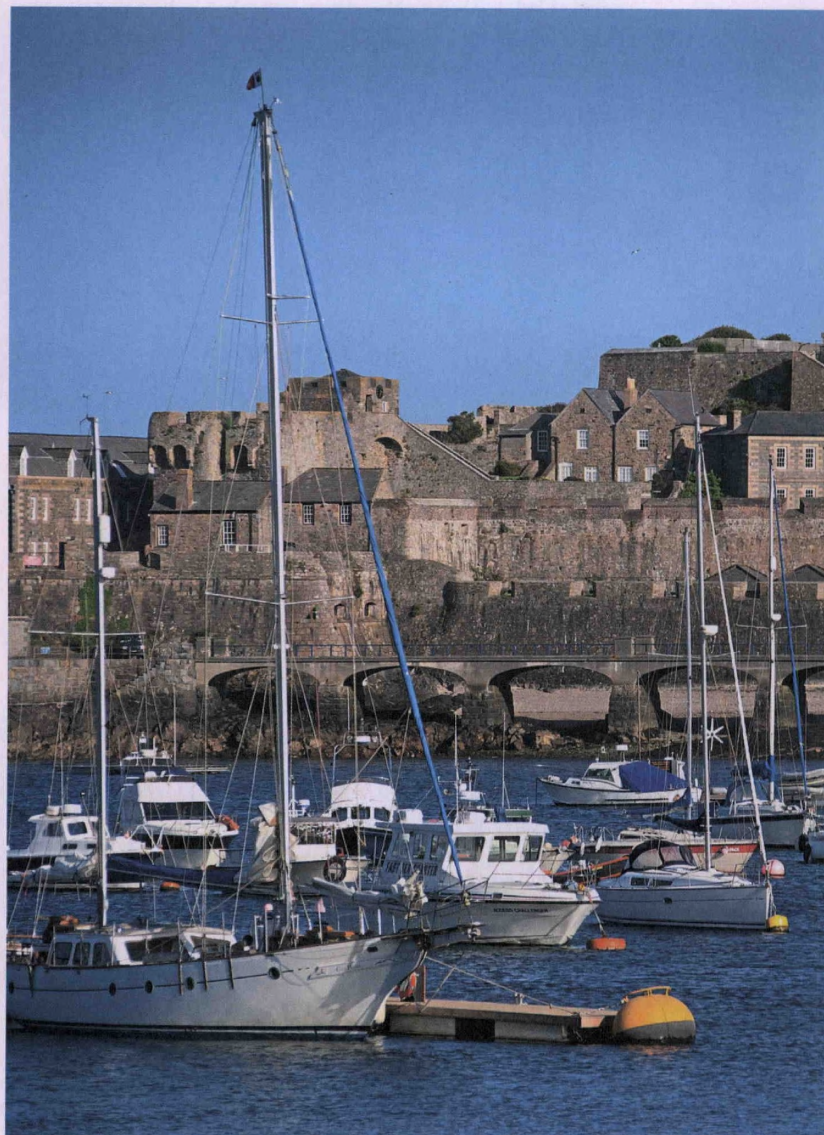
Davies (above), known for earning a Michelin star at SY23 in Aberystwyth and his previous work at Ynshir, Wales, brings his signature fire-led cooking to Guernsey for the first time. The restaurant's design will reflect the island's coastal location, and guests can dine on the terrace, offering views of the northern shoreline (visit [vraic.gg](http://vraic.gg)).

### STAYING ON SARK

One of the best ways to soak up the charm of the Channel Islands is to hop on a ferry from Guernsey and spend a few nights on Sark. With no cars to spoil the tranquillity, the island feels like a step back in time. When you arrive at the harbour, a tractor-pulled trailer meets the ferry and carries you up the steep hill to the village. Here, horse-drawn carriages wait to whisk you away to your hotel, or to Little Sark, via the island's most striking landmark: La Coupée. This narrow, 3-metre-wide causeway towers 80 metres above the sea, offering heart-stopping views down to the waves crashing below.

The ferry service from Guernsey to Sark is regular throughout the year, but spring to autumn is the best time for guaranteed crossings. With just 500 residents, the island feels a world away from modern life.

Sark is Europe's first Dark Sky Island thanks to its lack of streetlights. The island even has its own little observatory and visitors can enjoy guided night tours, where local experts point out constellations and share stories of the skies.

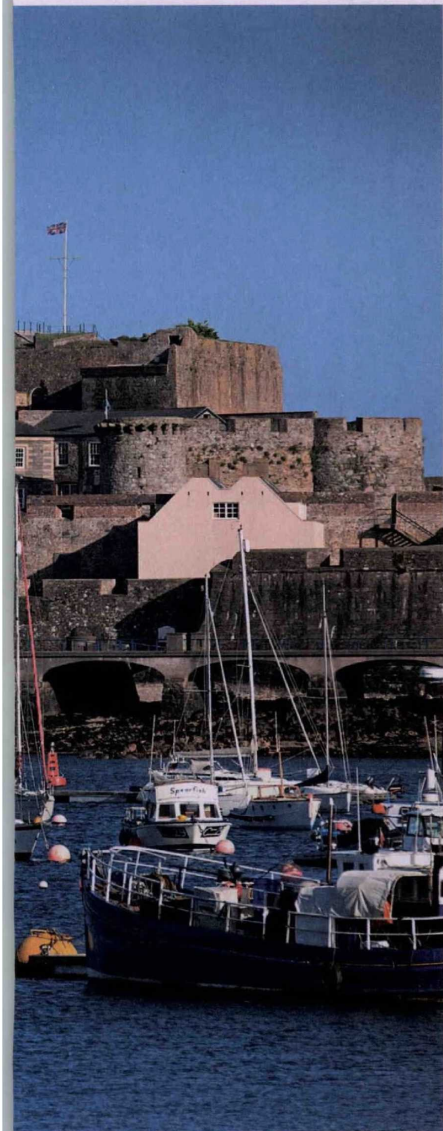


Stocks Hotel, set in the heart of the island, offers 23 beautiful rooms, a heated outdoor pool, and excellent local cuisine. The hotel can help arrange everything from bike hire and yoga to kayaking and coasteering. Don't miss a trip to La Seigneurie Gardens, an extraordinary garden full of colour and history. (Stocks Hotel offers Superior Double or Twin Rooms for £573.40 for two nights, based on two adults staying during summer 2025. Stocks Hotel requires a minimum stay of two nights: [stockshotel.com](http://stockshotel.com).)





Tra





### EXPLORING ALDERNEY

Alderney is Guernsey's second-largest island, yet it feels like a different world. It's a short flight from Guernsey (just 20 minutes) or a boat ride away.

Alderney's coastline bristles with historic fortifications, from Victorian forts perched on rocky outcrops to WWII bunkers built during the German occupation. As well as exploring the island's unique history, nature lovers will find plenty to marvel at. Puffins nest along the cliffs, while bottlenose dolphins and seals can be spotted in the waters.

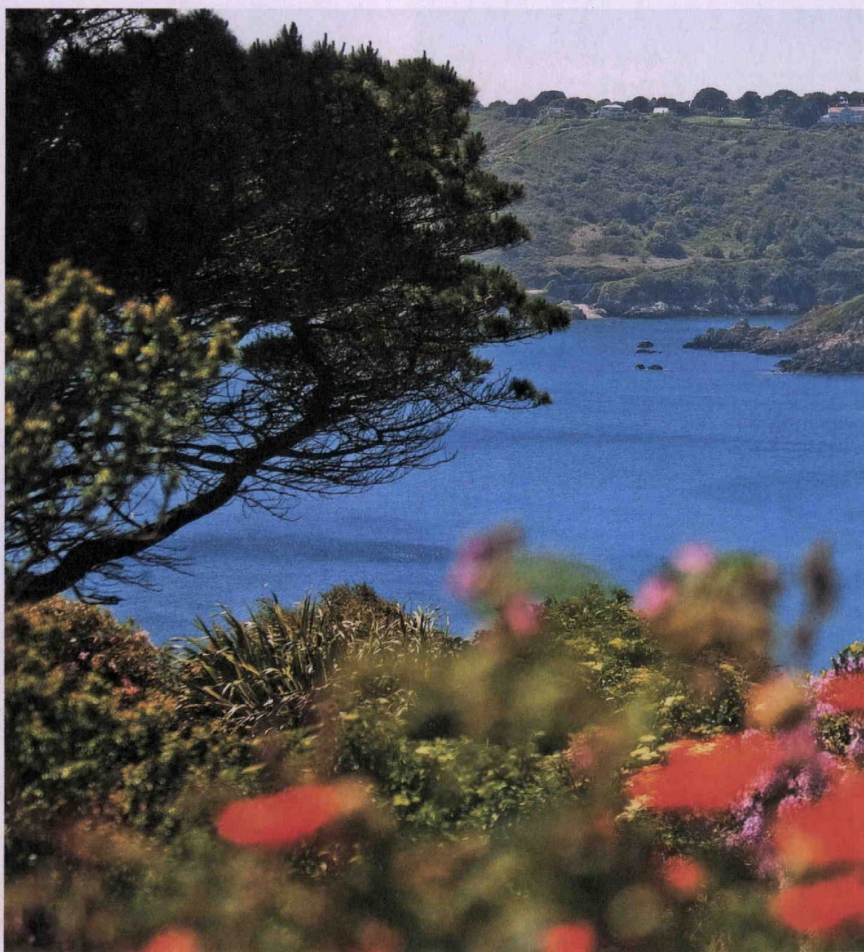
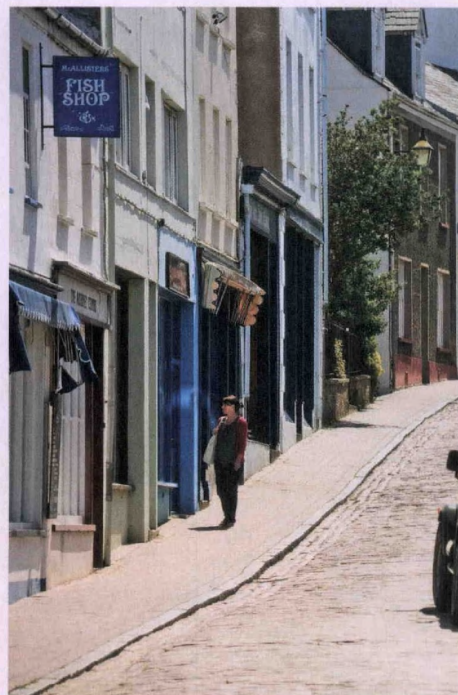
With more than 300 bird species recorded, Alderney has become a premier destination for birdwatching. From rugged cliffs and sandy shores to heathlands and woodlands, the island's diverse habitats attract a wealth of both resident and migratory birds throughout the year.

Puffins are one of the most loved birds and a big draw for nature-loving visitors. Recent data from the Alderney Wildlife Trust shows that the number of puffin nests has tripled since the first population surveys began in 2005 – a testament to the island's successful conservation efforts.

But it's not just seabirds that draw keen-eyed visitors. Birds of prey such as harriers, buzzards, ospreys, and even the occasional eagle are a common sight in the island's skies.

Along the shallow beaches and inland ponds, waders like stints, curlews, plovers, coots, and oystercatchers provide endless fascination for birdwatchers. The Alderney Wildlife Trust runs guided walks and boat trips to see the island's abundant wildlife, from 1,000 species of wildflowers to a gannet colony of 9,000 birds.

One of my favourite places to stay is Braye Beach Hotel. Offering stunning sea views, the hotel sits on the edge of the beach's gorgeous white sands, providing incredible views out to sea. Braye Beach Brasserie and their Vaults restaurant are two excellent places to eat. With 27 rooms to choose from, book one with a balcony and sea views. (Braye Beach Hotel offers a Classic Double Room for £200 per night for two adults, based on summer 2025 pricing: [handpickedhotels.co.uk/brayebeach](https://handpickedhotels.co.uk/brayebeach).)







## Getting there and around

Travel between the islands is easy, with regular ferry services and flights. Condor Ferries operates links from the UK and Jersey to Guernsey, with a year-round passenger and car ferry service from Poole or Portsmouth to St Peter Port ([condorferries.co.uk](http://condorferries.co.uk)). Manche Iles Express ([manche-iles.com](http://manche-iles.com)) connects Guernsey to Sark. Flights with Aurigny take you from Guernsey to Alderney in just 20 minutes. On the islands, hire bikes, walk, or hop on local transport to get around. Aurigny, Guernsey's airline, offers flights from London Gatwick, London City, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Exeter, Leeds Bradford, Manchester and Southampton. Flights start from £59.99 per person ([aurigny.com](http://aurigny.com)).

WORDS: ALEX FISHER. IMAGES: VISIT GUERNSEY.