

FAMILY

DROP IN THE OCEAN

Keen to make a splash on your next family break? Head to Gwithian Towans and see how swell the Cornish surf can be any time of year

**Where to go**

Cornwall is rightly known as one of the country's top surfing destinations, thanks to its great swell and favourable wind conditions. It's also home to one of Europe's biggest pro-surf competitions, Boardmasters Festival, which has been running under various guises for more than a decade. Families looking to test their mettle on the waves should head to the village of Gwithian, where you'll find Gwithian Towans beach. There are three miles of vast yellow sands at low tide, as well as grass-tufted dunes and rock pools to discover. Surfers come for the waves of various sizes, which also make it a magnet for bodyboarders, kayakers and windsurfers, too. visitcornwall.com

Getting started

A three-hour surf lesson for beginners can be booked from Sunset Surf Cafe, a five-minute walk from the beach. Beginning with a short on-land lesson with one of the experts, families are taken through the various safety points, including knowing your flags and ensuring the board you're using is leashed to your ankle. Surfing is easy in theory: hands on either side of your board, paddle away from the wave, jump onto your knees and then pop up and twist into the surf position, standing up. But in practice, it can be a little trickier, although teens tend to pick it up more quickly than adults. sunset-surf.com

Know your flags

Staying safe is paramount at sea, and so the training session rightly spends time going through the key safety procedures. Gwithian Towans has full lifeguard cover in the summer and during October half term but for the winter, you need to rely on the flags. Some important signs to remember include the double red flags, which means the beach closed to the public; a single red flag, indicating high surf or fast currents; and the green flag, which flies during calm conditions. Surfers and bodyboarders should stick between the black-and-white chequered flags and swimmers between the red-and-yellow flags. surfingengland.org

Where to stay

Opened in summer 2021, Three Mile Beach features a collection of 15 three- and four-bedroom, self-catering beach houses. It's perfect for families as it's less than five minutes' walk from Gwithian Towans and just a stone's throw from Sunset Surf Cafe. Each of the houses comes with well-equipped kitchens, comfy sofas and king-size beds. Garden-cum-decking areas feature a hammock, sauna, jacuzzi and barbecue, too, and private chef hire is available for special occasions. Wetsuits can be pre-ordered and surf lessons booked through Sunset Surf Cafe. From £2,400 per week in low season for a three-bedroom house. threemilebeach.co.uk **MARIA PIERI**

FROM LEFT: Interior of Three Mile Beach houses; surfing lessons on Three Mile Beach