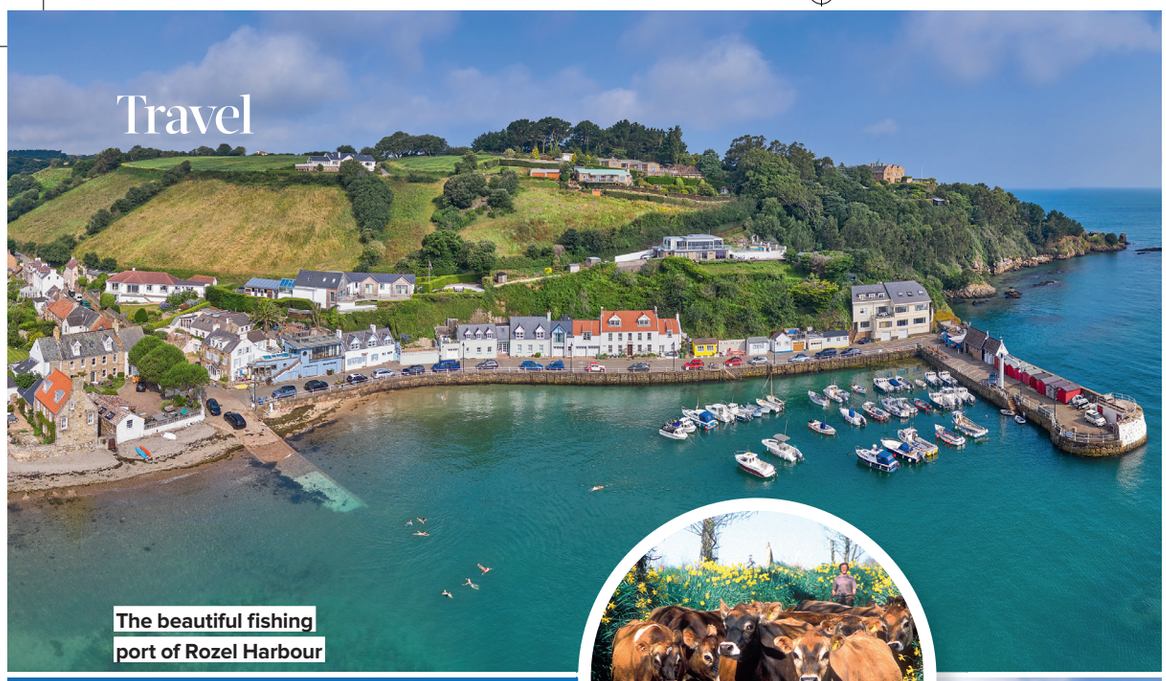
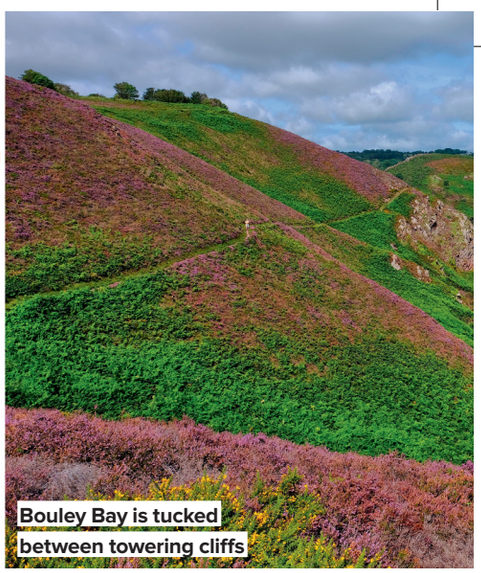


The beautiful fishing port of Rozel Harbour



Bouley Bay is tucked between towering cliffs



Climb down to Portelet Bay



Explore La Houghe Bie

JERSEY *shores*

Beautiful beaches and a mash-up of British and French culture make this island a delightful destination

A flight to Jersey is as easy as it gets. At 8.30am, I'm idling in traffic on London's M25; by 1pm, I'm savouring a bowl of mussels in a beachside cafe, gazing across a huge sweep of a sun-bleached bay where the Atlantic waves roll against an old defensive tower. An hour's flight (no passport needed) and a 20-minute drive from the airport was all it took to arrive at this blissful spot. Yet I could have picked any of the island's 24 beaches – none are very far on this pint-sized rock floating off the Normandy coast.

Lush landscape

Although small (8km by 14.5km), there's plenty here to make a memorable break. The coastline is as dramatic and inviting as anywhere in the Med, with rocky coves and sherbet-coloured beaches. Meanwhile, the countryside flips between tangled woodland and lush fields grazed by doe-eyed cows. A gentle microclimate, fertile soil and rich marine life results in scrumptious produce too (hello, Jersey ice cream). A network of footpaths loops around the island and immerses you in the landscape. Tackle the cliff-top section from Bouley Bay to Rozel Harbour and you'll spy the smaller Channel islands – Sark, Guernsey and Alderney – winking on the horizon. At Rozel, swing by the Hungry Man kiosk to refuel on crab sandwiches or a bacon bap.

Time travel

People have lived on the island for thousands of years, leaving layers of history. Visit La Hougue Bie (jerseyheritage.org) to see a neolithic burial chamber that's crowned with a medieval chapel. Shuffle sideways through a passageway that was built before the Pyramids, and stand up in a chamber precisely aligned to allow the sun's rays to fill the space at dawn. Outside, there's a reconstruction of a neolithic longhouse that rubs shoulders with an old German bunker, now a memorial to the slave labourers used by the Nazis



WORDS: CLAIRE MORLEY PHOTOS: JERSEY TOURISM, ALAMY, GETTY

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during the island's occupation during World War Two.

Coastal defences

With the near-constant threat of invasion, Jersey's coastline bristles with castles and forts, though several now enjoy a peaceful retirement as holiday rentals. Mont Orgueil and Elizabeth Castle are impressive bastions that shaped the island's fortunes. Visit one or both and take advantage of the free tours led by passionate volunteers. Explore a more recent history at Jersey War Tunnels, which tells the story of life under Nazi occupation from the perspective of those who lived through it. It's fascinating and sobering, and asks the question – what would you do in similar circumstances? Hide a slave labourer and risk imprisonment? Chat with a German soldier who's missing his family? Or try to escape in a fragile rowing boat?

Rockpool rambles

One of the unique aspects of Jersey is its huge tidal range (one of the world's largest). This means that when the tide retreats, there are miles of seabed to explore. Pull on some wellie boots and join Derek from Jersey Walk Adventures (jerseywalkadventures.co.uk) for a rockpool ramble in Royal Grouville Bay. Turning over lumps of barnacle-speckled granite, Derek points out tiny marine wonders, such as crimson beadlet anemones and the sea hare, a toffee-coloured, shape-shifting blob with long tentacles. Nibble on sea lettuce, which can be dried to make a condiment. Then decamp to nearby gastropub The Seymour (liberationgroup.com/the-seymour) and guzzle some amazingly fresh oysters, a stone's throw from the waters from where they were plucked.

Fresh menus

Surrounded by sparkling aqua seas, this is the place to indulge in briny treats. In St Catherine's Bay, Driftwood cafe (facebook.com/driftwoodcafe1) is run by fishing folk that are out on the boat early morning and serving customers by lunchtime. Savour dishes such as scallop risotto, Thai seafood soup and lobster roll. Another beach-side gem is Le Braye (lebraye.com), which offers crowd-pleasers such as crab linguine, Jersey beef burgers and a next-level Eton mess sundae. Check its instagram page for live music on summer nights. If traditional pub grub floats your boat, pop in to the 16th-century Portelet Inn (randalls-jersey.co.uk/the-portelet-inn), which is charming and has amazing views over postcard-pretty Portelet Bay.

WORDS: CHRIS MORLEY. PHOTOS: JERSEY TOURISM, ALAMY, GETTY. DETAILS CORRECT AT TIME OF WRITING



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Holiday Departure Months

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

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