

While most people prefer to visit the seaside during the summer season, the coast is just as tranquil and idyllic during the slower, chillier winter months.

If you fancy a quick getaway before Christmas or the New Year, have you considered peaceful Dunwich?

This village was once a thriving medieval port in centuries gone by, and today is a relaxing spot home to fascinating ruins, some great places to eat, and walking trails and natural beauty spots aplenty.

#### Where to stay in Dunwich The Ship at Dunwich

Close to miles of Dunwich coastline and heath, this hotel provides the perfect seaside getaway - with families, couples and furry friends alike all welcome.

The hotel - which is less than a five-minute walk from the beach - boasts chic, nautical décor throughout its bar and restaurant, peppered with cottagecore touches, making it the ultimate cosy, coastal retreat. It is comprised of 16 bright and characterful bedrooms, many with spectacular views over the marsh and big blue skies, and all designed to be pooch-friendly.

Food takes centre stage at The Ship, thanks to a menu bursting with local produce, from cured duck breast with pickled daikon and kohlrabi, to fresh gilthead seabream with charred greens and anchovy aioli.

The hotel even offers a dedicated dog menu for four-legged friends to tuck in to after a day of splashing and scampering along the beach, featuring Denzel's Soft Baked Chews, cooked sausages and pig's ears, to be washed down with washed down with Bottom Sniffer beer and Posh Pooch rosé wine (both 0% alcohol, of course).

As well as being the base for a relaxing getaway, The Ship at Dunwich is also an ideal place from which to explore the



plentiful attractions that Suffolk has to offer and its Heritage coast, including the likes of nearby Aldeburgh, Saxmundham, and Southwold.

The Ship provides package stays including Festive and Sandy Paws stays, Romantic Stay, Festive Stays and New Year's Eve Stays. A Festive Stay at The Ship includes a festive cocktail or mulled cider to start your stay, a stocking of treats and gifts, dinner for two and a restful night's sleep in one of the bedrooms. Prices start from £204.

#### What to do in Dunwich Take a stroll around Dunwich Heath

You simply can't visit Dunwich without spending a few hours wandering around Dunwich Heath - weather permitting, of course! Almost other-worldly, this coastal lowland heath is under the care of the National Trust and is home to a variety of rare and diverse flora and fauna - making it a must-do for nature lovers.

The heath itself is open from dawn until dusk, and visitors can be sure to catch a glimpse of species such as red deer, muntjacs, Dartford warblers, nightjars, and many more. And while the vast expanses of heather and gorse aren't as colourful during the current time of year, it's certainly still worth taking a stroll through the pathways and getting back to nature this winter.

The car park is open between 9am and 4pm, and dogs are free to be off the lead provided they are kept under control and stick to the paths to prevent disturbance to wildlife.

**Visit RSPB Minsmere:** Just a few miles south of Dunwich is RSPB Minsmere, another haven for nature lovers. Home to some of the country's rarest wildlife - even during the winter months - visitors are bound to catch sight of large flocks of ducks on the grazing marshes. Be sure to keep your eyes peeled for an abundance of birds of prey species such as marsh and hen harriers, peregrines, and barn owl.

# Let's staycation in... Dunwich

Peaceful, surrounded by nature and close to fantastic food.  
Danielle Lett shares why this part of Suffolk is ideal for a tranquil winter break



short-eared owls. But don't put your binoculars away just yet - as you might just spot an otter or few on Island mere or the reedbed pools.

Throughout the year, there are a number of events at the nature reserve, including the 'Robin Robin' adventure trail, and birdwatching for beginners throughout various dates in December. Or why not hop on a 4x4 safari which will allow you to see hidden parts of Minsmere from the comfort of a vehicle? Alternatively, volunteer guides can be booked for half-day tailored guided walks.

**Explore the ruins:** During the Anglo-Saxon era, Dunwich was actually the capital of the Kingdom of the East Angles - so unsurprisingly this seaside town is rich in history. Due to ongoing coastal erosion of the years, many of the settlement's 13th century now belong to the sea - but a number can still be seen today. The remains of Greyfriars, a Franciscan priory, and the Leper Hospital of St James are still visible, and Dunwich Museum is a great place to visit if you want to find out more about the village's ancient past.

**Take part in a baking class:** Just

west of Dunwich is The Two Magpies Bake School - the ideal place to experience an artisan baking masterclass first-hand. Adjacent to its popular bakery, the bake school offers a number of courses suitable for beginners, or those more experienced who wish to add to their repertoire. Classes available include the pizza masterclass, an introduction to sourdough, European and Scandinavian baking, a variety of cake decorating courses, macarons and meringues, and seasonal suppers.

The bakery itself is also a great spot to grab a bite to eat, serving freshly-baked sourdough bread, pastries, savouries, sweet treats and coffee. It also serves its beloved sourdough pizza every Friday from 4.30pm.

**Browse some antiques:** Pop over to Yoxford and make a day of pottering around Yoxford Antiques Centre and Gardens. Home to over 70 dealers, they come together to offer a fine selection of antique and vintage treasures - ranging from furniture, clocks, textiles, soft furnishings, jewellery, books, glassware and other assorted memorabilia. There is also a section dedicated to garden and

ABOVE:  
Dunwich ruins

INSET LEFT:  
Fresh food is always  
on the menu at The  
Ship

LEFT:  
Dogs are welcome  
at The Ship

Pictures:  
ROBERT MCKENNA/  
EMMA CABIELLES  
PHOTOGRAPHY





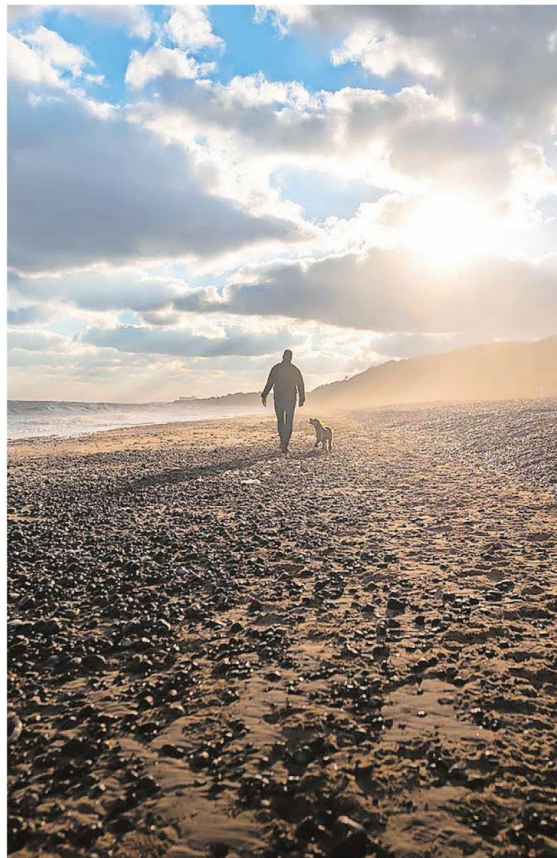
architectural ornaments.

**Unwind at the spa:** Kick back and relax this season at Dunwich's very own Potton Hall Spa - you've earned it! This luxury facility offers a number of treatments that are ideal to help you feel rejuvenated on your Suffolk staycation. Why not opt for an Elemis massage, an anti-ageing facial, or spend some time in the flotation centre? Once you're done, enjoy more me-time by having lunch or afternoon tea in The Yurt as you continue to watch your worries melt away.

**Get sporty at High Lodge:** If you're looking to spend your staycation doing something a bit more adventurous, then be sure to take a trip to Darsham's High Lodge. Activities on offer include clay shooting, air rifle shootings, archery, and fishing.

#### Where to eat in Dunwich

**Westleton Crown:** If you fancy stretching your legs, why not venture out and make your way to The Westleton Crown pub for a spot of lunch? From Dunwich, it's only an hour or so walk through Westleton Heath Nature Reserve, and once you arrive, you'll be met with a cosy pub nestled on the edge of the village's green.



Perfectly placed for a pint or a warming supper, its menu is carefully curated by head chef Kieran Drinkwater and his team, who pride themselves on their varied and imaginative menus using local and responsibly grown produce.

**The Eels Foot Inn:** Over in neighbouring Leiston, this pub's ever-changing menu reflects the seasons and trends, but visitors can guarantee a whole host of regular pub classics, including its Eels Foot Special Rarebit, Adnams-battered cod, scampi and chips, paninis, and a selection of homemade soups. For something a bit sweeter, traditional bread and butter pudding is always on offer, too. To whet your whistle, the pub also serves a variety of Adnams ales and bitters on tap all year round. Why not add a shot of Adnams Triple Grain to your coffee on a cold winter's day?

#### Places to visit near Dunwich

**Southwold:** Just a 20-minute drive up the road, head to Southwold if you're looking for the typical British seaside experience. There's plenty of places to eat including fish and chip shops, a number of independent shops to peruse, and of course the pier which is open all-year round. Be sure to check out the Under The Pier Show - an array of interactive and eccentric inventions sprung from the genius brain of Tim Hunkin.

**Saxmundham:** Head southeast and make your way towards Saxmundham, an historic market town that oozes Suffolk charm. Spots worth checking out include Saxmundham Escape Room, and The Walled Garden - a nursery and garden with a history that goes all the way back to the 1800s.



**TOP LEFT:**  
A walk on the beach  
in Dunwich

Picture: EMMA  
CABIELLES  
PHOTOGRAPHY

**TOP RIGHT:**  
One of the bird hides  
at RSPB Minsmere

Picture: HEATHER  
TANNER

**MIDDLE RIGHT:**  
The Eels Foot Inn

Picture: SARAH LUCY  
BROWN

**BOTTOM RIGHT:**  
Inside The Ship at  
Dunwich

Picture: EMMA  
CABIELLES  
PHOTOGRAPHY

