

# Canine Capers on the Coast

## Eleven of the best places to walk, eat, sleep and play with your dog on the Somerset and Exmoor Coast

*This is the fourth in our series that features more than fifty ways to enrich your life, or in this case that of your four-legged friend. Our guest author for this itinerary is Luna the Lurcher.*



Photo credit: Matt Elliott

I am a dog, not just any dog but a hound that has walked, loped and sniffed my way along the 697 miles of the South West Coast Path (yeap we got lost it's only supposed to be 630) plus the seventy or so miles of the King Charles III England Coast Path, from Brean to Porlock Weir. So not to be boastful but I am a bit of an expert. Carefully chosen by me here are some of my favourite things to do and award-winning dog friendly places to eat and sleep. There are loads more but for this itinerary I am focusing on the ones I have visited and would recommend to my four-legged friends.

### Six activities to get your tail wagging!

**Get Wet** - First up my absolute favourite place Brean Sands, why you cry, well as I am pretty well behaved and come back (when there is nothing more interesting happening) I can roam around soft sand for seven miles, making new friends, with no human attached! If the tide is in I can paddle, but not being a fan of waves, albeit very tiny ones, personally I prefer a lie down in the big puddle that's usually under the lighthouse. A short stroll will take you to [Apex Bark Park](#) where there are a few obstacles to explore.

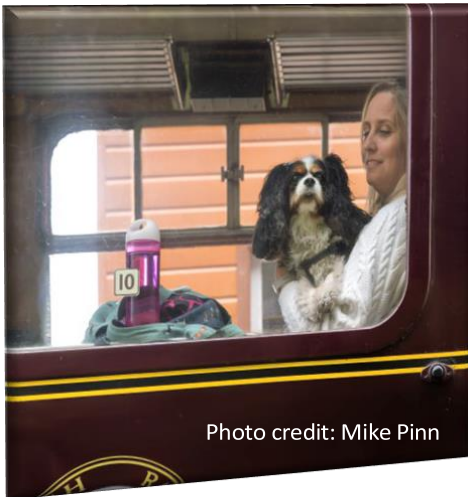
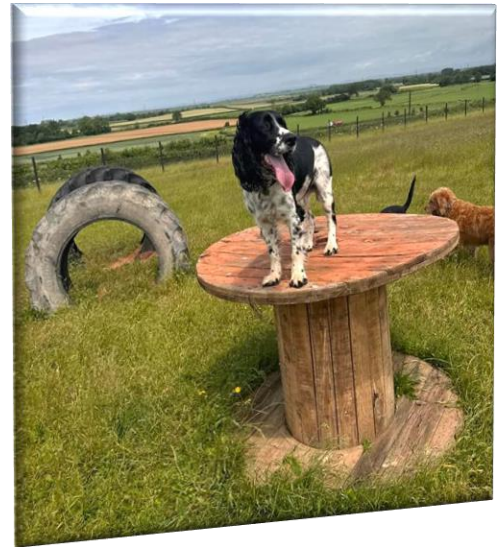


**eat:Festivals** - Now if you have a nose like mine, well this will blow your mind; food stalls as far as the eye can see all selling/serving delicious local produce. eat:Festivals take place all over the South West but we know Burnham-on-Sea the best. A dog concierge is on hand should you need a belly rub, advice or treat. Look out for Pooch Paws Points for a place to lie in the shade, have a drink and, if your human has forgotten the essentials, they have spare poo bags as well as printed maps of local dog walks. My tip, look out for the stands selling homemade doggy treats.



**Walk, Stile Free** - I am now of a certain age, thirteen and a half to be precise, and am unflatteringly told I am too heavy to be lifted, so the Coast Path from Brean Down to Porlock Weir is breeze as there are no stiles. It is also fairly flat with only a couple of slopes to scamper up as far as Minehead, then things change and you have the zig zag climb up North Hill. If you fancy a great few days walking, with loads to see, encourage your human to have a look at the route [here](#). There are so many interesting beaches to explore and unlike other places only a couple have restrictions on us, have a look [here](#).

**Private Playground** - If you want a bit of privacy and your very own peaceful spot (while your owner takes in the expansive views over the Quantocks and Brean Down) head to the enclosed Dog Walking Field at [Little Clayhill Farm](#). Here you can roam free, be taught new tricks without distractions, jump through tyres, or climb the platforms and ramps, if you are that way inclined. The main thing is that it is completely secure (six-foot fences and air gapped entrance) so if you are of a nervous disposition or just prefer your own company and peace this will be perfect. After your exertions head to the farm shop and feast on natural doggie treats and ice cream. Book your 30 minute or hour slot [here](#).



**Take The Train** - fed up with walking, want a rest, take the train to the seaside. The West Somerset heritage railway chugs gently for twenty miles from Bishops Lydeard through stunning Somerset countryside and along the coast to Minehead. I am reliably informed that your owner will have to pay £3 for dogs to travel no matter what journey, alternatively there is an annual doggie pass for £12. They can find out about the tickets [here](#). The only conditions are paws on the floor and understandably we are not allowed in the food carriages or any of the special dining trains. The best thing to do in my view is to get off at Blue Anchor, go to the 1930's [Driftwood Café](#), for a sea view, ice cream and your own water bowl,

walk to Minehead, curl up on the floor of the snug at [The Beach Hotel](#), being fed treats by the friendly staff, while your human gets lunch, then cross the road for a round of golf, or ball watching.

**Crazy Golf** - Opposite the Beach Hotel, right on Minehead sea front is the really dog friendly [Jubilee Café](#). They also run special dog friendly events each year supporting canine charities. Here you have a choice of butchers sausages, doggie cupcakes and ice cream - full of goodness, glucosamine for joints, vitamin C for the immune system and Omega 3 for a glossy coat. If you can contain your excitement about ball chasing you can escort your human around the cafes very own [10-hole crazy golf course](#)!



## Five award-winning dog friendly places to eat and sleep

**Gourmet canine cuisine at the Coast Cafe** - After enjoying the soft golden sands of Brean head to the Coast Café at Holiday Resort Unity. For those sizzling summer days there is air conditioning indoors and lots of shaded outdoor seating, a blanket if you prefer a softer lie down and water bowls at different heights. Dining, well a selection of doggie delights, starters, mains, desserts and treats. For me it was a tough choice I loved the smell of the roast dinner (chicken drumsticks, chew sausage, peas carrots on a bed of chicken and potato) but settled on the Paw Scratchies (pulled pork bites).



To drink well perhaps a Bark Brew Beer (chicken flavour) or a Paw Star Martini (chicken and passionfruit!). Your owner also has their own extensive menu and, as the café is fully licensed, could have a drink too. For the slightly more discerning dog the Brean Country Club welcomes canines in the lounge area and we can eat with our owners.



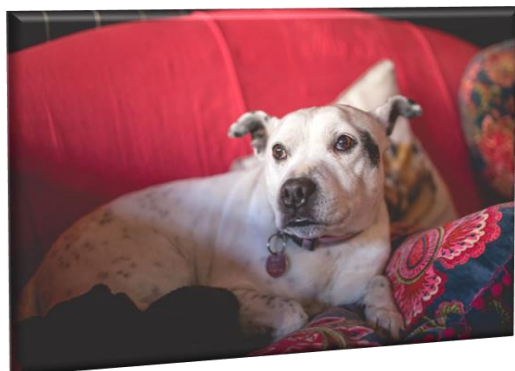
**Dog friendly dining with fabulous views** - A little way from the coast is the delicious Middlewick Café last year's Bristol Bath and Somerset Dog Friendly Business of the Year. Not only will they welcome you with open arms but they have a dog specials menu which currently features fish and chips and a Sunday roast. Sit in the spacious interior or on the terrace with stunning views over the Mendip Hills and Somerset Levels to the sea. From Middlewick take a scenic stroll through the fields and climb to the summit of Glastonbury Tor for spectacular countryside and coastal views.

**Hidden Gem - Colourful Canalside Café** - Tucked away in a tranquil spot beside the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal (there are a few ducks that can't be chased but can be fed) is the beautifully decorated Purplespoon café, perfect for breakfast, lunch and coffee and cake. I love their Pooches Menu, which uses only the highest quality ingredients and includes pasta surprise, ham omelette or butchers sausages followed by the obligatory ice cream and if you are lucky Hungry Pawz treats. With water bowls readily available and a warm, friendly atmosphere, both you and your human will feel completely at home



## **The Best Dog-Friendly Beach Hut: Holi Moli at Dunster Beach**

Holi Moli is a bijou chalet that is absolutely perfectly kitted out for you and your companions. Not only did they win a Gold Dog Friendly Business of the year in Somerset they went on to win a national bronze award for the best Dog Friendly Business in England, so yes, they know a thing or two about providing superstar service for us canines. There is too much to include here but suffice to say you will be spoilt rotten; outside dog wash, access to a toy box, a welcome basket for you and your owner, towels, treats, a ball and throw stick, extendable leads, throws so I can sleep in my rightful place the sofa, and holiday tags. Unbelievably there is no extra charge for us to stay. Read more and book [here](#). Dunster Beach itself is incredibly dog friendly and dogs are welcome 365 days of the year.



**Sweet Dreams at the Most Dog-Friendly Hotel: The Old Vicarage in Bridgwater** - This 15th-century boutique Old Vicarage Hotel in Bridgwater isn't just dog-friendly - they're dog lovers, as proven by their Gold Award for Best Dog-Friendly Hotel in Somerset. I'm told reviewers consistently praise it as "the most dog-friendly hotel we have ever stayed at." The warm, welcoming staff create a home-away-from-home atmosphere, ensuring both you and your human can completely relax. The quirky, quiet bedrooms ensure a night's sleep, with plenty of extras for dogs; bowls, great beds, treats, and an emergency kit. Have a drink in the cosy bar then enjoy dining with your human (or rather watching them eat delicious home cooked food) in the restaurant, the Oakroom or on the charming, heated terrace overlooking the pretty cottage garden.

## **Discover more doggie days out by visiting our friendly, local experts:**

- [Burnham Information Centre and Rescue Support](#)
- [Watchet Visitor Centre](#)
- [Dunster National Park Centre](#)
- [Minehead Information Centre](#)
- [Porlock Information Centre](#)

