



Guide to The New Forest

Your guide to great adventures
in The New Forest



Guide to The New Forest

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Introduction

There are many wild and beautiful places crammed into this small island of ours, but one of the most beautiful is The New Forest, a National Park in the South of England.

It has vast open spaces, leafy woodland and winding waterways. Its population is huge and varied, from rare wildlife species in the undergrowth to the bustling settlements of Lymington and Lyndhurst. It is steeped in rich history with tonnes of space to explore.

This guide will tell you everything you need to know about visiting The New Forest, with some interesting facts along the way!

*From The New Forest
Activities Team*

How to get here

The New Forest is easily accessible from London and other parts of the UK. The train takes just 90 minutes from London Waterloo to Brockenhurst, and stopping services serve other New Forest stations, such as Beaulieu Road and Ashurst. Services to Lymington Town and Lymington Pier are available from Brockenhurst. There are also National Express coach services from London, Bristol and Bath.

If driving, the M3 from London will take you as far as Southampton at which point, you take the M27 towards Bournemouth. The A31 will take you right through the forest. The New Forest is also close to Southampton Airport and ferry services from the Isle of Wight to Portsmouth, Lymington and Southampton.

Once you get to the forest, there are a number of ways to get around without having to drive including cycle hire shops and local buses. But there are also a number of places to hire cars, including the vintage models from **New Forest Classic Cars**. There's nothing quite like coasting along winding forest roads, enjoying beautiful sights and grazing New Forest ponies.

The New Forest



Where to Stay

Hotels

New Forest Hotels

Choose from four stunning hotels scattered across the National Park; Bartley Lodge, Beaulieu Hotel, Forest Lodge and Moorhill House. Warm, intuitive hospitality. Comfy, contemporary rooms. And the kind of food you can't wait to tuck into. www.newforesthotels.co.uk

New Park Manor, Brockenhurst

Discover a family hotel folded in the heart of the New Forest. Explore the enchanting woodland that lies all around, and wash away the day's expedition with a family splash in the indoor or outdoor pools. In the evening, sink into the hot tub with a chilled glass of bubbly, while the children watch a film in the cinema room. www.newparkmanorhotel.co.uk

Thatched Cottage Hotel, Brockenhurst

This charming Grade 2 listed hotel offers cottage rooms as well as luxury garden rooms and suites - combining modern essentials with historic charm. Plus, it's home to The New Forest's only gin bar - with a wide selection to sample and enjoy! www.thatchedcottage.co.uk

OUR TOP PICK



Master Builder's Hotel

Beaulieu

Situated within the historic village of Buckler's Hard in Beaulieu, their rooms boast beautiful views of the Beaulieu River. Steeped in history, this hotel was built in c.1729 and was home to Henry Adams, the Master Builder of ships for Nelson's Navy.

www.hillbrookehotels.co.uk/the-master-builders/

Where to Stay

Holiday Parks

Sandy Balls Holiday Park, Fordingbridge

Perfect for families looking to fill their New Forest holiday with fun. With resident alpacas, a bushcraft school and forest laser tag, along with the usual holiday heroes of cycling and swimming; there's plenty on your doorstep to keep you entertained. Choose from cosy, cottage-style lodges and caravans to help you unwind. www.awayresorts.co.uk/sandy-balls/

Shorefield Holiday Park, Milford-on-sea

On the southern edge of the New Forest and just a short stroll away from the peaceful shingled shores of the beach at Milford-on-sea. A leafy parkland setting is the perfect backdrop to a range of luxury lodge and caravan accommodation. Enjoy access to swimming pools, on-site bars and a whole host of evening entertainments. www.shorefield.co.uk

Hoburne Holiday Park

With 2 of their 8 wonderful holiday parks nestled in The New Forest, there's so much to see and do, both on-park and in the surrounding area. And with a wide range of accommodation in a choice of types, sizes and specifications, there's something to suit every holiday budget. www.hoburne.com



Sandy Balls Holiday Park
Fordingbridge

Where to Stay

Self-Catering

New Forest Cottages

Choose from self-catering holiday properties in all shapes and sizes; from romantic cottages perfect for two, to family homes that fit the largest of groups. Not to mention their dog-friendly cottages, luxury holiday homes and properties with swimming pools.

www.newforestcottages.co.uk

New Forest Escapes

Their eclectic collection of houses provide very special retreats. These are quirky homes that are set up for tranquillity, family adventures and big celebrations!

www.newforestescapes.com

Toad Hall Cottages

Offering a delightful array of holiday homes across the forest, Toad Hall's reviews speak for themselves. Very straight forward to book, lovely staff and super easy to book! www.toadhallcottages.co.uk



New Forest Escapes
Magnolia Cottage, Bransgore

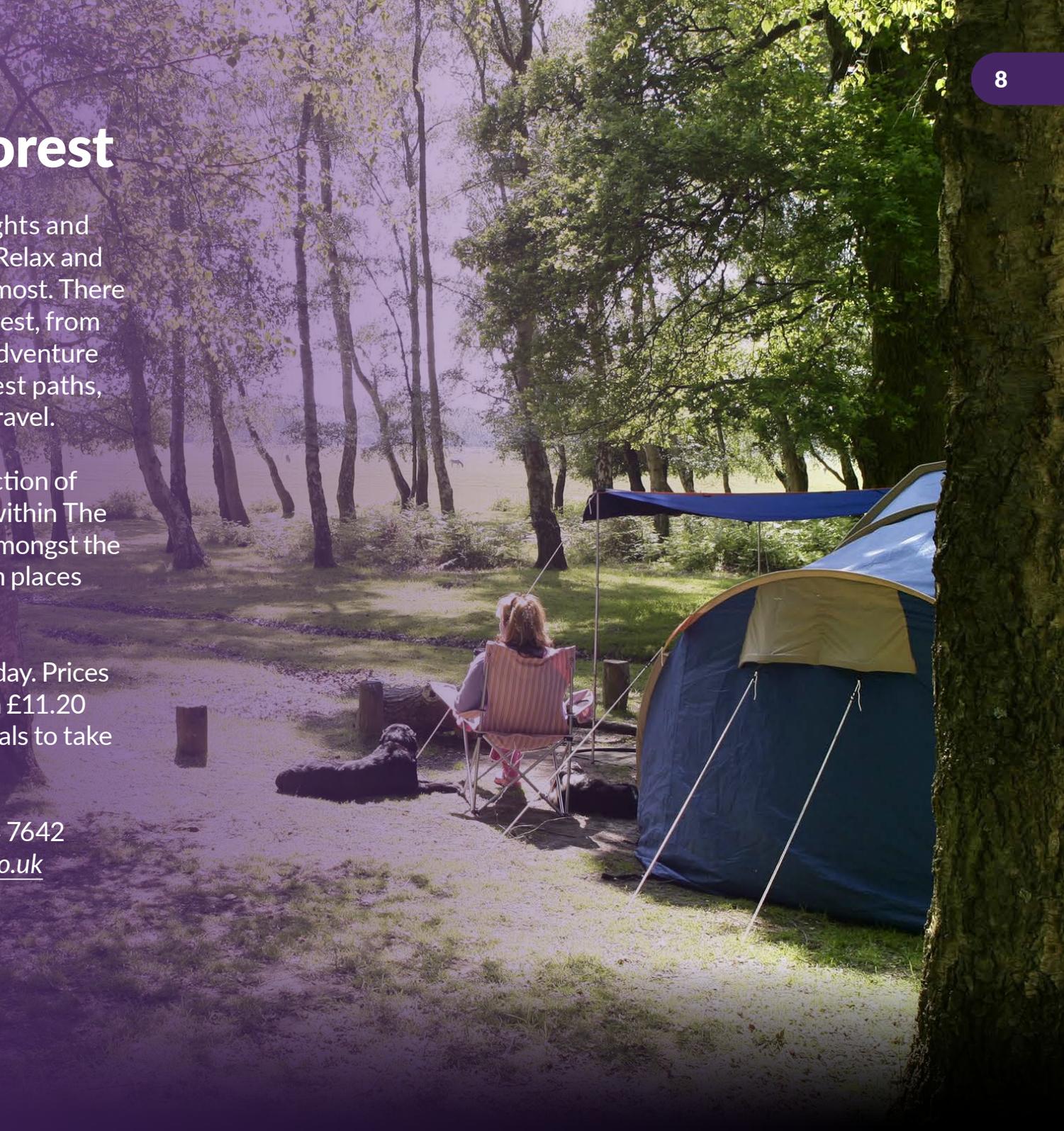
Camping in the Forest

Fresh air, beautiful scenery and the sights and smells of the woodland to inspire you. Relax and unwind with the people that mean the most. There are many activities to do when in the forest, from sailing through the trees on a **Go Ape** adventure to cycling and walking through the forest paths, keeping an eye out for wildlife as you travel.

Camping in the Forest have a wide selection of campsites across the UK, including 10 within The New Forest. The campsites are all set amongst the idyllic woodlands of the National Park, in places where you can truly find yourself.

Hurry and reserve your perfect pitch today. Prices vary per campsite, but usually start from £11.20 per pitch, per night with great family deals to take advantage of!

To book a campsite pitch, call +44 (0)24 7642 3008 or visit www.campingintheforest.co.uk



Where to Eat

There are so many dining options in The New Forest that you'll find it hard to choose where to go! With many restaurants serving freshly grown, local produce you can be assured that the food on your plate is good quality and ethical. There is a wide choice of cuisines and everything from à la carte dining to fish and chips on the beach.

The Montagu Arms, Beaulieu

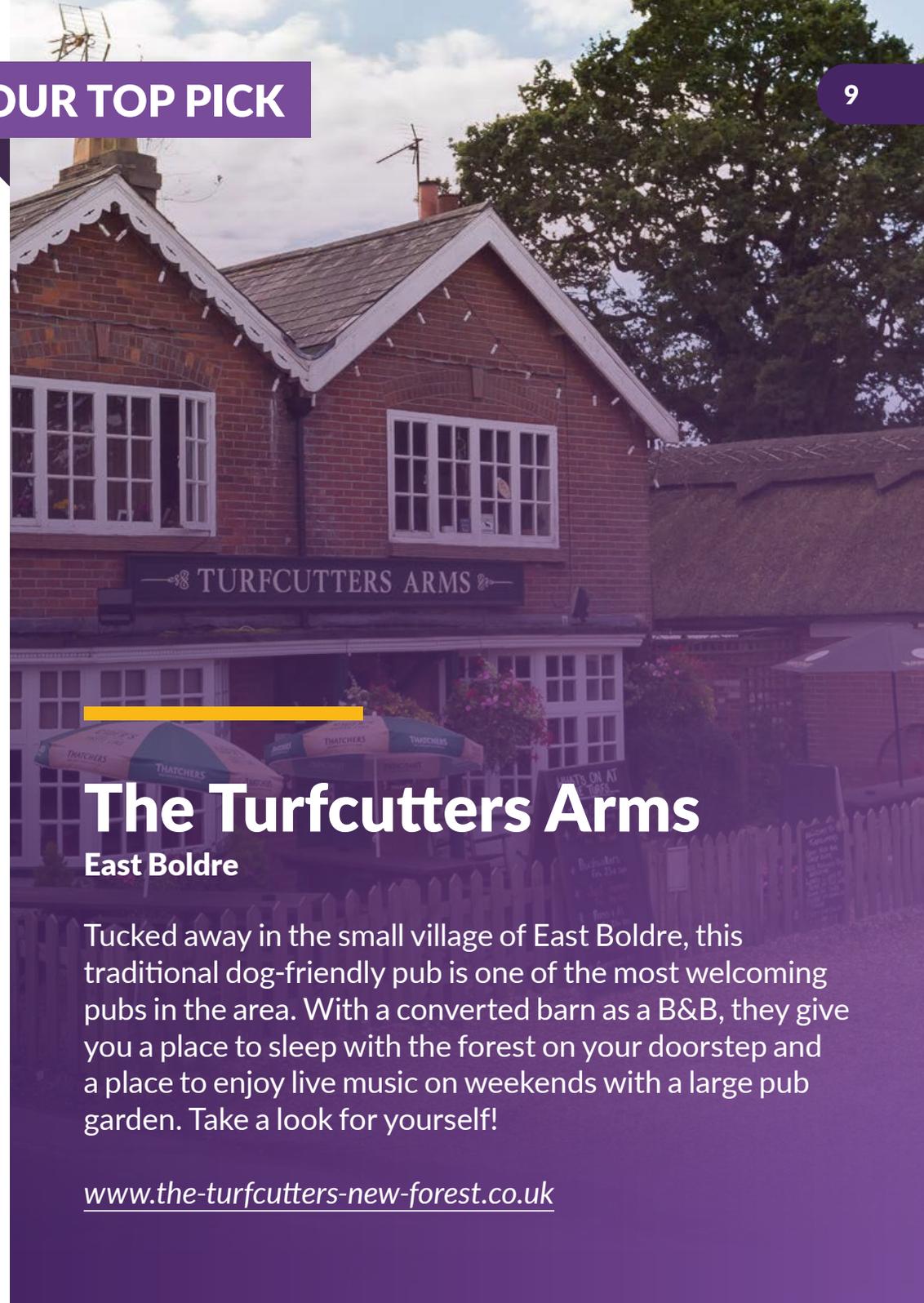
The award-winning restaurant set in the heart of Beaulieu, a small village in The New Forest offers a variety of food. Whether you want fine dining in the restaurant or a more relaxed pub environment, The Montagu Arms can cater for all. With locally grown produce from the countryside and coast, this is picked by their very own kitchen gardener to create some culinary magic for your tastebuds.

www.montaguarmshotel.co.uk

La Pergola, Lyndhurst

An authentic family-run Italian cuisine in Lyndhurst, the heart of The New Forest. With a large comfortable bar area to unwind before sitting down for locally sourced delicious Italian food and if you have the space, try one of their homemade desserts too! www.la-pergola.co.uk

OUR TOP PICK



The Turfcutters Arms

East Boldre

Tucked away in the small village of East Boldre, this traditional dog-friendly pub is one of the most welcoming pubs in the area. With a converted barn as a B&B, they give you a place to sleep with the forest on your doorstep and a place to enjoy live music on weekends with a large pub garden. Take a look for yourself!

www.the-turfcutters-new-forest.co.uk

Where to Eat

The Pig, Brockenhurst

Tucked away in Brockenhurst, The Pig embraces the flavour of the countryside with their on-site garden. With regular menu changes, no day is the same and your taste buds will get a delicious surprise every day. The Pig pride themselves on simple food well done. www.pighotel.com/brockenhurst/

Koh Thai Tapas, Lymington

Delicious Thai cuisine based in Lymington, a relaxed atmosphere and some great cocktails! If you fancy a sample of exotic dining, Koh Thai aims to give their customers the complete dining experience. www.koh-thai.co.uk

The Kings Head, Lymington

A traditional English pub in the coastal town of Lymington. If you want some hearty foods, generous portions and a great atmosphere, The Kings Head makes for a homely place to visit if you're stopping by. www.kingsheadlymington.com



The Pig
Brockenhurst

History

The New Forest was first established as a hunting ground in 1079 by William the Conqueror and has been patronized by royalty ever since. Just 21 years after the forest's birth, it saw a royal death, with William's son, William Rufus being killed by an arrow while out hunting. It was reported as an accident, but the King was hugely unpopular thanks to his harsh methods, and no-one mourned him very much. In fact, the descendants of William I didn't have much luck in The New Forest, which some believed was justice for the harshness with which he created the forest.

It was described poetically, if not necessarily accurately, around 500 years later; "But this wicked act did not long go unpunished, for his son's felt the smart thereof; Richard being blasted with a pestilent air; Rufus shot through with an arrow; and Henry his grandchild, by Robert his eldest son, as he pursued his game, was hanged among the boughs, and so died".

The grisly events of 1100 didn't stop successive kings (Henry VIII among them) from using the forest as their own personal hunting ground, for stags and other wildlife.

The forest dwindled into decline during the era of the Stuart Kings, with the wood being used for shipbuilding and not replanted. At one stage, there was even a proposal to remove the iconic New Forest deer.

Then it suffered the Great Storm of 1703, which saw 4000 Oaks lost. The New Forest Act of 1877 did a lot to protect the forest, giving rights back to the 'Commoners' of the area, to graze their animals on the open heathland.

In the 20th century, it would suffer the damage of the Second World War, coupled with the introduction of roads and cars, cutting through the open countryside. But in 2005 it became a protected National Park. And so the forest has been restored to its former glory, now mostly owned by the Queen.

Wildlife

The New Forest wildlife is varied and interesting, with a number of different habitats sharing the same space. There's woodland, open heathland and bogs and they all provide the environment needed to sustain life in its many forms.

Woodland

One of the most obvious animals you'll find in the wooded areas is the New Forest Pony. Known for their friendly nature, they are free to roam the woods and graze as they wish. They are owned by the commoners of the forest, whose legal right to let their ponies graze in the forest originated when the forest itself did, in 1079. So they may appear to be wild at first, but they are all owned by someone. Every year, they are rounded up and accounted for and then can be bought or sold at auctions.

The ponies are a very specific breed, and only foals with two purebred parents can now be counted as purebreds themselves. There are some fanciful tales about the origins of the horses – that their ancestors were in the Spanish Armada and swam ashore after their ships sank – but sadly they are unlikely to be true. It is quite likely that they are descended from the horses brought over by William the Conqueror, hence his generosity in allowing them to graze on his land.





Wildlife

But wherever they came from, they are flourishing now, with thousands of the gentle creatures around the forest. They have right of way over traffic, so watch out for them when driving, and remember not to try and feed them!

The other large animal that roams the woods is the deer. There are five species of deer in the forest – the red deer and roe deer are native to Britain and are quite common around both the woodland and the heathland. The fallow deer is also common, with its ‘Bambi’ like appearance and the impressive antlers of the males. The other two species are rarer – the sika deer and the muntjac deer and, as with all deer, they are shy and prefer to keep their distance from humans. Like the ponies, they wander between the woodland and the heathland (and occasionally the roads too!)

Other woodland creatures include badgers, squirrels and foxes, who forage for food around the trees. So look out for them if you’re picnicking nearby! Also look out for woodpeckers, blue tits, redstarts and even bats, who make their homes in the hollow trees.

Heathland

The open heathland is home to an interesting mix of species. Rabbits graze there daily, in their hundreds, and there are a number of birds who frequent the heather-covered plains, including the rare Dartford Warbler. The sandy heath is also appealing to reptiles, with the sand lizard making its home there.

The sand lizard is very rare in the UK and only survives now because of a careful breeding programme. Another native reptile is the adder, Britain's only venomous snake, and they enjoy the sunshine that appears more regularly in The New Forest than it does elsewhere in the UK! Adder bites are rare, and it's even rarer that they are harmful to humans, but medical attention should always be sought if you've been bitten! The forest also contains grass snakes and smooth snakes, but neither are venomous.

Wetlands

The third major type of habitat in the Forest is the common bog, although they have been designated as "Wetlands of International Importance", which sounds far grander than "bog"! There you'll find all kinds of plants and insects, with dragonflies and damselflies flitting about.

Birds love the wetlands too, with curlews, snipe and redshanks circling above. Around the streams of the Forest, you'll also find the glorious Kingfisher, showing off his colours as he hunts for food. Fish too are abundant, with 20 different species to be found in the streams and rivers of the Forest. There is enough wildlife in the area to keep even the most ardent animal-spotter happy!



Trees

As you'd expect, the forest has a number of different types of trees, all grown naturally and without any interference from humans (although there was a great deal of deforestation during the building of the Royal Navy). There are the kind of English trees you'd expect – Oak, Ash, Yew, Beech – and some more unusual species, such as the Japanese Cedar.

Thanks to the enlightened 20th century way of thinking (i.e. the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act), a lot of the trees in the forest are now protected, and it's a criminal offence to fell them. Hopefully, this will go some way towards repairing the damage done by the shipbuilding. Standing in the middle of the forest it certainly doesn't feel like it's short on greenery, with trees spouting out oxygen in every direction!

There are also a few individual Oaks that are not just protected but famous. One is the Eagle Oak, so-called because it was where a gamekeeper hid as he shot the last known Sea Eagle in the British Isles. The Eagle Oak sits

within the Knightwood enclosure and is not far from the A35, south-west of Lyndhurst.

Another pair of well-known trees are the Adam and Eve Oaks in Minstead. The Adam Oak is a contender for the largest tree in the forest, and grows behind a hedgerow. Eve is slightly smaller and further back, with some branches that seem to be dying. They are said to be the oldest trees in the forest, hence being named after the first man and woman.

Adam's competitor for the tallest tree title is the Knightwood Oak, near the Eagle Oak. It's 7.4m in girth and over 400 years old. On Victorian maps it appeared as "the Queen of the Forest" and it's a great example of sustainable forestry – instead of felling the tree, the top has been cut off and used, allowing for fresh growth. This practice, known as "pollarding", keeps the tree healthy while still providing wood for building and firewood. Many of the older oaks in the forest are pollards, and it certainly helps to keep the trees healthy!

Attractions

Exbury Gardens, Exbury

Boasting over 200 acres of woodland beauty, discover world-famous displays of rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias and explore over 20 miles of pathways, three woods, riverside walks, adventure play area and abundant parkland. In addition to the beautiful gardens, you can also take a ride on their magnificent miniature railway that tours 1.5 miles of the northern part of the gardens. www.exbury.co.uk

The New Forest Paddle Sports Co, Milford-on-sea

Explore more of the New Forest's stunning coastlines by getting out on the water with The New Forest Paddle Sport Company. Excellent for hiring Stand Up Paddleboards or join them for a SUP experience to Hurst Castle, or a peaceful Sup Yoga experience. www.thenewforestpaddlesportcompany.co.uk

Beaulieu Motor Museum, Beaulieu

Enjoy getting up close to vehicles through history in the motor museum, home to on-screen cars and The World of Top Gear. You can also explore their beautifully kept grounds and gardens, let your imagination run wild in 'Little Beaulieu' the new adventure play area. www.beaulieu.co.uk

OUR TOP PICK

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A photograph of three Peppa Pig characters (Mummy Pig, Daddy Pig, and Peppa Pig) standing in front of several colorful hot air balloons. The balloons are striped in purple, yellow, and red. The scene is set outdoors under a blue sky with light clouds. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple gradient.

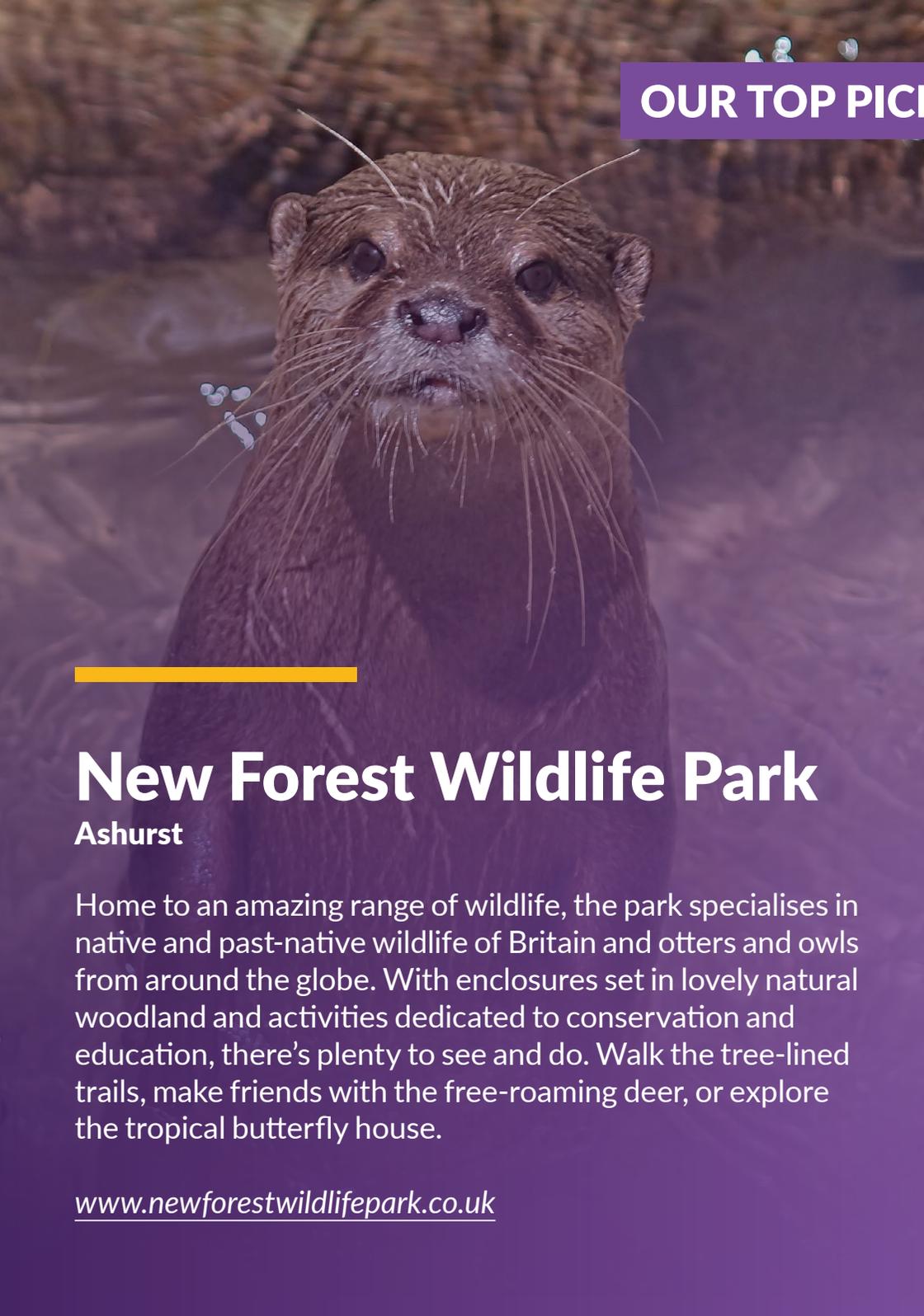
Paulton's Park

Romsey

With over 70 rides and attractions, Paultons Park is deservedly the UK's #1 family theme park. With the UK's only Peppa Pig world, they also have water rides, indoor and outdoor play areas, a collection of animals to enjoy and roller coaster rides suited for all ages. It's a great place for a family day out!

www.paultonspark.co.uk

OUR TOP PICK



New Forest Wildlife Park

Ashurst

Home to an amazing range of wildlife, the park specialises in native and past-native wildlife of Britain and otters and owls from around the globe. With enclosures set in lovely natural woodland and activities dedicated to conservation and education, there's plenty to see and do. Walk the tree-lined trails, make friends with the free-roaming deer, or explore the tropical butterfly house.

www.newforestwildlifepark.co.uk

Attractions

Marwell Zoo, Winchester

Situated in the Winchester countryside, the 140-acre wildlife park is home to hundreds of animals, from endangered Amur tigers, snow leopards and white rhinos to giraffes, gibbons and penguins. There's something the whole family can enjoy on this wild day out! www.marwell.org.uk/zoo/

New Forest Water Park, Fordingbridge

Learn and enjoy a whole host of water sports, including Wake Boarding, Kayaking and Stand-up Paddle Boarding. Or bounce around the 55 meter long floating inflatable aqua park. There's something for everyone – whether you're on holiday or just fancy a great day out. www.newforestwaterpark.co.uk

Longdown Activity Farm, Ashurst

There's farmyard fun for the whole family at Longdown Activity Farm. Join in with a daily schedule of hands-on activities including bottle-feeding kid goats and calves, the Animal Encounter Barn, and duck feeding, to name just a few! www.longdownfarm.co.uk

New Forest Activities

New Forest Activities doesn't just offer great downloadable guides! If you are looking to get outdoors and make unforgettable memories then that's our speciality. With activities available for all ages and group types, we are certain to bring a smile to everyone's face. Whether you're after a land or water activity there's plenty on offer to add to your day, or even fill it!

Our water activities include **kayaking** and **canoeing** on the beautiful Beaulieu River, where you can explore hidden creeks, spot all sorts of interesting wildlife, and admire the beautiful houses that call the banks home.

Or why not join us in the beautiful New Forest woodland for **archery**, **bushcraft** or an aerial adventure on our treetop **ropes course**?

For thrill-seekers, our outdoor laser tag experience **Battlefield LIVE** is sure to keep the whole gang entertained. Whatever the occasion and whatever the group - we've got you covered!

www.newforestactivities.co.uk



Dog Friendly Things To Do

Hurst Castle, Milford-on-sea

Well behaved dogs are very welcome to visit Hurst Castle and soak up the history and views with you, just make sure to keep them on a short lead as there is nowhere off limits for dogs! So you can keep your canine friend with you all day. Dogs can also ride for free on the ferry from Keyhaven. www.hurstcastle.co.uk

New Forest Walks

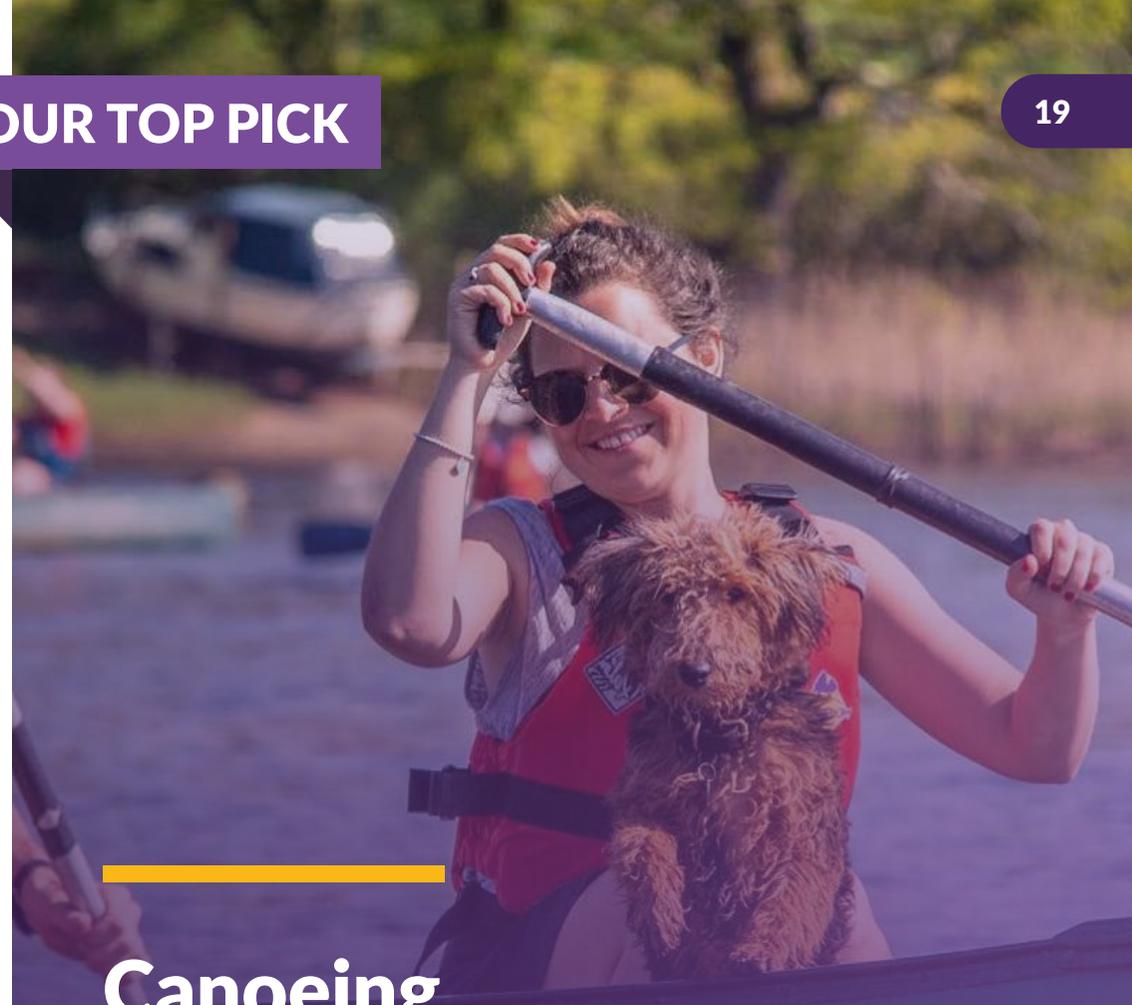
The Forest is the perfect place for a scenic dog walk, with many routes and varied parts of the forest from sea wall paths to woodland trails, take a look at the New Forest website to see which route is best for you and your hound.

Cycling

With many off-road paths and trails on offer in the forest all you need is a dog trailer attached to the back of a bike. Forest Leisure Cycling in Burley and Cyclexperience in Brockenhurst offer these trailers as part of their daily cycle hire options (advanced booking is strongly recommended particularly for school holidays and weekends). www.forestleisurecycling.co.uk or www.cyclex.co.uk

OUR TOP PICK

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Canoeing

Beaulieu River, New Forest Activities

Join us at New Forest activities where both you and your fellow pooch can enjoy a guided canoeing tour. Sat in the stable canoe they can sit and relax whilst you paddle them about exploring this stunning river and learning about the history, wildlife, and local residents. A great activity for the whole family!

www.newforestactivities.co.uk

OUR TOP PICK

Dogstival

New Forest

In September, The New Forest is home to its very own dog festival! With pup demonstrations and displays in the main arena, to dog-friendly activities like aqua sports and the 'Happy Hound Den', there's plenty to keep your woofers entertained for the day. Make sure to visit the Dogstival website to get your paws on some tickets!

www.dogstival.co.uk

New Forest Pubs

The New Forest is home to many fantastic pubs, great for food and drink! What's even better is nearly all New Forest pubs welcome your furry friend, many have water bowls and dog treats available. Why not Paddle to the Pub with New Forest Activities for a real adventure?

New Forest Beaches

If your dog loves splashing about in the seawater then Calshot and Milford-on-Sea beaches are pooch friendly and perfect for a different type of scenery to the woodland and heath.

Buckler's Hard River Cruise, Beaulieu

From Easter to September you and your dog can hop aboard the river cruise for a small fee and experience a different view of the Beaulieu River.

www.bucklershard.co.uk

Lepe Country Park

Dogs are free to run around most areas of the country park, just make sure not to venture onto the family beach area or the nature reserve. Take a look at their website to get a map of all the greenland you can cover with your woofers!

Towns of The New Forest

Brockenhurst

For many people, this is the starting point of their New Forest adventure, as the rail station is on the mainline from London Waterloo. It's deep in the heart of the forest and is home to a picturesque stream that flows over the road, locally known as "The Splash". There are also ancient churches to visit as well as a number of independent shops and pubs. You will usually spot a donkey or two here too!

Lyndhurst

Lying just north of Brockenhurst, with its Elizabethan panelled shops and many tearooms. It's where you'll find the New Forest Museum, as well as the church of St Michael and All Angels where Alice Hargreaves who inspired the famous "Alice in Wonderland" story is now resting. Take a wander to Bolton's Bench and directly onto the forest where you are bound to see a New Forest pony!

New Milton

A town that first appeared in the Domesday Book, New Milton is still full of life. It has a weekly market and a full calendar of town events. It's close to the coast and has a mix of modern architecture and older styles, along with all the supermarkets you need if self-catering.

Lymington

Further south, the market town of Lymington sits at the edge of the forest. It's one of the major cultural centres of the region, with concerts being held regularly at the Bandstand and modern art exhibitions at the Coastal Gallery. There are also two stunning marinas, filled with yachts from around the world. Snap a photo next to Ben Ainslie's golden postbox or take a walk down the cobbled streets to get a proper feel for this little yachting town.

Fordingbridge

The town of Fordingbridge is a treat for history enthusiasts, with its medieval bridge and the Fordingbridge Museum. It's on the north-west edge of the forest and sits on the beautiful River Avon. There is a riverside playground for children along the sports field and memorial gardens.

Ringwood

Home to the famous Ringwood Brewery, where you can sample such ales as Boon Diggle and Old Thumper, Ringwood is a historic market town, situated just down the river from Fordingbridge. It has its own football team – Ringwood FC – and the UK's largest slot-racing centre, the Millstream Model Centre and Raceway.

Waterside Towns

Barton-on-sea

One of the best beaches in the vicinity of the forest. There's a clifftop golf course as well as a glorious stretch of shingled beach. Barton-on-sea is famous for the fossils that have been found there, some dating back to 40 million years ago! The cliffs have some erosion problems so are cordoned off in some places, but there is still plenty of space to admire the views over to the Isle of Wight.

Milford-on-sea

Just down the coast from Barton-on-sea is Milford-on-sea, with more beautiful beach vistas. It's notable for its foodie focus, hosting a "food week" every year where you can sample delights from all the local restaurants. If you fancy trying an unusual way of dining, there's also the Milford-on-sea "Great Dining Bus" where each course takes place at a different restaurant, with bus trips in between!

Hythe

A bustling marina on the eastern edge of the forest, Hythe is the place to go for sea views and bird watching. You can also see the cottage where Lawrence of Arabia once lodged, albeit under a false name! There are also two markets, selling local produce and crafts.



Interesting Villages

Beaulieu

Home to both the Motor Museum and the Abbey, Beaulieu itself is worth a visit for its quaint cottages and narrow streets. It feels a little like a step back in time. It's frequented by New Forest ponies who often wander up and down the High Street, to the amusement of passers-by!

Burley

During the 1950s, a "white witch" called Sybil Leek lived in this village, carrying her pet jackdaw on her shoulder wherever she went. She may have gone, but there's still a sense of magic that hangs around this woodland village. Her picture still remains, in the gift shop that bears the name she gave it; "A Coven of Witches".

Minstead

Minstead is the very model of a traditional English village, centred around a village green and a village shop. There's also a pub, a village hall and a parish church, which contains the grave of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It's close to the Rufus Stone, which marks the spot where William Rufus died.

Near The New Forest

Southampton

The most obvious and sprawling of the Hampshire settlements, this city is full of life. There's a wealth of shopping opportunities, from the expansive West Quay shopping centre as well as the main high street.

Back in the centre of town, you'll find a huge IKEA, with an easy access walkway to West Quay shopping centre, Showcase Cinema de Lux, and vast bars and restaurants. West Quay is within walking distance from Southampton Central train station so easily accessible from the forest (although the change of pace may come as a shock!) Southampton also has nightclubs, an expansive Common, The Mayflower Theatre and Southampton Guildhall, a favourite for up and coming bands.

Winchester

A few miles and a world away from the buzz of Southampton is the genteel Winchester. Once the capital of Wessex, Winchester is full of history – the most obvious example being the 1000 year old Cathedral in its centre.

A mixed-up masterpiece of architecture, it's a good place for quiet reflection or for enjoying a soaring concert. Winchester is also home to the Great Hall, with its Round Table, and the ancient Buttercross. For the best possible views over the city, climb St Giles' Hill at the bottom of the High Street. From there, you can enjoy a picnic and a glorious vista of the green-roofed Guildhall and the statue of King Alfred.

Bournemouth

The archetypal English seaside town, with golden beaches and an iconic pier. There's a cliff railway and seaside amusements and on a sunny day, the beach is covered in sunseekers taking advantage of the warm water. But once the sun goes down, the fun doesn't stop, with a number of lively nightclubs and bars all over the city. It's a busy student town, but there is fun for all ages, with shows on at The Pavilion and the Bournemouth International Centre. Ideal for a great night out or a lazy day by the seaside eating ice cream!

Near The New Forest

Basingstoke

Another busy town that has been much maligned over the years, Basingstoke actually has a lot to offer. There's the Anvil Theatre there and the huge shopping centre known as Festival Place. True, it does have more than its fair share of roundabouts, but it's a modern city with lots for kids to do, including a splash park, soft play and bowling. It's also surrounded by beautiful countryside and interesting villages, which contrast sharply with the high rises of the town centre.

Portsmouth

A drive along the M27 from the Forest will land you in Portsmouth, the birthplace of Charles Dickens and home to the Portsmouth Historical Dockyard. Attractions at the dockyard include the newly restored Mary Rose, the sunken flagship of Henry VIII and its interactive museum. Or you can walk the deck of HMS Victory and see the spot where Nelson died. After that, you can pick up some designer bargains at the Gunwharf Quays outlet village or enjoy the high street shopping of the Cascades.

Portsmouth also contains the Blue Reef Aquarium, filled with sharks, rays and penguins. It even has its own family of otters!

Isle of Wight

Another place that deserves more than a day's exploration, the Isle of Wight has miles of golden beaches, a theme park on the edge of a cliff (Blackgang Chine) and a zoo with rare white tigers. There's even a garlic farm, where you can sample their unique garlic ice-cream (worth tasting at least once!) The middle of the island is leafy and beautiful and makes a lovely drive. Ferries to the island go from Southampton and Lymington.



Find us on



New Forest Activities
Hazel Copse Farm
Beaulieu
Hampshire
SO42 7WA

01590 612377
info@newforestactivities.co.uk

Start planning your New Forest adventure.

Have a question? We're local New Forest experts. **Get in touch** and we'll be happy to help.



Kids Parties

Be the best Mum or Dad ever and book them an adventure party to remember!



Adult Groups

Don't worry, big kids can join us too! Celebrate in style or just hang out with friends.



Youth Groups

Whether you're a Scout or Guide group, sports team, or youth club, we've got you covered.



School Trips

Inspiring children to develop, grow and learn new skills outside of the classroom.



Team Building

Bring your team along to bond and grow during a bespoke outdoor team building day.



Stag & Hen

Go for a 'Do with a difference!' Action packed activities for active Stag and Hens.