

Brake time

With UK breaks continuing to prove popular, **Adam Shaw** rounds up some of this summer's highlights

Clients may be fully embracing global travel again, but there's still nowhere like home – or so the appetite for staycations suggests. According to a survey of 1,000 people by consultancy RSM in January, almost two-thirds (64%) of holidaymakers are planning a break in the UK in 2023 (just one percentage point lower than last year).

For clients keen to book a trip closer to home, we've pulled together a list of where to visit in the UK, with attractions such as Titanic Belfast and Beamish Museum reopening after major refurbishments, new tours championing old seaside favourites such as Weymouth, plus King Charles's Coronation in May all providing top reasons for a summer staycation.

BELFAST

Titanic Belfast reopened on March 4 after a multimillion-pound refurbishment of its Titanic Reimagined exhibition – an interactive experience about the people who built the ship, the passengers who sailed on it and those who discovered the wreck.

With a fresh 'Pursuit of Dreams' theme, the exhibit has four new galleries and a new 7.6m-long

illuminated rotating model of the ship. Built at a 1:35 scale, the model features lifeboats, engines, propellers, cranes, bridge, the main staircase and chimneys, while LED lights are programmed to highlight different parts of the ship and images tell the stories of the people associated with them – as well as how they were affected by the tragedy.

Book it: A four-day Belfast & The Titanic Experience with Newmarket Holidays starts at £493, including return flights from Heathrow, a Belfast city tour, entrance to the museum and three nights' B&B accommodation, departing August 20. newmarketholidays.co.uk/agents-area

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

Scotland is having a bit of a moment when it comes to cycling, with the 2023 UCI World Championships coming to the country in August. This coincides with a wider tourism push for two-wheeled travel, with a new South of Scotland Coast to Coast route due to open in time for the championships.

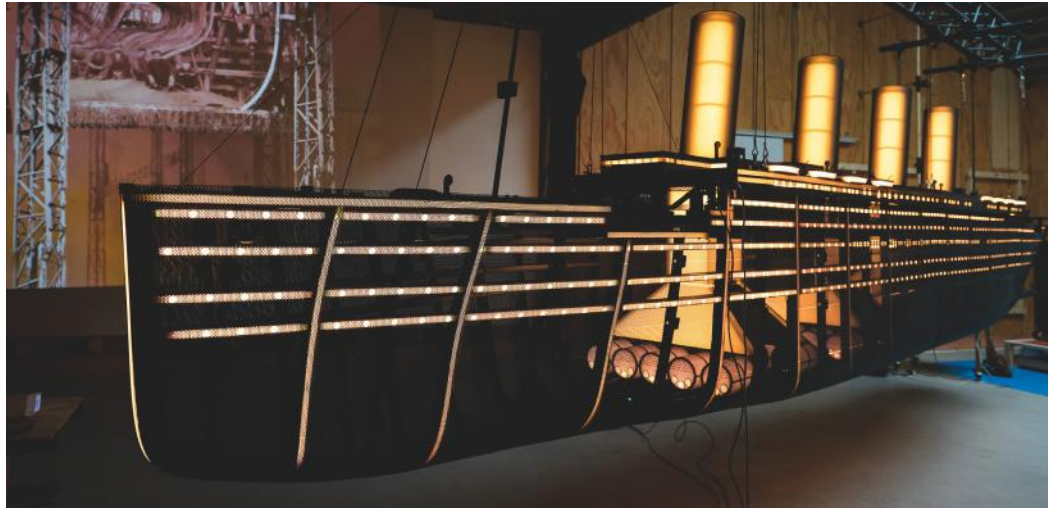
The 250-mile trail stretches from Stranraer in the west, runs close to the border with England and

Mountain biker in
Glentress, Scottish Borders

PICTURE: VisitScotland/Kenny Lam

DESTINATIONS

UK | SUMMER 2023



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Titanic replica, Titanic Belfast; Seeing the Invisible augmented reality exhibition, the Eden Project; Beamish: The Living Museum of the North; cycling in the Scottish Borders PICTURES:

Yvonne Witte; VisitScotland/Ian Rutherford; Shutterstock/Chris Jenner



ends in the North Sea town of Eyemouth. Visitors will be able to cycle part of this new trail on borderland tours that cross over with the new route, including at Galashiels, which is home to Abbotsford, the former residence of Sir Walter Scott. Tours visit the poet's home, and pass by the impressive Leaderfoot Viaduct.

Book it: A seven-day Tour of the Borders with Wilderness Scotland costs from £2,265 including accommodation, meals, transport and a boat trip to Bass Rock, departing August 19. Bikes can be hired from £225. wildernessscotland.com

CORNWALL

The Eden Project in perennially popular Cornwall is wowing visitors with an augmented reality exhibition that combines technology and nature.

The ambitious Seeing the Invisible project, which runs until September and is included in the general entry ticket, allows visitors to view interactive pieces of art across the site through a smartphone app.

On National Holidays' Newquay & the Eden Project trip this summer, clients can visit the plant haven, while exploring the award-winning, picturesque beaches surrounding Newquay, on the county's north coast.

Book it: National Holidays offers a five-day Newquay & the Eden Project break starting at £369, including transport and four nights' half-board accommodation, departing June 5. nationalholidays.com/agents

ASK THE operator



JOANNA ROBERTS product director, JG Travel Group

"UK seaside resorts continue to prove popular and there are some incredible options all around our coasts. Firm favourites such as the Isle of Wight, Scarborough and Newquay remain top sellers, but there is also demand to discover other regions and places such as Weymouth and Deal. The desire to do more while away is also being seen in domestic breaks and this year we have introduced tours that include a more experiential element, such as wine tasting in Somerset. And, of course, the King's Coronation in May will showcase London at its very finest – agents should piggyback on all the media hype, as I have no doubt it will drive demand for breaks to London and royal-themed tours."

COUNTY DURHAM

There are few places in the country like Beamish: The Living Museum of the North, an open-air museum telling the story of northeast communities from the 1820s to the 1950s. The attraction has had a sizeable upgrade, with new exhibits in its 1950s section gradually opening since last year.

These include models of a fish and chip shop, cafe and hairdresser's from the decade, as well as a typical house based on the former home of artist Norman Cornish. The 1950s town also boasts a cinema, toy shop, bowling green and pavilion, and police and miners' houses. And its Coronation Park, which opened in 2022, showcases allotments, a putting green and a playground with 1950s equipment built to 21st-century safety standards.

Book it: Shearings offers a five-day Historic Durham and Beamish Open Air Museum tour starting at £399, including transport and B&B accommodation, departing June 5. shearings.com/login-agent



ABOVE: Buckingham Palace, London PICTURE: Shutterstock/Pajor Pawel


DORSET

With its prehistoric fossils, ancient ruins and quaint coastal villages, Dorset looks a strong bet for summer 2023.

A new tour for this year from Just Go Holidays is based in classic seaside town Weymouth, known for its elegant Georgian buildings. Clients can also explore the Jurassic Coast, a Unesco World Heritage Site, taking in the scenic beauty of West Bay (a key filming location for TV drama *Broadchurch*), the striking rock formations at Lulworth Cove and the palaeontology hotspot of Lyme Regis. Medieval history buffs will appreciate the 12th-century Corfe Castle, while there's also the opportunity to enjoy Dorset's landscapes on a ride on the heritage Swanage Steam Railway. **Book it:** A five-day Weymouth, the Jurassic Coast & Swanage Steam Railway tour with Just Go Holidays starts at £339, including transport and four nights' half-board accommodation, departing August 7. justgoholidays.com/agent-login

LONDON

All eyes will once again be on Westminster Abbey for King Charles III's Coronation on May 6. The extra bank holiday two days later means there's sure to be a carnival atmosphere across the country, with people taking to the streets to celebrate the monarch's swearing in.

Clients can get right into the thick of things by heading to London to take in landmarks such as Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament and the British Museum, try to catch a glimpse of the king or simply soak up the party mood. Those feeling particularly inspired by royal proceedings could combine their visit with a trip to nearby Windsor, home to the majestic Windsor Castle, the former residence of Queen Elizabeth II. **Book it:** A four-day Coronation of Charles III itinerary with Gold Crest Holidays costs from £379, including coach transport to London, an optional group coach day tour to Windsor and three nights' B&B accommodation, departing May 5. bookings.gold-crest.com 

STAYCATION OPTIONS



Ashley Dellow, head of retail sales at Leger Shearings Group, highlights the variety of UK breaks available

Weekend breaks: Shorter staycations are ideal for those who typically book a 'main' holiday overseas, but still want to explore the sights and attractions on their doorstep.

Our weekend breaks are in high demand for summer.

These Friday-to-Monday escapes allow customers to make the most of their weekends, offering a taster of the UK's most spectacular destinations.

Extra-special tours: From countryside mansions boasting character and charm, to contemporary hotels with first-class facilities such as swimming pools, excellent restaurants and landscaped gardens, there are UK holidays available for customers seeking a staycation with something extra. With value for money on everyone's mind right now, our indulgent Signature Collection breaks, for example, are a fantastic alternative to an overseas holiday.

Self-drive trips: Many customers prefer to make their own way to their chosen holiday destination, and a self-drive hotel-only break offers freedom and flexibility. The convenience of exploring the sights at your own pace makes these breaks attractive, together with the choice of both midweek and weekend travel options.



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