



# Napoleon Plymouth







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**Napoleon Bonaparte one of the greatest commanders of all time died 200 years ago on 5th May 1821. He was one of the most famous emperors in the history of the West and remains one of the most celebrated political figures of all time.**

After his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon Bonaparte was briefly kept prisoner on a warship in Plymouth Sound – HMS Bellerophon in 1815. During his imprisonment the harbour became packed as crowds flocked on boats to see their defeated enemy. This itinerary for Plymouth, Britain's Ocean City is commemorating the historical connections with this famous political figure and showcasing the wonderful heritage on offer.

Plymouth, is one of Europe's most vibrant waterfront cities, with so much to explore. There's something for every traveller to experience in this historic city, however long you have to stay around.

But there's also hundreds of years of history to uncover, from Napoleon's time imprisoned on the HMS Bellerophon in Plymouth Sound to Sir Francis Drake and the Spanish Armada and the Mayflower sailing in 1620, Plymouth has an array of history to be discovered.

During Napoleon's time Plymouth was growing as a renowned major naval base and port which men would set sail from to participate in the Napoleonic Wars. In 1824 Plymouth Dock was named Devonport and became the largest employer of the region and this strengthened Plymouth's ongoing relationship with the Royal Navy.

Plymouth has great connections with other Napoleonic cities in Europe particularly our closest neighbour Pontivy in France. There is a fantastic cycling route panning 1200 km along the Atlantic coast connecting Plymouth with Pontivy.

During your visit to Plymouth, take a trip to the Barbican and Sutton Harbour for quaint cobbled streets, a picturesque harbour and wealth of independent shops and restaurants. Here you'll also find the National Marine Aquarium – the UK's largest with more than 4,000 animals.

Visit The Box, Plymouth's newest museum, art gallery and archive and see for yourself the impact of Napoleon's time in Plymouth from a painting by French artist Jules Girardet's.

During your visit to The Box you won't be able to miss the striking naval figureheads, all lovingly restored.

Once built to adorn the bows of naval warships, these icons of maritime history are suspended in a huge sweep in The Box's main entrance space. Make sure you leave enough time to visit the nine permanent galleries which showcase The Box's incredible collections and will include a full-size woolly mammoth to add to your visit.

History fans should also stop by the Mayflower Steps. Learn all about the departure of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower ship, who sailed from the UK to the US in 1620 in search of religious freedom.

A short walk from this historic heart of the city is Plymouth Hoe – to describe it as a park doesn't do it justice. The Hoe is home to the striking red-and-white striped former lighthouse, Smeaton's Tower, the art-deco, open-air swimming pool Tinside Lido and a number of statues and memorials.

Another unmissable spot is the historic Royal William Yard. Formerly a Royal Navy Victualling Yard, it's a grand and imposing sight, and the largest collection of Grade I Listed military buildings in Europe built around the time of Napoleon.

The Yard has now been transformed into one of the coolest spots to be, home to an array of restaurants, cafes, shops and galleries.

You can even navigate the city by boat – unsurprisingly, as Britain's Ocean City, one of the best ways to appreciate this wonderful place is on the water.



(Above)The Barbican. (Far Left) Smeaton's Tower

## Things to See and Do

### Napoleon at The Box

Visitors to The Box, Plymouth's major new museum, gallery and archive, can see a portrait of Napoleon in its 'Port of Plymouth' gallery.

The portrait was painted by John Harris the Younger (1791-1873), an English artist who specialised in pen and ink facsimile as well as miniature portraits, copies of printed landscapes and woodcuts. It shows Napoleon posing in all his finery, despite being a prisoner on board HMS Bellerophon in Plymouth Sound at the time: *"Buonaparte is a fine-looking man..... Roman nose, good mouth and chin.....big belly, arms stout.....and shews a good leg. He wears a cocked hat.....like our three cornered ones.....white waistcoat and breeches and white silk stockings, thin shoes and buckles."* (Ephraim Graebke, Assistant Surgeon, on HMS Bellerophon)

Some highly detailed bone models made by prisoners of war from the Napoleonic era can also be seen in the gallery. The models were created with handmade tools as well as a great deal of skill and patience and are detailed examples of high quality craftsmanship.

The Box will be open from 18 May from 10am-5pm Tuesday to Sunday. Admission to its galleries, including 'Port of Plymouth' is free, but tickets must be booked in advance.

Visit [www.theboxplymouth.com](http://www.theboxplymouth.com) for more information and to book.





## Napoleon Walking Tour with Chrissie Le Marchant – Blue Badge Guide

After years of facing the enemy across the channel, 200 years of entente cordial, Billy Ruffian and the Bogeyman of Europe!

Join Chrissie on this 90 minute walking tour meeting at The Box and discover the intrigue of how Napoleon never came ashore in Plymouth before being sent into exile on the island of St Helena... I promise not to scare the children.

£10 per person up to groups of 6. To book please email Chrissie Le Marchant.

[bluetours@hotmail.com](mailto:bluetours@hotmail.com)



The Box

## Plymouth Boat Trips – 1 hour cruise

A one hour harbour cruise departs daily from The Barbican Landing Stage, adjacent to the Mayflower Steps, Plymouth.

On departing the Mayflower Steps, your skipper will provide an informative commentary, as we sail across the spectacular Plymouth Sound, flanked by the beautiful Devon and Cornish coasts and you will hear references on Napoleons stay in Plymouth imprisoned on Plymouth Sound.

You will see the great Plymouth breakwater which was constructed during 1812 and built to keep Napoleon out. Known as the 'National undertaking' it has stood the test of time and is an exemplar of construction from its day. More information on the project can be seen in 'the Box' in the 'Port of Plymouth' gallery.

You will also pass Plymouth Hoe, the famous Drakes Island, heading for the River Tamar and the Royal Naval Dockyard, where the mighty warships and nuclear submarines await!

To book please visit [www.plymouthboattrips.co.uk](http://www.plymouthboattrips.co.uk)



Plymouth Boat Trips



Napoleon Commemorative Stone

## Napoleon Commemorative Stone

This commemoration stone is two pieces of Dartmoor Granite and a piece of Volcanic rock from St Helena. It commemorates 200 years of peace between Britain and France and was unveiled in 2015. Sponsored by Monsieur Alain Sibril then French Consul, Plymouth City Council the French Navy and Brittany Ferries, the stone is located overlooking Plymouth Sound where Napoleon was detained on HMS Bellerophon for 9 days in 1815. It bears the inscription 'May our hearts be open to friendship and our arms reach across the sea to unite our two nations' – written by Mrs Mrs Melisande Fitzsimons, a French poet living in Plymouth.

# Things to See and Do

## Royal William Yard

Royal William Yard is an award-winning Grade I listed ex-naval victualling yard. Superbly located between the River Tamar and Plymouth Sound, Royal William Yard provides breath-taking views and a great place to live or base your business.

It boasts an array of both local and more widely known eating and drinking experiences.

Take a stroll along the famous South West Coast Path and descend the stunning steps from Devils Point into the Yard.

There is an on-site marina offering berthing and a regular ferry service as well as stand up paddle boarding which launches from Firestone Arches. Royal William Yard is steeped in history. There is a different story to be told around every corner you turn and in every building you see.

Why not take one of our regular history tours to learn more about its fascinating history. Keep an eye out in the events section for when the next tours are happening.

<https://royalwilliamyard.com/relax-and-play/historytours>





## Devon and Cornwall Walking Tours: Barbican and Mayflower Steps Walking Tour.

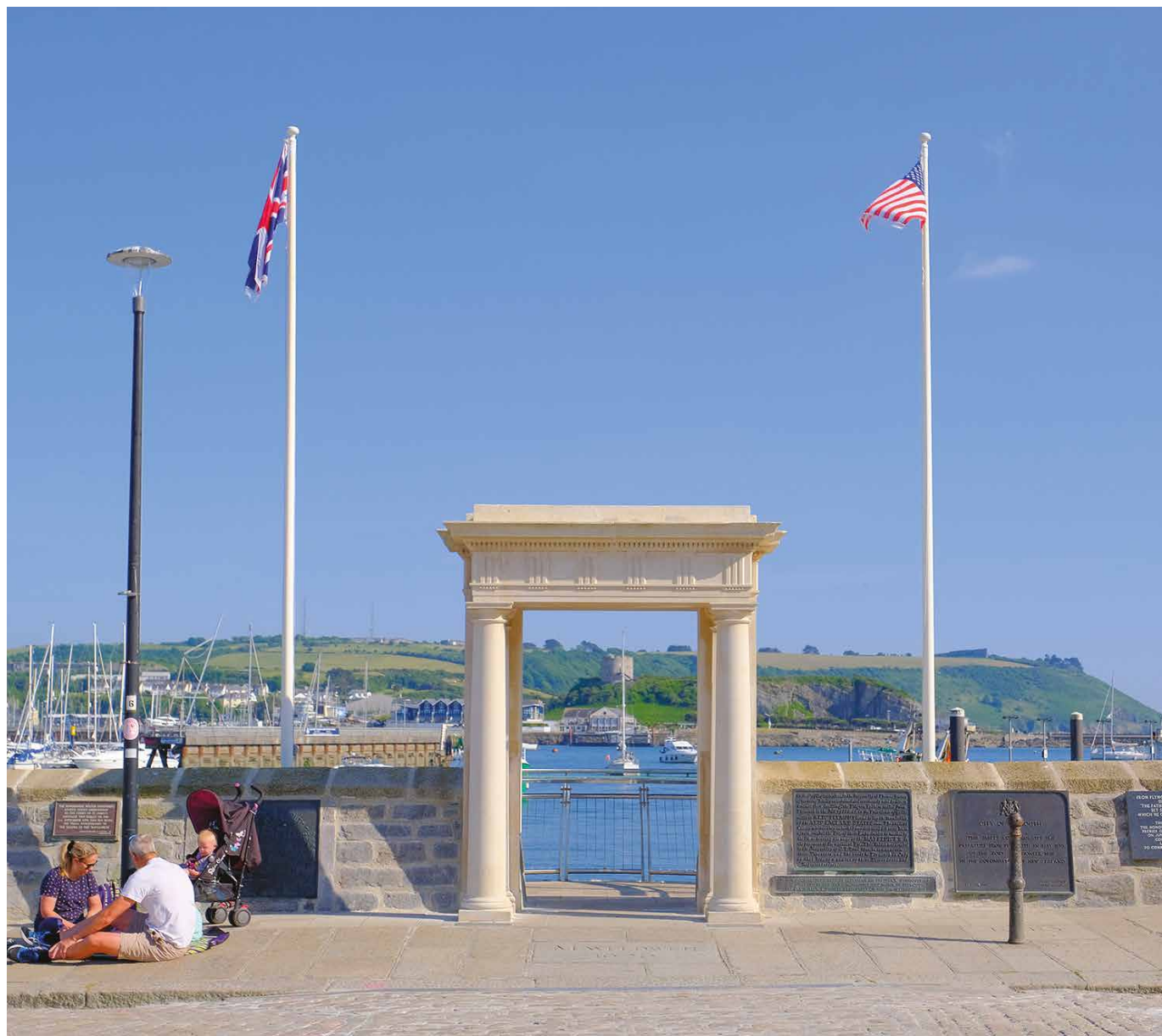
The historic Barbican and Sutton Harbour are at the heart of the city's heritage with the oldest buildings and the greatest number of historical stories. Around the Barbican, a vibrant place of cobbled streets, narrow lanes and more than 200 listed buildings – many of them Tudor and Jacobean – you'll find a range of cosmopolitan boutique shops, galleries, pubs, cafés and restaurants.

Visit the Mayflower Steps from where the Pilgrims are believed to have left England aboard the Mayflower for a new life in America in 1620.

Discover Plymouth's maritime heritage with the one-mile Sutton Harbour Trail, or take advantage of the two National Cycle Routes right on the harbour's doorstep.

Plymouth's waterfront is home to many historic stories, with the likes of Sir Francis Drake, Captain Cook and Charles Darwin all setting sail from our shores.

[www.devonandcornwalltourguides.com/tour/plymouth-walking-tour](http://www.devonandcornwalltourguides.com/tour/plymouth-walking-tour)



The Mayflower Steps

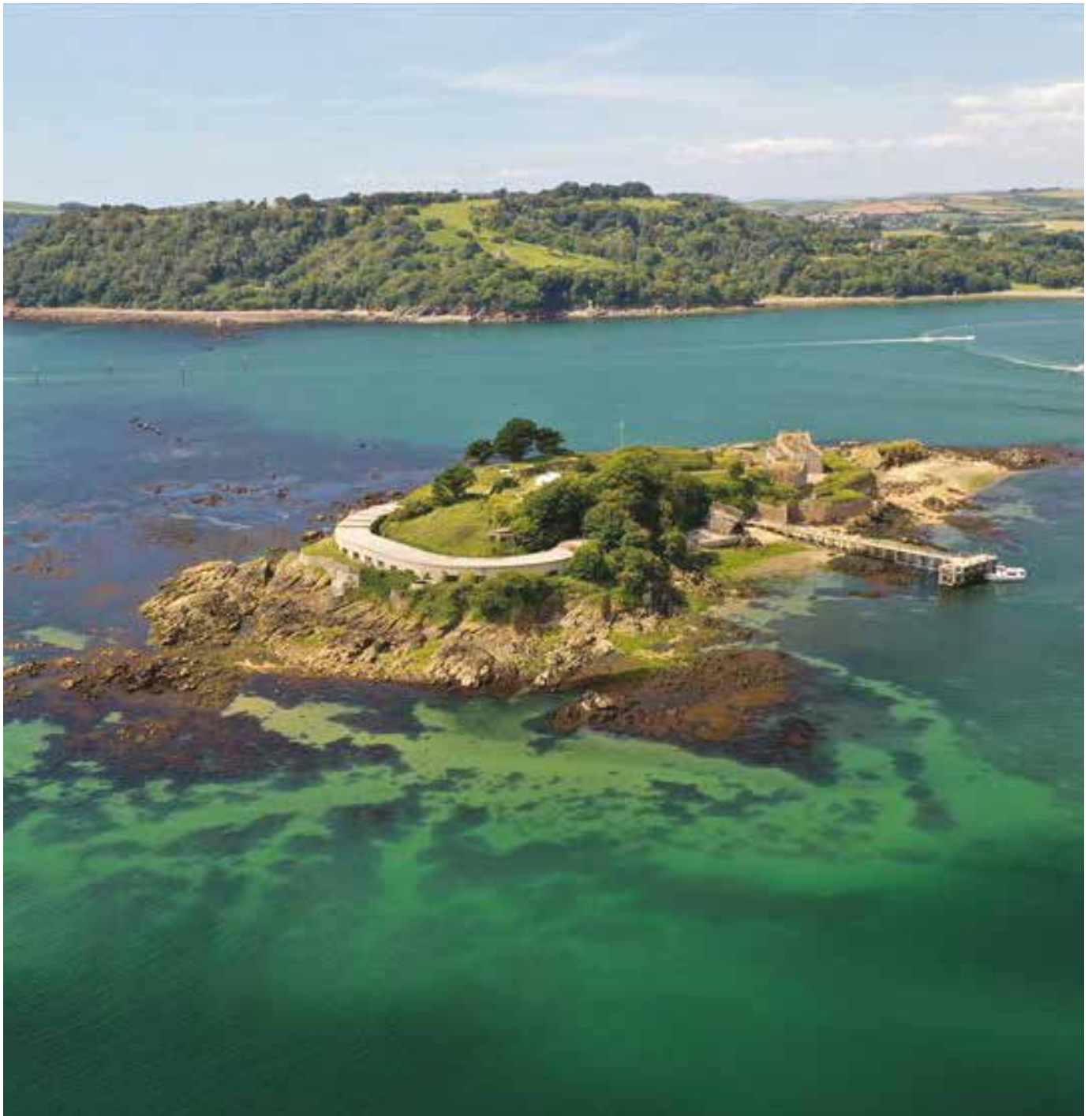
# Things to See and Do

## Guided Tours on Drakes Island

Be one of the first to set foot on Drake's Island in 30 years as they open for exclusive guided tours. Learn about the history of the island, walk the tunnels, see the wildlife and view Plymouth from a whole new perspective. There are also the enduring mysteries and myths surrounding the Island.

During Napoleon's time, a major update of the defences occurred on the island in 1860 with the building of the Palmerston casemates for Drake's Battery. These housed technologically advanced guns with the power to sink the new Ironclad Battleships.

<https://drakes-island.com>



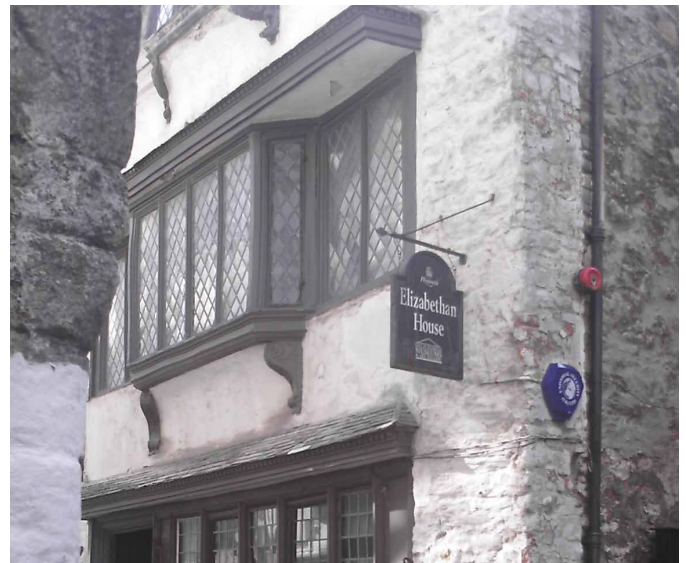


## Elizabethan House – opening Summer 2021

Built in the late 1500s when Plymouth was a thriving port, the Elizabethan House is a rare, surviving example of its time. The date of the house's first known recorded owner is 1631, and the last recorded owner relinquished their deeds in 1926. The house was then saved from demolition and opened in 1930 as a visitor attraction.

A home to merchants, businessmen, fishermen, washerwomen and dressmakers, throughout the last four centuries the house - with its timber frame, bare wooden floors, oak beams, spiral staircase and earth plaster walls - has stood almost unaltered, while the fortunes of those living and working around the Barbican have risen and fallen. Group tours available – max 15 people. 45 minute tours

[www.theboxplymouth.com](http://www.theboxplymouth.com)



Elizabethan House



Crownhill Fort

## Crownhill Fort

If you want to explore further afield visit Crownhill Fort where you can actually stay in one of the guardrooms.

Built in the 1860s to protect Plymouth from attack post the Napoleonic wars Crownhill Fort retains its tunnels, earth ramparts, parade ground and cannons. It is one of only two forts in the country to be preserved in such good condition.

Visit the Landmark Trust website for more info <https://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/search-and-book/properties/crownhill-fort>

## Getting here

### Arriving by car

- Drive time from London is around 4 hours.
- Drive time from Manchester is around 4.5 hours.
- Drive time from Cardiff is around 2.5 hours.

### Arriving by train

Plymouth is easily accessible by train. Travelling from London takes around 3 hours with Great Western Railway, if you're coming from the north, the trip from Manchester can take 5 hours 15 minutes.

### Arriving by ferry

You can sail by cruise-ferry to Plymouth from France and Spain. Brittany Ferries run regular services from Roscoff in Brittany and from Santander in Northern Spain to the ferryport at Millbay – close to the city centre and waterfront.

### Arriving by air

There are 3 airports within an easy distance of Plymouth. These are Bristol, Exeter and Newquay.

# Getting around

## Cycling in Plymouth

Plymouth’s waterfront boasts some fantastic sights as you cycle from Sutton Harbour and the Barbican along the easy route to Plymouth Hoe then onto Millbay and Stonehouse before arriving at the Royal William Yard – a former Grade 1 Royal Naval yard.

<https://www.visitplymouth.co.uk/things-to-do/cycle-plymouths-waterfront-p1729843>

Plymouth is also part of the Euro Velodyssey cycling route which is a 1200 km cycling route along the Atlantic Coast, it is an invigorating cycling journey through landscapes of unspoilt beauty.

Plymouth’s part of this cycling route covers Route 27 of the National Cycle Network

<https://www.cycling-lavelodyssee.com/>

## Cycling to Princetown – Dartmoor

<https://www.visitplymouth.co.uk/things-to-do/activities/cycling-and-mountain-biking>

<https://www.explored Devon.info/activities/cycle/princetown-railway/>

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## Walking in Plymouth

There are 9.3 miles (14.9Km) of the South West Coast Path in Plymouth running between Admiral’s Hard in Stonehouse and Jennycliff in Plymstock, known as the Plymouth’s Waterfront Walkway.

For more information on walking in Plymouth please visit <https://www.visitplymouth.co.uk/explore/coast>



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## Accommodation in Plymouth

**Crowne Plaza Hotel**  
[www.crowneplaza.com/crowneplaza/plymouth](http://www.crowneplaza.com/crowneplaza/plymouth)

**Jurys Inn – 247 bedrooms**  
[www.jurysinn.com/plymouth](http://www.jurysinn.com/plymouth)

**Duke of Cornwall – 72 bedrooms**  
[www.dukeofcornwall.co.uk](http://www.dukeofcornwall.co.uk)

**New Continental – 99 bedrooms**  
[www.newcontinental.co.uk](http://www.newcontinental.co.uk)

**Moorland Garden Hotel – 42 rooms**  
[www.moorlandgardenhotel.co.uk](http://www.moorlandgardenhotel.co.uk)

## Food and drink in Plymouth

**Plymouth Gin**  
[www.plymouthdistillery.com](http://www.plymouthdistillery.com)

**The Boathouse Restaurant**  
[www.theboathousecafe.co.uk](http://www.theboathousecafe.co.uk)

**Rockfish Plymouth**  
[www.therockfish.co.uk/restaurants/plymouth](http://www.therockfish.co.uk/restaurants/plymouth)

**Pier Master House**  
[www.piermastershouse.com/](http://www.piermastershouse.com/)

For more information on accommodation and food and drink in Plymouth please visit [www.visitplymouth.co.uk](http://www.visitplymouth.co.uk)



## Looking to stay a little longer – Dartmoor/Princetown

Britain's Ocean City is the perfect base to explore the breath-taking beauty of the south west.

Only a few miles from the city is Dartmoor, one of the finest and largest National parks in Britain and the largest great wilderness in Southern England.

The landscape is unique with its high heather covered moors, ancient standing stones, hut circles and stone clapper bridges. You can walk or cycle whilst enjoying this extraordinary area at its best.

Princetown is one of the highest villages on Dartmoor and home to Dartmoor Prison, built during the Napoleonic Wars.

The prison is the most iconic and famous part of Princetown; the jail is still an important part of the country's prison service, though today visitors can visit the prison museum and learn more about it.

Here you will also find The French Prisoner of War Cemetery, H M Prison Dartmoor, a landscaped burial ground created in 1866-8 to commemorate the French PoWs who lost their lives at Dartmoor Prison during the Napoleonic Wars of 1806- 16.

### Dartmoor Prison

Visit and learn about 'life inside' one of the world's most famous and notorious jails. Our museum attracts more than 35,000 visitors every year from all over the world. Some of the artefacts and documents on display will surprise you but will certainly enable you to form an opinion about prison life.

Vividly portrayed are more than 200 years of this prison's turbulent history ranging from the beginning, when Dartmoor was a Prisoner of War Depot for French and American prisoners of war, to the later convict era through to today.

<https://www.dartmoor-prison.co.uk/>



Dartmoor Prison



Sunset on Dartmoor





Founded in 2004 by Charles Bonaparte, the European Federation of Napoleonic Cities (FECN) brings together more than 50 European cities whose history has been marked by Napoleonic influence.

In 2015, the European dimension of its work was recognised through the certification as “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” of Destination Napoleon, an itinerary enhancing and creating a network of Napoleonic heritage, a shared European one.”

**Plymouth**  
Britain's Ocean City

[www.visitplymouth.co.uk](http://www.visitplymouth.co.uk)