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Go back to nature

Where? Cynefin Retreats, near Hay-on-Wye
Best for: Sustainable luxe seekers

The Welsh word *cynefin* has no precise English translation; it means something along the lines of a natural environment in which you feel a sense of belonging. Opened in March 2019, Cynefin Retreats, a cluster of four timber-clad pods tucked into the Wye Valley, aims to make you feel just that. Cosy on the inside – with king-size beds and woodburners – the real joy is what’s beyond. Floor-to-ceiling windows lead to huge terraces (with hot tubs), which offer unbroken views of rippling hills and starry skies. If the view entices, no problem – a woodland path from the pods leads straight out into the Brecon Beacons.

Pack: A telescope – the Brecon Beacons is one of the country’s best spots for stargazing
Info: Luxe pods (sleep two) start from £150 per night cynefinretreats.com

2

Walk with bears

Where? Wild Place Project, Bristol
Best for: Amateur Attenboroughs

Some 2,000 years ago, native woodland cloaked swathes of Britain and many large animals roamed within. Today, such woods cover only two per cent of the country and species such as bears and wolves are long gone. But it seems they’re making a comeback. This summer, the Wild Place Project is opening Bear Wood, a chunk of forest where European brown bears, lynx, wolves and wolverine can roam as if it’s the first millennium AD. Follow a raised walkway through the woods to see the creatures in their near-as-possible natural habitat. Look out for owls, woodpeckers and wild garlic.

Pack: £75 – the cost of sponsoring a plank on the walkway to do your bit to support Bristol’s bears
Info: Tickets £9.95 adult, £8.50 child wildplace.org.uk



The Welsh word *cynefin* roughly translates to a natural environment in which you feel a sense of belonging.

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Take a moor safari

Where? Exmoor National Park
Best for: Nature lovers, history fans

Exmoor has a bit of everything, from history to abundant wildlife, woodland, coast, river valleys, literary heritage and good food. To better showcase this bounty, a selection of experiences aimed at inspiring in-depth exploration was launched this spring, as part of the English National Park Experience Collection. Catch your own lunch with a mackerel fisherman on the Seafront Dining Adventure, learn to capture the landscapes with your camera on the Moods of Exmoor trip, go animal-spotting by 4WD on the Exmoor Wildlife Safari, or follow the region's great writers on the Literary Footsteps walk.

Pack: Sturdy boots, binoculars and an appetite
Info: One-day experiences range from £55pp to £500pp
nationalparkexperiences.co.uk

4

Stand-up paddle in the city

Where? Original Wild, Bath
Best for: Waterbabies, sightseers

Not only does Bath have super thermal springs, it also has Original Wild. The outdoor adventure company launched in 2018 and reveals a more unusual side to the UNESCO-listed city. From the company's new base at Riverside, try paddleboarding along the River Avon. Easy to master (hardly anyone falls off), you'll soon be gliding along the waterway, passing under bridges, looking out for the peregrine falcon nesting in the spire of St John's Church and waving to bemused tourists, before pulling up at the splendid curve of Pulteney Weir. Original Wild offers raft-building, canoeing, kayaking, climbing and abseiling, too.

Pack: Swimwear, old trainers and a bunch of friends
Info: Stand-up paddle sessions cost from £18pp
originalwild.com

5

Float in the forest

Where? Forest of Dean
Best for: Stressed-out souls

Opened in February 2019, Float in the Forest is the first floatation centre in the Forest of Dean. What's that, you ask? Floatation is a relaxation therapy that involves climbing into a giant bath pod and bobbing in 25cm-deep water that's steeped with buoyancy-aiding Epsom salts and heated to skin temperature. You can choose to float with the light on and the pod door open, or in closed-off darkness to remove all distractions. Either way, the aim is to find your zen; some people find it helps soothe muscles, improve sleep and relieve pain. Also, the centre is right by the woods, so you can take an equally calming walk through the trees after your float.

Pack: An open mind, but not a swimming cossie (you can wear one, but naked floating is recommended)
Info: A float costs £50pp
floatintheforest.co.uk

6

Go coastal foraging

Where? Carmarthenshire
Best for: Creative cooks, hungry kids

Learn to survive like Robinson Crusoe, relying on what you can find for yourself by the sea. Coastal Foraging runs courses along the coast of south-west Wales, and RAF engineer-turned woodland manager Craig Evans leads the hands-on courses. Spend a morning learning about the littoral and searching rock pools, mud flats and estuaries for their natural spoils – which range from prawns and mussels to sea vegetables, truffle-like pepper dulse and crabs. Extreme Low Tide courses might even turn up lobsters and octopus. Then cook up these goodies over a fire in a sheltered sea cave. X

Pack: A tough waterproof bag to carry your foraged finds
Info: A one-day Classic Course is from £80pp, with a £10 refund if arriving by public transport
coastalforaging.co.uk

ALL THE GEAR

Words by Anika Schulze



The tent
Heimplanet The Cave, Classic, €690

An inflatable, all-weather stylish tent. Perfect for your next adventure, this sturdy number has space for three people and only takes a few minutes to assemble. The handy sewn-in bags offer additional storage for all your camping essentials.

heimplanet.com



The van
Bath VW Campers, £28k to £55k

These revamped VW T6s have everything from a stove top and convertible beds to a pop-top and full insulation. Bath VW Campers have excelled at upgrading the classic into something everyone will love all over again. All campers are customisable.

bathvwcampers.co.uk



The stove
BioLite CampStove 2, £129.95

A wood-fired camping stove which includes a battery that self-charges while cooking. Energy efficient, smart-looking and with the ability to boil water for your cup of tea in no time: a must-have for happy campers.

uk.bioliteenergy.com