



# Exeter's historic port

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

# Welcome

The historic estuary town of Topsham is located about 4 miles from the city of Exeter. The town can be easily reached by road or rail, by bicycle or on foot, using the new Exe Estuary Trail. Once here, visitors can enjoy fantastic shopping, award-winning pubs, tearooms and restaurants, as well as excellent walking, bird watching, boat trips, galleries and a fascinating museum.

A town has existed on this site since Roman times. From the medieval period onwards, Topsham became a very important port, and the town still maintains a distinctive maritime feel today.

Topsham is a fascinating town to walk around, with a mixture of architectural styles and numerous independent shops and eateries to discover. The town also plays host to a lively calendar of events, including live music, markets, guided walks, an annual town fayre, food festival and carnival.



# History

Located on fertile land between the Exe and Clyst rivers, Topsham has been inhabited since at least the 1st century AD, when a port was created to serve the Roman city of Exeter (Isca Dumnoniorum). A long straight road, now Topsham Road, connected the two settlements.

Topsham was designated a town by Royal Charter in 1300. During medieval times weirs constructed across the River Exe meant it was impossible for ships to travel upstream to Exeter. Goods were landed at Topsham and the town grew rich from the taxes and duties it collected.

Topsham's past prosperity is evident today in its lavish architecture, including its Dutch-style gabled merchant's houses, elegant townhouses and coaching inns.

Today Topsham is no longer a major port, and instead the estuary has been adapted for pleasure. Popular activities include sailing, walking, cycling, bird watching, boat trips and sampling the excellent local food and drink on offer.



# Shopping

Topsham is a thriving shopping town. Wandering through the streets you will find galleries, antiques, jewellers, florists, wine merchants, as well as designer clothing, second hand books and home furnishings.

The town boasts a great selection of independent shops and boutiques – perfect for finding something unusual and unique. The Antique Centre on the Quayside is home to seventy dealers spread across three floors, selling a fascinating array of antiques and collectables.

Topsham is a great hub for regional produce, with a number of specialist suppliers and producers. Local delicacies on offer include regional cheeses, locally reared meat, and wine, ale and cider produced in the area. Darts Farm, located on the outskirts of the town specialises in local West Country food and drink, as well as beautifully crafted luxury gifts, plus home and lifestyle products.

The town's Saturday morning market in Matthews Hall sells a range of items, from fresh products, preserves and delicatessen, to small antiques, curios, paintings, toys and garden plants.



Shopping in Topsham



Shopping in Topsham

# Food & Drink

Topsham is well known for its great quality food and drink, and locally sourced ingredients feature highly on the menus of the town's award-winning restaurants and cafés. There is a great mix of cuisines to choose from including French, Italian, Mediterranean, Indian and of course British. Fresh fish and seafood are also synonymous with Topsham's location close to the sea.

Topsham's tearooms and cafés are the ideal place to indulge in a traditional cream tea. Topsham is also famous for its pubs, coaching inns and wine bars. Pebblebed wines, Topsham Ales and Green Valley Cider all produce excellent beverages in the town.

For a hands-on local food experience, why not sign up to a cookery class at Route 2, Topsham's eco-café and cycling hub.

Take a boat trip to the Lock Keeper's Cottage café in summer [www.topshamlockcottage.co.uk](http://www.topshamlockcottage.co.uk), or The Turf, a family run canal and riverside pub offering great local food, real ales and fine wines [www.turfpub.net](http://www.turfpub.net)

Each summer, Topsham hosts its annual food festival – a weekend celebration of local food and community, including 'Nello's Longest Table' – an amazing communal feast!



©The Turf



Topsham Food Festival



©Pepplebed Wine Cellar

# Cycling & walking

## Exe Estuary Trail

The Exe Estuary is a unique and very special place. The Exe Estuary NCN Route 2, known as the Exe Estuary Trail is a mainly traffic-free, first class cycling and walking route passing through beautiful riverside towns and villages steeped in maritime history.

The trail rewards cyclists and walkers with excellent views of the estuary and its abundant wildlife. Seasonal ferry companies operate between Exmouth and Starcross and in Topsham to The Turf to help passengers across the river. Ferries are equipped to transport bicycles. The Avocet train line also runs parallel to most of the trail, allowing walkers or cyclists the opportunity to combine rail travel with walking and cycling if desired.

As well as offering fantastic leisure cycling opportunities, the 26 mile trail connects some 80,000 Devon residents to Exeter. For more information visit: [www.cycledevon.info](http://www.cycledevon.info) / [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org)

## Cycle Hire

Cycle hire is available at the following locations in Topsham:

### Route 2 Café Bar & Cycle Hire

1 Monmouth Hill, Topsham, EX3 0JJ

t: 01392 875085 [www.route2topsham.co.uk](http://www.route2topsham.co.uk)

### Darts Farm

Topsham, EX3 0QH

t: 01392 878209 [www.dartsfarm.co.uk](http://www.dartsfarm.co.uk)



Exe Estuary Trail



Route 2 Cycle Hire



## Topsham Tours

Free walking tours of the town with Topsham Society Guides take place Wednesday and Saturday afternoons at 2pm, May – September. No booking necessary. Meet by the notice board in Holman Way car park. For group bookings, call 01392 875276.

## Topsham Treasure Trail

A circular treasure hunt trail, approximately 2 miles long through the town and along the river, with clues to solve along the way! Suitable for pushchairs and wheelchair users. To purchase the trail, visit [www.treasuretrails.co.uk](http://www.treasuretrails.co.uk)

# Boat trips

## Topsham Passenger Ferry

Popular with walkers and cyclists, The Topsham Passenger Ferry runs across the estuary to the Lock Keeper's Cottage [www.topshamlockcottage.co.uk](http://www.topshamlockcottage.co.uk). Ferry services operate daily, except Tuesdays, from Easter until end of September from 11am – 5pm and November to March weekends and (most) bank holidays. The ferry does not operate at low tide. Dogs permitted for a small charge.

## Sea Dream II

This ferry service operates directly to The Turf from Trout's Boatyard. Enjoy a half-hour round trip, or stop off and explore. Sea Dream II operates daily Easter holidays and late May to mid September, weekends April to October. Fully covered in wet weather. Dogs permitted for a small charge.

**t:** 07778 370582 [www.topshamtoturfferry.co.uk](http://www.topshamtoturfferry.co.uk)

## Stuart Line Cruises

Enjoy a round robin boat and train journey with Stuart Line Cruises. Setting out on the calm waters of the Exe Estuary at Topsham, the boat trip takes you to Exmouth, before returning by train to Topsham on the scenic Avocet Line.

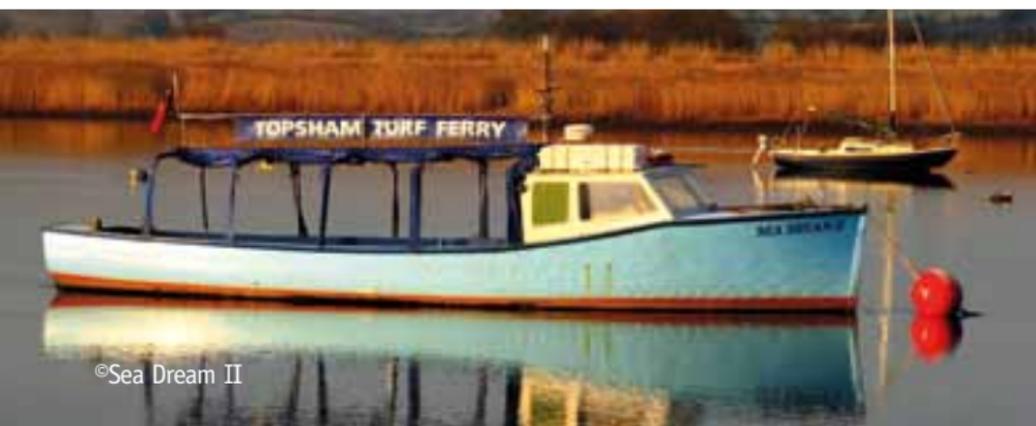
**t:** 01395 222144 [www.stuartlinecruises.co.uk](http://www.stuartlinecruises.co.uk)

## RSPB Avocet Cruises

Take a cruise of the Exe Estuary to spot winter visitors including avocets, black-tailed godwits, Brent geese and red breasted mergansers. Full and mini guided cruises available throughout Nov – Feb from Topsham. Advanced booking essential.

**t:** 01392 432691

[www.rspb.org.uk/datewithnature/146928-avocet-cruises](http://www.rspb.org.uk/datewithnature/146928-avocet-cruises)





## Outdoor activities

### Bird watching

Get up-close and personal with the huge flocks of winter birds visiting the Exe Estuary at Topsham's Bowling Green Marsh. The hide and viewing platform offer an excellent vantage point. The RSPB also has a shop at nearby Darts Farm.

[www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/b/bowlinggreenmarsh](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/b/bowlinggreenmarsh)

### Swimming

Topsham's outdoor heated swimming pool is open May – September. The giant inflatable family float sessions, adults-only swim sessions, private hire, plus stripey deckchairs, tables and brollies at the poolside, make a visit to Topsham Pool part of a great day out for all the family.

Fore Street, Topsham, EX3 0HF

t: 01392 874477 [www.topshampool.com](http://www.topshampool.com)



## Bowling

Topsham Bowling Club is a lawn bowls club located opposite the entrance to Topsham Pool.

New members welcome.

Fore Street, Topsham, EX3 0HF

t: 01392 877 364 [www.topshambc.co.uk](http://www.topshambc.co.uk)

## Tennis

Two hard tennis courts are located in Topsham Pleasure Ground. These courts are free to use and do not need to be booked.

Off Fore Street, Topsham EX3 0HF

## Sailing

Topsham Sailing Club is situated on the upper tidal reaches of the River Exe. Membership is open to everyone, and summer visitors can pay for storage, moorings, and temporary membership, subject to availability.

Hawkins Quay, Ferry Road, Topsham, EX3 0JN

t: 01392 877 524 [www.topsham-sc.org.uk](http://www.topsham-sc.org.uk)

## Play areas

There are four play areas in Topsham:

**Southbrook Road Play Area** – suitable for under 12s.

Location: Off Southbrook Road

**Tappers Close Play Area** – suitable for toddlers.

Location: Off Tappers Close via Station Road.

**Topsham Pleasure Ground Play Area** – suitable for toddlers.

Location: Off Fore Street

**Topsham Recreation Ground Play Area** – suitable for under 12s and teens. Site amenities: play park, skate park, parking & picnic area.

Location: Off Ashford Road via Exeter Road.

# Topsham Museum

Topsham Museum is housed in a group of late 17th century buildings overlooking the Exe Estuary. As well as the furnished period rooms of the merchant's house, visitors can also enjoy displays of local history with a maritime background; wildlife on the Exe Estuary and memorabilia of the film star Vivien Leigh.

The River Gallery, accessible to wheelchairs from the garden, features a unique collection of historic River Exe craft. A lift or the stunning staircase takes you to the sail loft showing the development of Topsham over 2,000 years.

The Riverside Garden is open to the public all year round whilst cream teas are served in the museum and gardens throughout the summer. The shop carries a wide range of gifts and memorabilia.

Open: Easter – Oct Sat, Sun, Mon, Wed & Thurs  
(& Tues in Aug) 2pm – 5pm. Admission free.

25 The Strand, Topsham, EX3 0AX

t: 01392 873244 [www.devonmuseums.net/topsham](http://www.devonmuseums.net/topsham)



## Places to stay

Throughout Topsham, there is a good mix of hotels, B&Bs and self-catering accommodation to choose from. From traditional accommodation to contemporary designed rooms, there is something to suit everyone. For further details of where to stay in Topsham, visit [www.ExploreExeter.co.uk](http://www.ExploreExeter.co.uk)



Offering a wide range of services to help make your visit to Topsham and the surrounding area as enjoyable as possible.

These include:

- Accommodation bookings
- Leaflets, local event information & tickets
- Bus & train times
- Discount vouchers for local attractions
- Wide range of maps, books & souvenirs



Dix's Field, Exeter, EX1 1GF

t: 01392 665700

e: [evit@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:evit@exeter.gov.uk)

[www.exeter.gov.uk/visiting](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/visiting)

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

Open: Mon – Sat, 9am – 5pm

(Oct – Mar, 9.30am – 4.30pm)

Bank holidays, 10am – 4pm

Reduced opening over

Christmas period.

## Travelling to Topsham

Travelling to Topsham from Exeter by public transport is very convenient. Regular bus services operate between the two, as well as a frequent train service. For further information, visit [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info). The town can also be reached by ferry, on bicycle or on foot using the Exe Estuary Trail.

### Whilst in Exeter, why not visit:

**Bill Douglas Centre** t: 01392 724321 [www.billdouglas.org](http://www.billdouglas.org)

**Cricklepit Mill** t: 01392 279 244 [www.devonwildlifetrust.org/cricklepit](http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/cricklepit)

**Exeter Cathedral** t: 01392 285983 [www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk](http://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk)

**Exeter Phoenix** t: 01392 667080 [www.exeterphoenix.org.uk](http://www.exeterphoenix.org.uk)

**Exeter Red Coat Guided Tours** t: 01392 265203 [www.exeter.gov.uk/guidedtours](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/guidedtours)

**Exeter's Underground Passages** t: 01392 665887 [www.exeter.gov.uk/passages](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/passages)

**Royal Albert Memorial Museum** t: 01392 265858 [www.rammuseum.org.uk](http://www.rammuseum.org.uk)

**St Nicholas Priory – A Tudor Home** t: 01392 265858 [www.exeter.gov.uk/priory](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/priory)

**Spacex Gallery** t: 01392 431786 [www.spacex.org.uk](http://www.spacex.org.uk)

**Tuckers Hall** t: 01392 412348 [www.tuckershall.org.uk](http://www.tuckershall.org.uk)

**Quay House Visitor Centre** t: 01392 271611 [www.exeter.gov.uk/quayhouse](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/quayhouse)

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure that the information in this leaflet is correct, Exeter City Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies. This document is available in other formats.



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**recycle** for Exeter