



Mill Cross Retreats Guidebook

Please read on for a selection of info on food, drink, places to visit & things to do

See our blogs at www.millcrossretreats.com/blog for lots of ideas for places to go, things to do & places to eat.

FOOD

We run The Bakehouse as part of Mill Cross Retreats where we offer cookery classes & private dining. You can [book](#) private woodfired pizza classes with us during your stay at a time to suit you, with 10% discount for you as a guest.

We now also offer [private woodfired dining](#) for our staying guests with 10% discount too and no corkage fees. Our website advertises a minimum of 4 people, but we are able to offer dining to staying guests for just 2 people. A really unique and tailored experience.

If there are any other opportunities during your stay (for occasional woodfired pizzas or meals), we will let you know. We are committed to locally sourced, organic and local food and have put together a selection of places to eat, drink & shop below.

Good places to eat & drink

This is our shortlist - you won't find any shortage of great food in the South West and we are forever having food festivals so look out for these on your visit.

The Church House Inn in Rattery www.thechurchhouseinn.co.uk

We think: this place was a major draw for us in moving to Rattery. The food is excellent, the pub is friendly and it has good ale. There's a lovely beer garden and in the Summer they have a wood fired oven on a Monday or a Wednesday night (do check opening hours & what's on). They have special offers on- check their website for info.

Riverford Field Kitchen www.fieldkitchen.riverford.co.uk

We think: This is our favourite go to and worth a visit for their approach to all things organic in their lovely wooden barn or outside in warmer weather. You can now book your own private table- in the past you shared with others. It's just marvellous and great value for money. You need to book in advance. If you would like to try just one place during your stay, this would be it, in our view.

The Bull Inn - Totnes www.bullinntotnes.co.uk

We think: just brilliant- owned by Guy(Riverford founder) and Giti Watson-Singh, featuring fantastic small plates (always interesting and always delicious) and more substantial seasonal main courses. Good wine list and attractive and interesting interior. Well worth a visit but you need to book! One of our favourite eateries.

The Cott Inn at Dartington www.cottinn.co.uk

We think: this used to be our local - it's an award winning pub with very good food, a friendly ambience and a nice garden. It gets **very** busy so if you want to eat it's best to book.

The Old Library in Ashburton www.theoldlibraryrestaurant.co.uk

We think: This is a firm favourite, run by two young, talented chefs. It's small and friendly. They are only occasionally open in the evenings- if they are you'll need to book but it's well worth a visit. Their breakfasts are **amazing** too. Go out of your way to go there if you're visiting lovely Ashburton.

Emilia Osteria in Ashburton- www.emiliaashburton.co.uk

We think: proper Italian food, beautifully served in this small, local restaurant. well worth a visit. A bit pricey but lovely.

The Anchorstone Cafe in Dittisham www.anchorstonecafe.co.uk

We think: Highly rated by our son Joe & his family who rave about the great views and excellent family friendly seafood. In a beautiful spot on the Dart.

The Church House in Holne www.facebook.com/churchhouseholne

We think: this pub was lacklustre for years but has been taken over by a local couple who have had the brilliant tearoom in Holne for the last few years and what a transformation! Sunday lunches & evening meals are very good and the service is friendly and reliable. Though it isn't open every day, the simple menu is well executed and it's the perfect spot for a meal after a hike on Dartmoor.

Rumours in Totnes www.rumourtotnes.com

We think: this is a perennial favourite – a busy wine bar with pizzas, steaks and standard wine bar fare which is a local to many in Totnes. Café style food served all day.

Sandridge Barton-home of Sharpham Wine www.sandridgebarton.com

Sharpham Wine used to be based at Sharpham on the Dart which was a walk from Totnes. It relocated last year to Sandridge Barton at Stoke Gabriel on the other side of Totnes. **We think:** Well worth a visit for their excellent wine and cheese tasting or a slightly more swanky lunch in the [restaurant](#). Features small plates and seasonal food- well executed in a beautifully remodelled restaurant.

Gather- Totnes- www.gathertotnes.com

We think: this is a really lovely, cosy fine dining restaurant in the heart of Totnes- where you will sample food sourced locally along with foraged ingredients from the fields, shoreline, rivers and hedgerows.

They offer taster menus and this is a place that's well worth a visit.

Waterside Bistro in Totnes www.watersidebistro.com

We think: this is a classic bistro, serving good quality wine, seafood and pizzas with riverside views. Not a haunt of ours but has good feedback from friends.

The Winking Prawn in Salcombe www.winkingprawn.co.uk

We think: Although we're not huge fans of Salcombe, many of our guests love it and like to visit the town and beaches so if you're heading that way, this is THE place to eat. Award winning seafood! What's not to like?

Live and Let Live Inn at Landscope www.liveandletlivepub.com

We think: this pub is getting very good reviews for its Gastropub food

The Green Table on the Dartington estate
www.dartington.org/visit/food-drink/the-green-table

We think: this is on the Dartington estate so good after a walk around the new walks or gardens there. Under new ownership and much improved by all accounts.

Bayard's Kitchen at Dartington Shops www.bayardskitchen.co.uk

We think: this is a great little café, serving good coffee and lunches – definitely the best place to eat if you are visiting the shops at Dartington.

Rockfish in Dartmouth
www.therockfish.co.uk/pages/dartmouth-seafood-restaurant

We think: if you have a trip to Dartmouth, Rockfish is part of the chain owned by chef Mitch Tonks – offers good value seafood in a nice spot. They also have a very good fish and chip takeaway there too. If you go further afield, there's also Rockfish restaurants in Exmouth, Exeter and Brixham.

The Oystershack- <https://www.oystershack.co.uk/>

We think: This is a really lovely, special and unique place to eat great oysters (with a great range of toppings) and BBQd fish and other fabulous options. We would highly recommend but check the tide times before you go to plan your route! The tidal road from Aveton Gifford isn't for the faint hearted!

Cafe on The Green-Widecombe www.thecafeonthegreen.co.uk

We think: terrific food, catering for a great range of tastes from breakfasts to afternoon teas but including some really excellent healthy options as well as great meat/veggie/vegan burgers and more. If you're on the moor, this place is definitely worth a visit. Lovely staff too!

[Things Happen Here](#) - Dartington- community owned brewery & events

We think: well worth a visit- not the most of attractive of buildings in the former community centre but on a lovely summer evening you can sit outside for a very jolly, convivial local atmosphere and drink their very drinkable range of community owned,

locally brewed beers. There's often street food there (check out their website) and it sits next to Pizza Logica (take out pizzas).

Further afield: if you're going to Plymouth, it's worth a visit to the Royal William Yard www.royalwilliamyard.com, where they have a range of restaurants, or to Barbican Kitchen www.barbicanKitchen.com or Plymouth Gin Distillery www.plymouthdistillery.com.

If you are heading back up the A38 towards the M5, it is worth a stop off in Topsham which has a great range of independent shops, cafes and restaurants as well as nice estuary views and walks.

Good places for coffee & possibly breakfast:

We're passionate about great coffee and hope you'll enjoy the lovely Grumpy Mule coffee we provide here. If you like to get out for a coffee- here's our shortlist;

Canteen in Totnes- www.instagram.com/canteentotnes/

Hairy Barista in Totnes- www.facebook.com/thehairybarista

Curator in Totnes- www.thecurator.co.uk

Almond Thief Bakery at Dartington (Webbers Yard, just before the roundabout)- www.thealmondthief.com

The Old Library in Ashburton- www.theoldlibraryrestaurant.co.uk

Rafikis in Ashburton (veggie/vegan) www.rafikis.co.uk

Home Farm Cafe at Parke, Bovey Tracy (see walks) www.homefarmcafe.co.uk

Ben's Farm Shop at Staverton www.bensfarmshop.co.uk

The Green Table on the Dartington estate
www.dartington.org/visit/food-drink/the-green-table

WALKING

We are keen walkers when time allows and are very happy to chat to you about places off the beaten track where you can get away from it all. We have left a selection of maps and walking guides for you to borrow – do take them out and about but please return! There are also suggestions in our [blogs](#)

Walks in the area

If you would like a short morning walk (with or without doggie companion), go out of the front of Mill Cross House, turn left towards the village. When you get to the pub, look to your left and you will see a footpath signposted. Take the narrow track, which brings you into a field with lovely views down towards Totnes. Keep to the top of the field and cross into the second field. When you get to the end, either turn left & come back down the hill with Mill Cross House on your left (this will take you about 25 minutes start to finish) **or** turn right and walk up the hill to Crabbers Cross. At the cross, turn right down the lane and you walk down a beautiful old lane with woodland to your left. When you get to the very bottom of this lane, turn right into the village and you will see the pub on your left. You can either walk back up the footpath and then turn left as described above or follow the road back round to Mill Cross House. This will take less than an hour – unless you stop at the pub!

A longer walk from the door...

Take the lane left out of Mill Cross House towards the pub. On your right, you see Allercombe Farm just beyond the village hall. Take the footpath down to the farm and then follow it up the path and into the field, where you will see a river down to your left. Hug the top of the field, which leads you to a woodland path. Stay on; you can't go wrong on this path. When you get to the end of this (you'll see a house down to your right) bear left along the path and this leads you to the pretty hamlet of Brooking. Cross the river on the path and walk up the short hill – turn left at the end and keep climbing up – it's a nice, steep walk with good views. When you get to the end of this road, turn left which brings you back down into Rattery. This walk will take around 2 hours – but the pint at the pub will make this well worth it...**n.b. this walk can be very muddy if it has been raining!**

Other local(ish) walks we'd recommend-

Parke (Bovey Tracy)- NT car park, shortish woodland walks along the river or (our favourite) a longer walk towards Lustleigh, turn left before the village and pick up the path through Pullbrook Wood), down to Lustleigh & then after a stop at the pub or the tearoom, back to Parke. There is a great cafe there- Home Farm Cafe.

Hembury Woods (not far from Buckfast Abbey) - NT free car park- there is a shortish (45 minute) river loop but we'd recommend hiking up to the fort, walking across parkland to the top of the woods & then back down to the beautiful River Dart (about 75 mins)

Bench Tor and Vennford Reservoir-go up beyond Holne onto Dartmoor and you will soon see Vennford Reservoir on your left. Park opposite and walk diagonally up onto Bench Tor where you will have the most incredible views down to the Dart. Walk along the Tor then drop down through the Rowan trees into ancient woodland and down to the Dart. Climb back up and pick up the "pipe track" to your right which will take you back to the reservoir. You can walk around it (about 2.5 hours in total) and then head to the pub (Church House Inn) in Holne.

Dartington Deer Walk and others- this is a well marked route which takes you from beautiful Dartington Hall Estate down along a medieval path and then along the River Dart and back up (about 45 mins) but there are lots of variations including a circular walk adding in North Woods, or continuing along the deer walk and picking up the access for all path from Totnes to Dartington Cider Press and then back onto the Dartington Hall estate. These walks take a couple of hours each and are lovely.

Avon Dam and Shipley Bridge-if you want a Dartmoor experience with a solid path, head to Shipley Bridge (about 10 minutes from here) and park where you can follow the path up to the spectacular Avon Dam. It's about a 2 hour loop.

Totnes to Sharpham

Alas, Sharpham wine & cheese has now relocated to Stoke Gabriel (worth a visit) but this is a lovely walk along the edge of the Dart. Start just above The Steam Packet Inn in Totnes and meander along the river to Sharpham and then up to Ashprington (try the Durant Arms) & then back to Totnes. The views are lovely and you can see Haytor on the way back.

For more experienced walkers who can follow a map and have hiking boots;

Cross Furzes- this is our favourite starting point for a Dartmoor walk... about 20 mins from here and under used. Park and walk down the track opposite you where you can do a variety of circular walks from a couple of hours to 5 or 6. Head left at the top of Lambsdown for Avon Dam then to Huntingdon Cross and back across to inner and outer Pupers before coming back down past Heyford- this is about 4 hours- we are happy to talk to you about the route up here.

Bonehill Rocks to Hameldown & to Widecombe

Another brilliant circular walk from Bonehill Rocks (about 25 mins drive from here) down to the small hamlet of Natsworthy and then up to Hameldown for a couple of hours before dropping down into Widecombe where you can check out the excellent

Cafe on The Green or the wonderful Rugglestone Inn before walking back up to Bonehill Rocks through the lanes.

Ask us about other places to walk- and look at the guidebooks and maps, as well as Devon Life magazines for other ideas. Walks on Dartmoor generally require a degree of navigational skills, sturdy walking boots and waterproofs. It can be very plashy so trainers won't be much help.

SHOPPING FOR FOOD

If you haven't guessed by now, we are all about local & would really encourage you to support local shops & jobs by using them, as opposed to supermarkets.

Ben's Farm Shop www.bensfarmshop.co.uk (used to be Riverford Farm Shop – still in the same family but re-branded) is at Riverford Bridge (about 10 minutes from here). They also have a small shop in Totnes. The Riverford Bridge shop also has a café. This is our favourite go-to shop & has pretty much all you might need during your stay; organic, local and ethical meat, alcoholic & non-alcoholic drinks, bread & bakes, dried goods, ready meals, ice-cream, deli items & of course wonderful fruit & veg.

Totnes is stuffed full of independent shops (food & non food). The market in Totnes has a great range of food (Fridays & Saturdays). If you're after decent meat, we use **Halls Butchers or Olivers** in Totnes (both on Fore Street). Ben's sells organic & free-range meat.

There are 2 independent wine shops & we also love Annies & The Happy Apple in Totnes.

If cheese is your thing, try the **Ticklemore Cheese shop** in Totnes (Ticklemore Street) or take a trip to **Sharpham Vineyard** (in Stoke Gabriel) for amazing cheese. Also the wonderful **Cheese Shed** in Bovey Tracey www.thecheeseshed.com (if you are walking at Parke, this is very near!)

There is a small farm shop at **Dean Court** www.facebook.com/deancourtfarmshopandkitchen about 5 minutes from here.

The Post Office & Shop at Dartington (just 5 minutes away and open from 8-6 during the week & on Saturdays & from 9-12 on Sundays) has a good selection of food. The **Texaco garage** next door sells some organic food, including brilliant vegan and dairy home made ice creams & incredible truffles & locally made organic Indian curries to take away! Who'd have thought it?!

Briar Bakery in Ashburton has wonderful bread and cakes and is well worth a trip.

Ashburton Deli www.facebook.com/AshburtonDelicatessen run by mother and son Sue and Robin Hudson is great and there's also a brilliant **Fish Deli** www.thefishdeli.co.uk, selling fresh fish and ready-made seafood meals.

There are a range of other independent shops in Ashburton and a small Co-op.

The Almond Thief bakery at Dartington www.thealmondthief.com (in the industrial units) has good homemade bread and cakes and excellent coffee- you can sit in. Check opening times

Pizza Logica offers takeaway pizzas at Dartington www.pizzalogica.uk

There is a wholefood shop and cafe in Buckfastleigh called **The Seed** www.buckfastleighseed.co.uk which has a good variety of dried and fresh produce.

If you need a supermarket, there are Co-ops in Buckfastleigh and South Brent. If you would like any other advice, please ask.

PLACES TO VISIT & THINGS TO DO

There really is so much to do here that you won't be short of ideas. Here's our round-up of the best (again, see Devon Life magazines provided for other ideas).

See our [blogs](#) for lots of curated ideas for places to go, things to do & places to eat.

Dartington Estate – lovely walks, beautiful gardens and plenty of events year round. N.B. You cannot take dogs into the gardens but you can walk them on the estate. Do visit The Green Table if you go to Dartington- great coffee and nice lunches/cakes.

Totnes – our local town, lovingly referred to as “twinned with Narnia”. Full of quirky, independent shops and cafes. There is a market there on Fridays and Saturdays at the top of the town, and do explore the narrows right up at the top. If you would like to walk from Totnes, you can walk up to Dartington Estate, or along the river to the Cider Press Centre.

Beaches – so many to mention... but Bantham is great (fantastic tin can café there too!), Bigbury with Burgh Island (Pilchard Inn pub and beachside cafes), South Milton (great if a little expensive cafe); Slapton (miles of open beach, where they practised for the Normandy landings), Wonwell (limited parking), Lanacombe (limited parking), Beesands. Please ask us for more info.

We really would suggest you avoid Torquay, Paignton and Brixham.

Dartmoor – Avon Dam is the closest and has a lovely walk along a two mile path to the Dam (park at Shipley Bridge)- you can also then walk up onto open moorland, but also lovely local(ish) walks at Venford Reservoir, Bench Tor, New Bridge. Please see guide books for your use while staying here

Ashburton

Quaint stannary town less than 10 minutes drive with lots of independent shops, cafes and eateries and some great antiques.

Buckfast Abbey

This is a Benedictine Abbey built 100 years ago. There are lovely gardens and if you visit their Millennium Garden, you will see the wonderful oak arches that Kevin made for this award-winning garden.

National Trust properties

Nearby, we have Saltram House, Greenway (Agatha Christie's home), Collaton Fishacre (**our favourite**-really lovely, and has great walks to the sea), A la Ronde, Lydford Gorge, Castle Drogo (amazing walks), and Killerton... to name a few.

Totnes to Dartmouth Round Robin This is a mixed journey done on bus, boat and steam train (you can stop on the train at Greenway, Agatha Christie's home). It takes

you (either way) to Dartmouth, Kingswear and Paignton. It's seasonal, so check the website.

CULTURAL

When we get away, we often use the opportunity to get to a concert, theatre performance or film. Here are some ideas if this is your kind of thing.

Totnes Cinema www.totnescinema.co.uk (just brilliant, independent cinema where you have your own table or sofa and can sip a cocktail, wine or craft beer before/during/after the showing)

Plymouth Theatre Royal (about 30 mins) www.theatreroyal.com

Dartington Hall (about 15 mins)- wide variety of events including music, cinema & theatre www.dartington.org

Buckfast Abbey (concerts/events) www.buckfast.org.uk

The Northcott Theatre, Exeter www.exeternorthcott.co.uk

CYCLING

We're on a national cycle route (route 2) and Kevin can give you good advice for moorland/coastal cycling.

If you would like to cycle on paths, there are some good rides from Saltram House (National Trust at Plymouth) up to the moor and you can stop at the Skylark pub.

Another lovely cycle is from Starcross to Exmouth – via Exeter if you'd like. You can get the ferry back across, or cycle both ways. There are loads of good places to stop – pubs and cafes – ask us for ideas. Topsham is a popular stopping point and is very pretty.