



The Great British* picnic

When the sun is out, there's no better way to explore the great outdoors than with a well-stocked picnic basket. We explore five of the best spots to lay your blanket, suggest what to pack and where to camp out in style nearby



WIN!
A two-night break at the luxury Priors Bay Hotel on the Isle of Wight



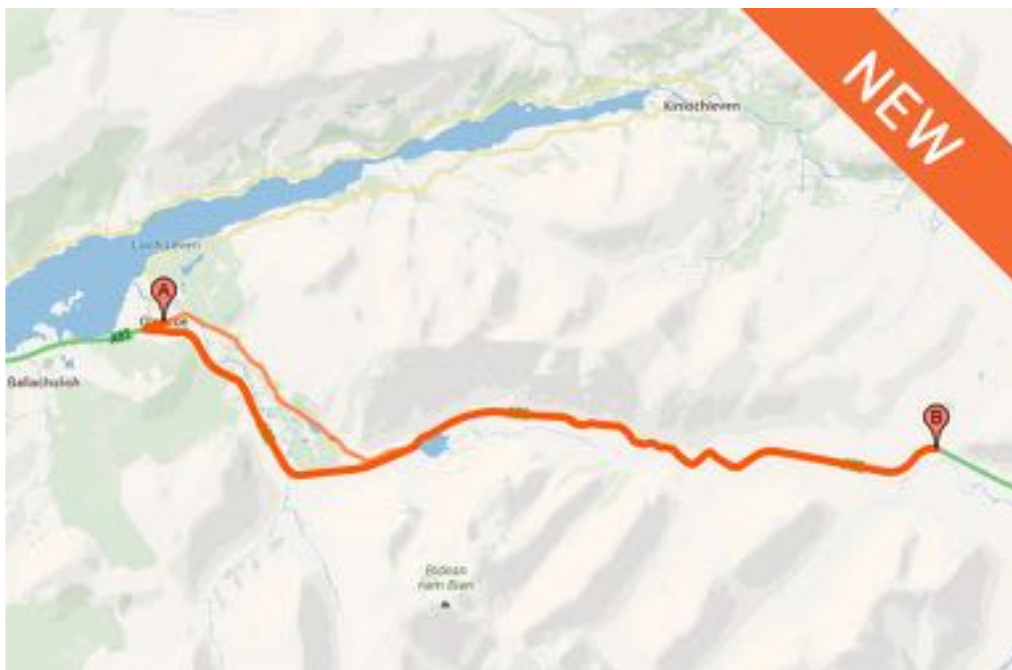
1. THE NORTH

Where to picnic

Glencoe is without doubt one of Scotland's most scenic glens, and the picnic spot about five miles outside the village on the A82 offers unrivalled views of the Hidden Valley, the mountains rising sharply on either side of the valley, and the collection of ridges known as the Tl Sisters. The route leading here is also one of the most rewarding dri in the country, as it hugs Loch Linnhe's shoreline for most of the journey with striking views of Castle Stalker. This is unspoiled Scottish Highlands at its best, and the surrounding area is known as the Outdoor Capital of the UK with very good reason.

Getting there

Click [here](#) to plan your route with RAC's new Route Planner.



If it's raining

The view from the parking area is truly spectacular, so just stay warm and dry in your car, put on your favourite music, and admire the views that stretch out in front of you.

This indulgent prize offers one dinner for two, including wine. Terms and conditions and further details available via the link below.

PRIORY BAY
HOTEL

Enter the
competition

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What's in the picnic basket

Get some crusty bread and pile it high with tasty Inverawe smoked salmon, which goes beautifully with [Ardshealach Smokehouse](#) smoked cheese. Both are lovely and local. Then wash it all down with a cool Bouvrage fruit juice, available from the great [Castle Stalker View shop](#). And why not buy a few bottles of [Fyne Ales](#)' Avalanche Beer to take home while you're there.



Where to stay

Erected along the shores of Loch Linnhe with easy access to the mountains of Mull and the Kingairloch coastline, [Ecopod](#) is the perfect option for city dwellers keen to escape the urban humdrum and reacquaint themselves with nature. Not only are the geodesic domes here little cocoons of luxury, but they also leave no lasting footprint on the environment. Blending open-plan living with classic designer furniture and quirky traditional touches like stag antlers, the ecopods rely on sustainable energy to ensure this guilt-free luxury experience doesn't cost the earth.



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2. THE SOUTH

Where to picnic

Nearly half of the Isle of Wight is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so it really is no challenge to find a host of brilliantly scenic picnic spots. Topping that list is **Tennyson Down** where you can follow in the footsteps of poet Alfred Tennyson who used to take daily walks there. Marvel at the chalk cliffs and dramatic ocean views, or simply get your fill of fresh air, which Tennyson once described as pure enough to be worth "six pence a pint". Fancy burning some calories after your meal? Simply explore the Tennyson walking trail which forms part of the Isle of Wight Coast Path.

Getting there

[Click here](#) to plan your route with RAC's new Route Planner.



If it's raining

From the Down, head west along the trail towards the Tennyson Monument and on to Freshwater Bay where you will find a cosy sea-front shelter with striking views overlooking the coastline.

What's in the picnic basket

Any sarnies made with the skillfully baked bread from **The Island Bakers** will be stunning, but never more so than when you pair it with

Isle of Wight Cheese's Gallybagger and Oak Roasted Tomatoes from [The Tomato Stall](#). Wash it down with the award-winning single variety apple juice from [Afton Park](#), located in Freshwater Bay.



Where to stay

Dating back to the 14th Century, the [Priory Bay Hotel](#) is steeped in history. It is nestled between the two popular sailing villages of Seaview and Bembridge, and boasts a 70-acre country estate that used to be home to medieval monks. Stylish, spacious and filled with luxury furniture (most of it crafted on the island), each yurt is accessed through a stable door with French windows and boasts its own secluded terrace where guests can soak up the tranquil atmosphere.



WIN!

A two-night break at the luxury Priory Hotel on the Isle of Wight

Your chance to win an indulgent stay in one of the world's finest independent hotels. Terms

and conditions and further details available via the link below

PRIORY BAY
HOTEL

Enter the competition



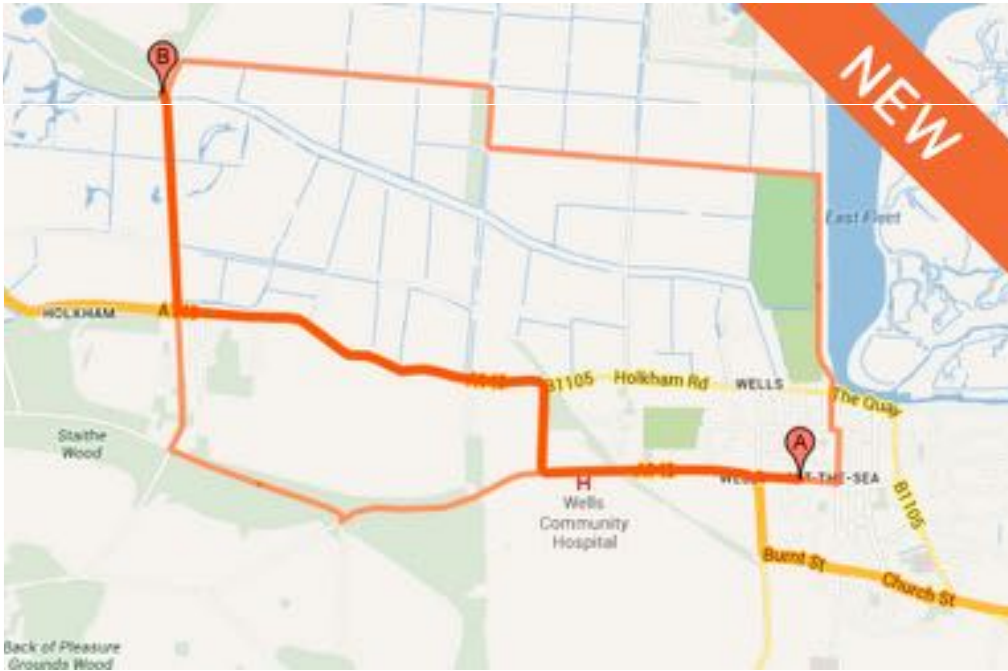
3. THE EAST

Where to picnic

Boasting some of the most diverse stretches of coastline in Britain, [Holkham National Nature Reserve](#) is home to dozens of jaw-dropping picnic spots. The Reserve's biggest asset is undoubtedly its massive 11-mile-long beach – making it perfect for walking, playing and kite flying. Concerned you'll be exposed to the wind? No worries, there are some great sheltered spots between the dunes. After your meal you can explore the unique salt marsh (it's one of only two in Europe that actually continues to grow), and the stretch of tranquil pine forests created over 150 years ago to protect the fragile coastline.

Getting there

[Click here](#) to plan your route with RAC's new Route Planner.



If it's raining

Cromer is an old school seaside resort famous for its traditional pier and stretched-out beaches. It also offers plenty of sheltered options to keep you dry without dampening the picnic spirit.

What's in the picnic basket

The seafood in Norfolk is exceptional, with scores of roadside shops along the coast selling the freshest mussels, cockles and whelks available. Crab sandwiches are a local delicacy here and are perfect for picnics, especially when combined with salty samphire, which grows in the marshes along the coast.



Where to stay

With miles of England's finest beaches right on its doorstep, the canvas safari tents at this Norfolk glamping site are exceptionally appealing.

The Wild Luxury Lodge was designed to be erected and dismantled for the season, and is miles off the beaten track. At its heart this is wild camping at its best with only badgers and birds keeping you company,

although there is nothing rough about having a full-size dining table, warm shower and flushing toilet in your tent.



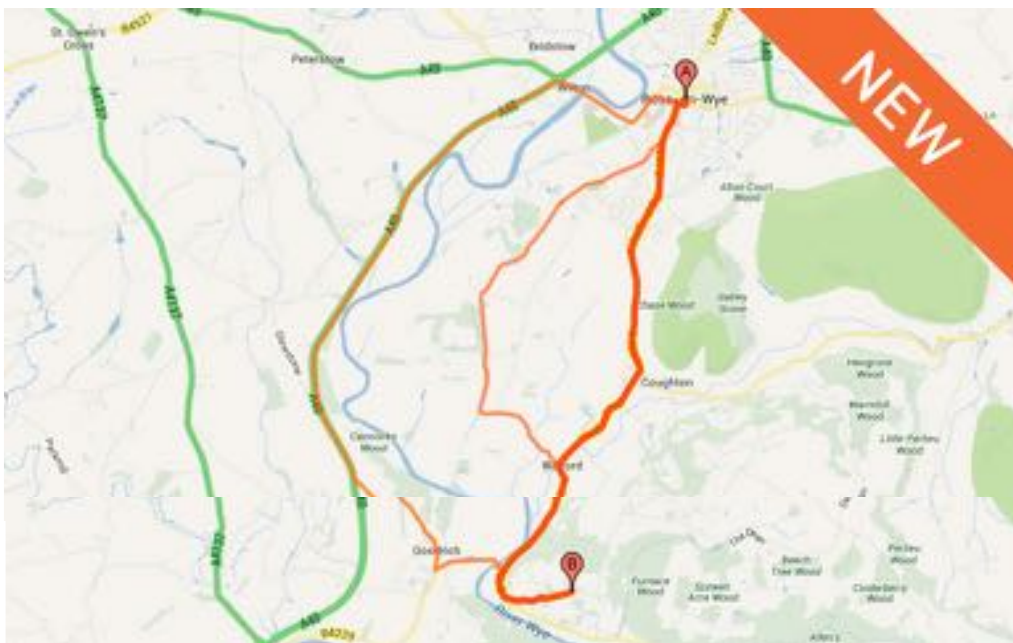
4. THE WEST

Where to picnic

Taking its name from the nearby arched road bridge, the pretty village of **Kerne Bridge** makes for a splendid base from which to explore the Wye valley. Located about 3.5 miles south of the market town of Ross-on-Wye, the parish used to be known as 'the Quern' until it was renamed in 1828 to pay homage to the bridge upon its completion. The picnic spot is located near the single-track railway bridge, from where many walks exploring the valley start. For a more adventurous alternative, rent a canoe and enjoy the surrounding countryside from the water.

Getting there

[Click here](#) to plan your route with RAC's new Route Planner.



If it's raining

Symonds Yat Rock is a famous viewpoint from where to admire the meandering coils of the River Wye. It also offers great rustic wooden enclosures where you can stay dry.

What's in the picnic basket

Herefordshire is all about gorgeous cider and perry, with more than half of Britain's production hailing from this county. Stock up on a selection of cider and perry offerings to enjoy when you get home at **Truffles Deli**, a foodie haven in Ross-on-Wye, and keep an eye out for other local delicacies like **Butford Organics'** Magnificent Organic Marmalade and Dore Valley Chocolates.



Where to stay

Although you stay in tents at **Hollings Hill Farm**, there is no roughing it here. The farm can accommodate up to 36 people in tents that closely resemble a traditional farmhouse kitchen – complete with a small wood-burning stove and bread oven. Guests can look forward to a private hot tub right next to their tent. And when you arrive, the stove will already be lit and candles burning, with a freshly homebaked cake filling the canvas with mouth-watering aromas.



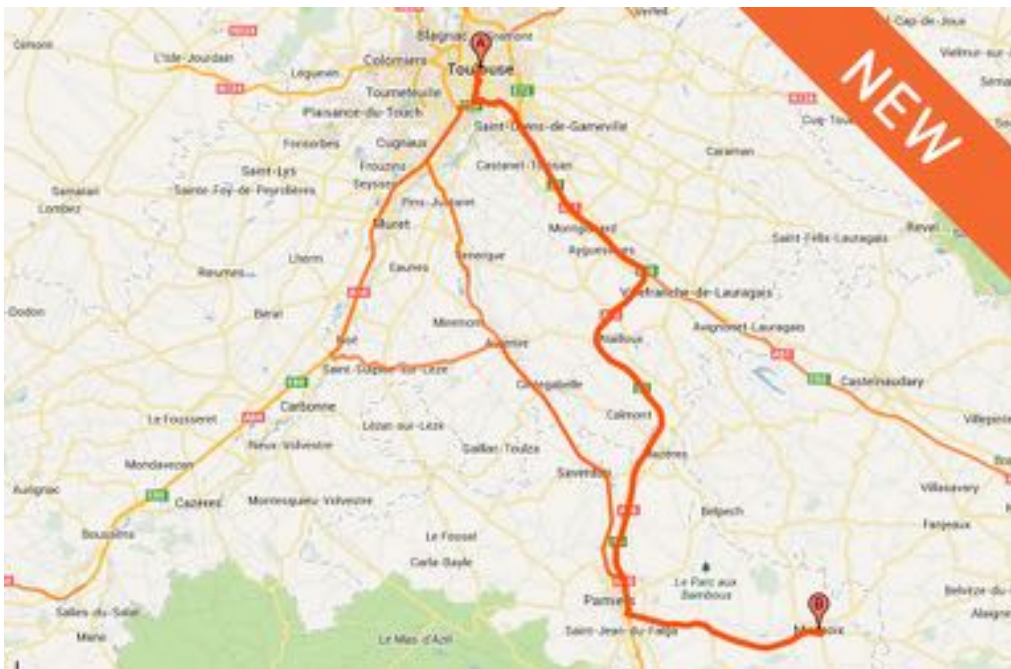
5. FRANCE (*IN CASE IT'S RAINING AT HOME!)

Where to picnic

Mirepoix is as pretty a fortified town as they come, and boasts one of the best-preserved and most striking medieval town squares on the continent. Simply lay out a blanket on the lawn of **Place du Maréchal-Leclerc** and soak up the bustling village atmosphere while tucking into your French cuisine. Mondays are when the weekly market takes place on the square, adding an extra buzz to the place, not to mention its great local food options.

Getting there

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If it's raining

One of Mirepoix's greatest attractions is the 16th Century covered walkways that surround the square. Not only do these 'couverts' add a stunning medieval backdrop to any picnic, but they also provide very practical shelter against inclement weather under its massive medieval beams.

What's in the picnic basket

For lovely bread look no further than Boulangerie de Rieucros on the National road just outside town, which goes beautifully with the organic foie gras from [Domain de Sié](#), while [La Ferme aux Bisons](#)' bison paté offers an unusual alternative. And no trip to France would be complete without buying a great local wine to take home; the Ariège region isn't Burgundy but [Les Coteaux d'Engravies](#) is a top drop.



Where to stay

Nestled in the foothills of the Pyrenees, you can be forgiven for feeling like you've passed through a time portal when arriving at [Belrepayre](#), with only vintage caravans or Airstream models allowed at this retro-styled campsite. Don't have your own classic caravan? Simply hire one of nine Airstreams on site, all kitted out according to a theme – from 70s Rock to the 1953 Silver Streak Clipper decked out in 1950s kitchenware with brightly hued curtains.