

# the simple things

August



## JOLLY

Summer reading • Tea dresses • Cool tins of fish • Parks & peaks  
SHADY SPOTS • BEACH CAFES • SUNFLOWERS • OLD-FASHIONED FUN

TAKING TIME TO LIVE WELL



## Weekend away

A BEACH HOUSE STAY WITH SAND DUNES RIGHT ON THE DOORSTEP OFFERS ALL THE SIMPLE PLEASURES OF A BUCKET-AND-SPADE BREAK

Words: **ABBIE MILLER**

With three kids to amuse, a trip to the beach is always guaranteed to tick the 'family fun' box. One of life's simple pleasures, a stay near the seaside offered pristine sands, a natural playground and a treasure trove of washed-up discoveries. Memories of a happy childhood came flooding back, a much-needed reminder that some of the best things to do are free. Although it's also nice to spend a penny or two, and the ancient medieval town of nearby Rye didn't disappoint with its eclectic mix of independent shops filled with delicious local produce and beautiful interiors inspiration. With so much to do, this weekend break in a luxurious home-from-home in Camber, East Sussex, proved to be a hit with both young and old.

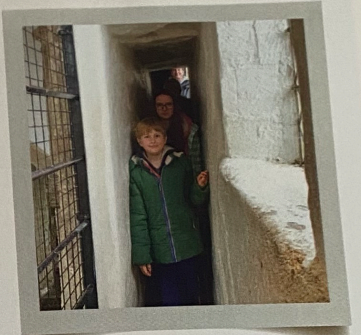


### Where we stayed

The Recycled House in Camber is exactly what its name suggests. A once ordinary house, it's been given an eco-overhaul and is now a cheery, clapperboarded, sky-blue beach house that sleeps up to eight, with everything inside either recycled or reused. Better still, with several heat sources, it permanently gives back to the grid, and we were actively encouraged to use up the hot water! But don't think its upcycled heritage makes it shabby, far from it. It felt spacious and luxurious, with all the usual home comforts. There were special extras, too, such as a welcome hamper with local goodies, plenty of books and games to enjoy around the log burner if wet weather got in the way and, for the energetic (my kids), there was a games room with ping-pong table, plus a trampoline in the cleverly landscaped garden.



hearted or claustrophobic, however once we'd scaled the steps – inching past the eight church bells – the views were well worth the climb.



### The best thing

The simple joys of careering through Camber's sand dunes with child-like abandon. Once I'd overcome the fear of losing my footing, I was able to take on my eight-year-old, running full-throttle down the banks, safe in the knowledge that any crash-landing would be sandy-soft. Afterwards, we emptied the sand from our shoes and headed back to the house for yet another ping-pong championship. 🏓



A stay at *The Recycled House* costs from £1,100 for a minimum of three nights. For more, see [camberholidaycottages.co.uk](http://camberholidaycottages.co.uk).

### What we ate

Having done her research, our eldest firmly ushered us in the direction of Knoop's, which sells luxury chocolate drinks. Milkshaked-up, we headed off to explore the historic town of Rye. By evening, we were ready for dinner and burgers were the general consensus, so we headed to popular eaterie, Hoof. The simple menu offers the juiciest of burgers and crispiest of fries, all supplied from a local farm, just four miles away. We also managed a pit-stop at Salts Farm shop on the Sunday to stock up on all that East Sussex and Kent had to offer, including homemade sausage rolls that could barely contain their generous filling, crumbly fudge, garlicky carrot chutney and ice cider – an aperitif made from local apples.



### We also liked

We woke up to rain on the Sunday, so again headed to Rye for a nosey around Lamb House, a Georgian National Trust property that was once home to literary greats, Henry James and EF Benson. As we walked through the idyllic walled gardens, we felt like we were worlds away from being bang in the middle of a bustling town centre. And, as the clouds cleared, we seized the opportunity to climb the tower at St Mary's church. Not for the faint-



### What we did

We came for the beach and *The Recycled House* could not have been better positioned, right opposite Camber Sands' golden dunes. Who needs a playground when you have sandy embankments to climb and then slide down at breakneck speed. My kids adored chasing each other through the winding maze of trails, while the big kid in me remembered the simple joy of summer beach days. We borrowed buckets and spades from the house and made sandcastle villages before collecting pretty blush-pink shells to make into beach art. Once we were thoroughly windswept, we headed to Rye, just a ten-minute drive away, where we explored the quaint cobbled streets, including Mermaid Street – one of the most photographed streets in the UK, and for good reason! Shopping-wise, we were genuinely spoilt for choice with all the independent offerings, from covetable homewares at Soap & Salvation to the indoor greenery at *The Green House*, but, as a keen sewer, the cherry on the cake for me was a mooch in Merchant & Mills, where I could have spent an entire afternoon coveting the fabrics, perusing their patterns, and running my fingers through the haberdashery's boxes of buttons. Rye Deli is well worth detouring for, while the Rye Emporium proved to be an Aladdin's cave of vintage and quirky finds.