

North Devon Scenic Drives Guide

Five breathtaking drives, with Bristol as your gateway

Route map: the five North Devon scenic drives, from the surf coast at Woolacombe and Croyde to Clovelly and the Hartland Peninsula, all reached from Bristol. (Map image to be added once finalised.)

The Drives at a Glance

Drive	Distance	Difficulty	Best for
The surf coast: Saunton, Croyde and Woolacombe	~12 mi	Easy to moderate	Beaches and surf
Ilfracombe and the Morteheo headland	~10 mi	Moderate, narrow	Cliffs and harbour
The Taw and Torridge estuary villages	~15 mi	Easy	Relaxed village touring
The Atlantic Highway to Clovelly (A39)	~20 mi	Easy	Fairytale village
The Hartland Peninsula	~14 mi	Moderate, remote	Wild cliffs, solitude

Safety Tips

North Devon is spread out and many lanes are single-track with passing places and high hedges, so allow more time than the mileage suggests and drive slowly. Clovelly is a privately owned, car-free village: park at the visitor centre at the top and walk down, with a fare-paying Land Rover service back up. The surf beaches at Woolacombe, Croyde and Saunton get very busy in summer, so arrive early for parking. Keep fuel topped up in Barnstaple, Bideford or Ilfracombe before the remote Hartland lanes.

Bristol Airport Access Guide

Bristol is the natural gateway to North Devon, with all the major car hire suppliers on site. It is around two hours (about 85 to 95 miles) via the M5 south to Junction 27, then the A361 North Devon Link Road to Barnstaple, the hub from which all five drives radiate. A smaller, nimbler car is a real advantage on the narrow lanes around Hartland and Morteheo.

Book your hire car at getcarhire.com/bristol.htm and compare all the main suppliers in one search, with insurance and taxes included.