

It's time to kiss winter goodbye!

THE days are getting longer, the skies are brightening and the temperatures are starting to edge up nicely. Which all heralds the blossomy return of spring!

With the clocks leaping forward next weekend, it's time to start getting out and about again. So why waste another weekend cooped up at home?

Kiss winter goodbye by arranging a cottage or lodge stay, where you can step out from your doorstep to explore a world awash with daffodils and new life, from frisky lambs to wiggly tadpoles.

Or dust off your walking boots and make tracks for spectacular coastal paths and glorious stately gardens, before heading back to a plush hotel restaurant for an indulgent supper.

Romantic West

SPRING'S warmer days and longer evenings are perfect for whisking your loved one away on a romantic weekend break for two.

Flirty Cornwall seduces with iconic spots to spend quality time, such as St Michael's Mount, named as one of the top places in the country to pop the question.

Time it right and catch the evocative castle drenched in the glow of a stunning sunset, before a glass of Cornish bubbly in one of Marazion's many fantastic restaurants.

Cornwall's lovely sub-tropical gardens, such as Trebah and the Lost Gardens of Heligan, are poised to burst into life with a colourful array of magnolias and azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons.



You can't beat Poldark for romance — making locations such as Charlestown's Georgian harbour a good choice for a stay, as we await the promised drama of series three.

Blue Chip Holidays offers romantic boltholes here. Or stay at The Pier House Hotel & Restaurant, recently bought by St Austell Breweries.

Devon foodie break

FROM tender lamb to tangy rhubarb, nature's larder is abundant in spring.

Experience seafood heaven in South

Devon, by tucking into delicious seafood in Salcombe, which is serious sea to plate and field to fork territory.

Fantastic produce is served in quality restaurants, from the Winking Prawn, to the beach-side Venus Café. A Sharpham Vineyard tour and wine tasting experience is a must, too.

Not forgetting the huge Exeter Festival of South West Food and Drink in April.

Find a scrumptious property with Coast & Country Cottages.

In North Devon, the stunning beaches



Incredible Cornwall: St Michael's Mount (left). Above: Dog walking above Eype beach in Dorset

at Saunton, Croyde and Woolacombe beckon those who stay at Rock Haven, a chic, five-bedroom period family home at Braunton.

Tapas, Thai and French restaurants are on hand, as well as a great pub serving renowned Sunday roasts.

Or head for Bay Valley Of Rocks Hotel at Lynton, part of the Bay Hotels group, which is offering some excellent deals on spring getaways. The group has six hotels to choose from in Devon and many more around Britain.

Historic islands

CELEBRATING a colourful history, the Channel Islands Heritage Festival runs from

April 8 to May 10, with a Heroes, Myths and Legends theme.

With guided walks, exclusive openings, coasteering, a treasure hunt and coastal boat tours revealing evidence of pirates and smugglers, it's a fascinating way to take a new look at the islands.

Island Getaways has some bargain-priced Channel Island breaks lined up for adventurous couples and families.

Family getaways

MARCH out in Bournemouth this month, on Blue Flag beaches and through

Dog-friendly Dorset breaks

TAKE the whole family away with you, to Dorset — and that includes your dog. Dorset provides plenty of wag-worthy walks, over rolling hills, through mystical woods and along the spectacular coastline.

Most cottage companies, such as Toad Hall Cottages, offer plenty of properties that will accept your furry friends.

And some, such as Golden Acre holiday bungalows at Eype (above), specialise in canine-minded holidays. A number of the beaches here, including Eype, are doggy friendly year-round, but do check.

While it might have summer dog restrictions, Weymouth Beach recently took the crown as Britain's best beach — and was even placed in Europe's top ten by TripAdvisor.

award-winning gardens. Head down to Hengistbury Head, where you can catch panoramic views of the sea and sandy beaches. You can also spot plenty of wildlife while walking, cycling or taking the land train to this special place.

Or stay near Warwick, at the Glebe Hotel, Barford, with Shakespeare country and loads of history on the doorstep.

Temperatures are definitely on the up, so now's the time to break out of hibernation and enjoy being outdoors again!