

Little Black Book

Say hello to **BELLA GIVEN**, the lady behind Longlands glamping haven near Combe Martin in North Devon. When it comes to her local patch, just on the outskirts of Exmoor, she's the queen of gourmet go-tos. Here she shares her favourite coast and countryside spots to feast with family and friends



INTERVIEW BY ANNA TURNS

Breakfast? The Beachcomber Café just above Woolacombe beach does a very good cooked breakfast, which tastes even better after a family surf first thing on a Saturday morning. Plus, their freshly squeezed orange juice is the nectar of the gods – and the sea views are gorgeous.

Best brew? I am *majorly* fussy about my coffee – it's my life's work to find North Devon's best flat white. So far, Charlie Friday's coffee shop in Lynton comes pretty close to perfection. It's a quirky place serving lots of lovely cakes, and they are serious about their coffee. The owner Jackie loves dogs, so my adorable Longlands dachshunds, Honey and Mimi, feel at home there!

Child-friendly? The number one choice is Café Blue Bar at Tunnels Beaches, where they have a super soft play area and a pirate ship to explore, plus one of the best rockpooling beaches in the country.

For friends? The menu at Relish Bar and Bistro in Ilfracombe is a feast of fresh seafood, from Lundy lobster to scallops. Their most recent venture, Sunfish Cuisine, delivers luxury seafood picnic hampers locally. Top of my list to try!

Sunday lunch? The King's Arms at Georgeham serves the best roast dinner in North Devon, absolutely fantastic after a bracing walk at Putsborough. In the same village, the Rock Inn is also lovely – Georgeham is so utterly spoilt for choice.

Quick pint? The Hunter's Inn knows its beer. Stroll down the valley to Heddon Mouth in the evening and then pop back to the pub for a local ale after watching the sun set.

Working lunch? We nip down the road to the Fox & Goose, just four miles away in Parracombe, for regular midweek Longlands team lunches. The food is fabulous and beer is great too, so it's a

great escape in the middle of a hectic week looking after guests staying in our lodges.

Best pub? The Black Venus in Challacombe, a 16th-century pub, is perfect for an evening meal. No one does a sirloin steak better than them, and it comes from Besshill, where we source all our meat for Longlands meals.

Exmoor adventure? I have to walk a long way up on the moors to earn the enormous portions served up at The Blue Ball Inn at Countisbury.

Post-changeover tippie? After a busy day, we'll most likely be parked on the bench looking over the boating lake with a beer from GT Ales – this new microbrewery in Barnstaple handcrafts pale ale in small batches.

Pedalling pitstop? Johns at Instow is a great break for lunch or tiffin treats when we're cycling along the Tarka Trail from Fremington Quay. I lose myself in there looking at the deli counter.

Hamper heaven? When we go to the beach I raid our Longlands larder, which is stuffed full of Devon delights for our guests to choose from. Our standard picnic includes a Chunk Of Devon's award-winning pasty with a packet of Burts chips (more often than not Lobster Fire Cracker or Guinness flavour) washed down with a bottle of Luscombe Organic's Damascene rose bubbly.

Posh nosh? Just two miles away from home, The Coach House at Kentisbury Grange is headed up by the wonderful Michael Caines. This restaurant has such a nice atmosphere and serves up sensational food in sumptuous surroundings.

Hidden gem? For a special occasion, I book a table at NC@EX34 in Woolacombe. Chef Noel Corston cooks up a storm with some of the best local, seasonal produce.

It feels like a magical mystery foodie tour – it's a set menu, and each course is named after its main ingredient so you're never quite sure what you're going to get, but it always wows the taste buds.

Al fresco? Head to Barricane Beach Café to taste the most incredible authentic Sri Lankan curry. The only choice each night is how hot do you want it – mild, medium or spicy? And it's open until the end of September – or until they run out of curry powder!

One to watch? Just opened, the Wabasso Art Café is a little Aladdin's cave of artworks on the beach front. Selling homemade lemonade and inauspicious-sounding toasties – but my word, these are the *best* toasties – Wabasso's menu is simple but excellent. longlandsdevon.co.uk

Quick! Now add this little lot to your contacts book

- 📍 **Beachcomber Café**, The Esplanade, Woolacombe; 01271 871441
- 📍 **Charlie Friday's**, Lynton; 07980 454195; charliefridays.co.uk
- 📍 **Café Blue Bar**, Ilfracombe; 01271 879882; tunnelsbeaches.co.uk
- 📍 **Relish Bar and Bistro**, Ilfracombe; 01271 863837; fishbistroilfracombe.co.uk
- 📍 **The King's Arms**, Georgeham; 01271 890240; kingsarmsgeorgeham.co.uk
- 📍 **The Hunter's Inn**, Exmoor; 01598 763230; thehuntersinnexmoor.co.uk
- 📍 **Fox & Goose**, Parracombe; 01598 763239; foxandgooseinnexmoor.co.uk
- 📍 **Black Venus Inn**, Challacombe; 01598 763251; blackvenusinn.co.uk
- 📍 **The Blue Ball Inn**, Countisbury; 01598 741263; blueballinn.com
- 📍 **GT Ales**, Barnstaple; 07909 515170; gtales.co.uk
- 📍 **Johns Café & Delicatessen**, Instow; 01271 860310; johnsofinstow.co.uk
- 📍 **The Coach House**, Kentisbury; 01271 882295; kentisburygrange.co.uk
- 📍 **NC@EX34**, Woolacombe; 01271 871187; noelcorston.com
- 📍 **Barricane Beach Café**, Woolacombe; 07969 189304
- 📍 **Wabasso Art Café**, Combe Martin; 07517 110663