



## DUNSTER CASTLE EXPRESS

BISHOPS LYDEARD, SOMERSET

Take a nostalgic steam train ride to Dunster Castle and village on board the latest express service on the West Somerset Railway

**F**ollowing the launch of a new service on the West Somerset Railway it is now possible to combine a trip to Dunster Castle in Somerset with a nostalgic steam train ride through some of the county's finest countryside.

Running every Wednesday from April to October, the Dunster Castle Express service departs from Bishops Lydeard train station at 10.25am, arriving at Dunster station just over an hour later. Passengers are then transferred by bus to Dunster Castle, for an afternoon spent exploring its interior and grounds, before being returned to the station to catch the 4.12pm train, arriving at Bishops Lydeard at 5.19pm.

Once a country branch line of the old Great Western Railway, the West Somerset Railway is run and maintained by a team of volunteers and enthusiasts. Stretching between Bishops Lydeard and Minehead, the 22-mile line is Britain's longest standard gauge steam railway, with 10

historic stations and views of the Quantock Hills, Exmoor and the West Somerset coast en route.

On the approach to Dunster station passengers are rewarded with their first glimpse of the castle.

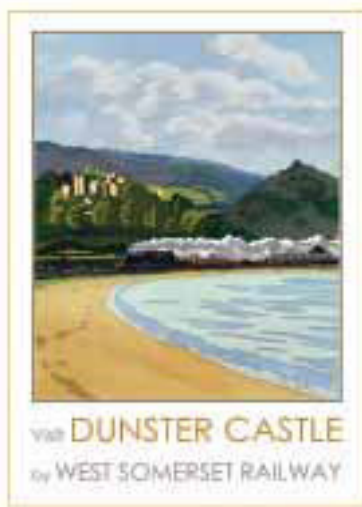
Dramatically sited on a wooded tor that dominates the medieval village below, the castle was first built in Norman times, with a medieval gatehouse and ruined tower providing the oldest reminders of its tumultuous history.

Home of the Luttrell family for more than 600 years, the building was transformed into a Jacobean country house in the 17th century, before being remodelled by Victorian architect Antony Salvin to emphasise its medieval origins and accommodate the large family and their servants.

Interior highlights include the fine oak staircase, which sweeps through the centre of the house; the Dining Room, with its ornate plasterwork ceiling; and the King Charles Bedroom, which takes

its name from Charles II, who slept here in 1645.

Round the afternoon off with a stroll around the grounds before taking the train ride back to your car.



**GETTING THERE:** By car, take junction 26 off the M5 and head for Taunton on the A38.

On the outskirts of Taunton, turn left at the first roundabout, following the brown West Somerset Railway (WSR) tourist signs onto the A358 towards Minehead. Bypass the road to Bishops Lydeard and continue on for about half a mile, before turning left. Take the next left for the main car park for Bishops Lydeard station. The train leaves at 10.25am so allow time to buy your ticket.

**WHERE TO STAY:** Dunster Castle Hotel in the heart of the medieval village has double rooms from £90 per night. Tel: 01643 823 030. [www.thedunstercastlehotel.co.uk](http://www.thedunstercastlehotel.co.uk)

**WHERE TO EAT:** Reeves Restaurant on Dunster high street offers an à la carte menu. Tel: 01643 821 414. [www.reevesrestaurantdunster.co.uk](http://www.reevesrestaurantdunster.co.uk)

**DON'T MISS:** the castle's sunny south terrace, home to a variety of subtropical plants.

**MORE INFORMATION:** West Somerset Railway. Tel: 01643 704 996. [www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk](http://www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk) Dunster Castle is managed by the National Trust, and open from 12 March to end October. Tel: 01643 823 004. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)