

# daysout

**Brighton**  
by Paloma Lacy

**T**he lure of the 'staycation' has never been greater. With international travel restrictions changing weekly, a holiday a little closer to home seems like a safer bet. My family and I did just that last week and headed down to the Sussex coast. First stop Brighton, which as the crow flies is about 45 miles from our South London home. So near but it somehow feels so very far away – in a good way.

We were blessed with the weather – daily temperatures of around 30 degrees – which of course meant long, sunny days spent outside.

This is so important when travelling with a toddler – the more sea air inhaled and energy burned off, the better night's sleep the whole family will have, right?

After checking into the family-friendly New Stein Hotel, where we were warmly welcomed by proprietor, Herve, it was time for lunch.

Brighton is a food lovers' paradise and visitors are spoilt for choice. The first meal of our trip had to be a good one and newly opened *Shelter Hall Raw* on the seafront fitted the bill nicely.

Seating is mostly al fresco so perfect for summer dining, ordering is done via an app, and food delivered directly to the table.

The food hall brings together some of Brighton's best-loved food and drink businesses under one roof, with a pop-up presence, that will change on rotation. The starting line-up includes Fatto a Mano, Lost Boys Chicken, Carlito Burrito and GB Charcuterie.

After a hearty lunch, there was only one thing to do, walk it off. So we set off on a 50-minute schlep from Brighton's iconic Palace Pier down to Hove Lagoon.

It had changed hugely since I was there last, the play park expanded and a number of fairground rides added for good measure, plus pedalos for hire, the ideal setting in which for a family to while away a few hours.

Back in the heart of Brighton seafront, a quirky upside down house has appeared. This museum of illusions is free for under-3s and £5 for everybody else.

Adjacent is the children's playground, complete with sand shipped in so our little one could build sandcastles. This wasn't what I was expecting from a pebble beach location and my daughter was delighted.

There is enough to do in Brighton to keep even the largest multi-generational family busy.

The view from the Palace Pier is pretty cool, not to mention the full British seaside experience that comes with it, complete with a stroll down the promenade.

Probably the best view in town is from the British Airways i360 Viewing Tower – the big wheel – that sits smack, bang in the middle of the seafront.

If stepping back into history is for you, Brighton Pavilion won't disappoint – the sheer beauty of this building alone is a delight in itself.

Then there's the shopping in the famous Lanes, a visit to Brighton Sea Life Centre, the Toy Museum or a jaunt on Volk's Electric Railway from the Brighton Seafront, down to Brighton Marina. Tick all these activities off and you'd barely scratch the surface of Sussex's most exciting destination.

Awash with ice-cream shops and dessert parlours, one stands head and shoulders above the rest – *Boho Gelato*.

Owner Seb gave us an introduction to the hand-made Italian ice-cream he makes daily.

Making ice-cream and sorbet for more than 10 years, he now boasts an ever-changing flavour line up topping 500 varieties. And there's nothing ordinary about them, either.

Bourbon, Battenburg, violet and a huge proportion are vegan, little surprise in a city that embraced vegan dining long before the rest of country jumped on board. If, like we did, you visit at the start of your holiday, it'll become a daily ritual. Seb's creations are just too good not to repeat.

It's impossible to be bored or hungry in this city.

There are so many exciting places to visit while in Brighton



We particularly enjoyed dinner one evening at *Curry Leaf Café* – a South Indian street food restaurant with a firm eye on family dining. The £5 two-course kids menu is designed to introduce children to Indian flavours and spices without the heat of chilli.

Co-incidentally, this is an initiative we'd started at home, and chicken tikka and onion and mushroom pakoras went down a storm with our toddler, as did the cooling mango lassi.

We, too, were genuinely blown away by the authenticity of the dishes and tucked into the chef's special – tandoor platter of chargrilled meats – Goan pork ribs, chicken leg and lamb seekh kebab – and chicken kori gassi.

A favourite family dining spot of ours has long been *Bill's*. If memory serves me correctly, the Brighton outpost is only the second ever open, the first being Lewes.

The staff couldn't have been happier to greet my little family. We arrived for an early dinner, which in toddler terms was the end of the day and tiredness had set in. This gave us 45 minutes to enjoy dinner before meltdown mode took over.

The manager could see this and quickly whizzed through the menu, suggesting we order little one's food, and drinks for us adults, while perusing the menu.

Her plan worked and my daughter was kept busy by macaroni cheese and peas – which incidentally was both delicious and plentiful. It was so good in fact that we all ended up eating it. I can also recommend crumbed halloumi sticks

with lime alioli and crispy chicken and sesame dumplings as starters. Main courses of slow cooked beef rib and pan fried sea bass also helped re-energise us as we rested our weary feet.

Choosing the right hotel to lay your head is key to the success of a family holiday. We struck gold with our triple room at New Stein Hotel – it suited our needs perfectly.

Nothing is too much trouble for Herve and his team and they deliver a hotel experience with old fashioned values. A friendly chat over breakfast to ask how your holiday is going or perhaps to see if you need any advice to make it better – they went above and beyond.

Breakfast was timed so that it could be executed safely in a socially distanced way, with dishes cooked to order.

New Stein's location nestled at the top of bohemian St James's Street and just off the seafront makes it a good base to soak up all that Brighton has to offer.

I'm pleased to say we managed to walk everywhere and didn't step foot into a taxi. We bought a family bus day ticket on one of the days, which allowed us to travel all over the city for £10.



There's lots of information at: <https://www.visitbrighton.com/> to help plan a trip but below are a few of our top picks.

**Where to stay:**  
New Stein Hotel - 10 – 11 New Stein Brighton, East Sussex BN2 1PB. Tel: +44 (0)1273 681546.

**Where to eat:**  
*Shelter Hall Raw* - 152-154, Kings Road Arches, Brighton BN1 1NB  
*Curry Leaf Café* - 60 Ship St, Brighton BN1 1AE  
*Bill's* - The Depot, 100 North Rd, Brighton BN1 1YE  
*Boho Gelato* - 6 Pool Valley, Brighton BN1 1NJ.