

Organic breaks

Wish you were here

Count sheep, sleep soundly and wake up to an organic breakfast. Julie Ferry checks in



Dear all
Having a fabulous time - food is delicious!
Julie

Living Earth
40-56 Victoria St
Bristol
BS1 6BY

Walking towards Bangors House on the north Cornish coast you find something that is a rarity in our busy lives: space. This wonderfully restored Victorian house has lots of it and views to match. Situated five miles south of Bude, its countryside views and rugged coastline invite you to explore. And it isn't just the elegant house with William Morris wallpaper, rolltop baths and antique beds, which makes this bed and breakfast stand out from the rest: it was also the first in the UK to provide Soil Association certified bed and organic breakfasts.

Cornwall

Gill and Neil Faiers rescued the house in 2001 after it had stood empty for nearly a decade. Gill gave up life as an accountant and hasn't looked back. "We wanted to run our own business, so we decided to open an organic tearoom. After the renovation was complete we had beautiful rooms and started taking in bed and breakfasts."

'Organic' on a menu is a legal term (as with food) and must be backed by organic certification. So having certified the tea room with the Soil Association, it was natural to certify the B&B side too. Although many organic farms offer bed and breakfast, it turned out that Bangors was the first B&B to receive organic accreditation. "It's like the way we restored the house's original features," says Gill. "We don't do half measures and that's one of the reasons we went down the organic route."

Gill and Neil admit that they are "passionate" about organic food and are in the process of converting four acres of their land to organic production. "In every which way organic is right for us: our health, the environment and animal welfare."

And what is likely to end up on your breakfast table if you stay at Bangors House? Expect a tempting array of organic treats ranging from the usual sausages, eggs and bacon to porridge with local clotted cream and yoghurt. The Faiers say it is easy to

source good local organic food because there are "so many amazing producers in the Southwest" including their suppliers Providence Farm, Trekennard Farm and Barwick Farm. After breakfast you can walk it all off through their formal gardens or by following the maze of tracks to the coastal path.

"Having a fabulous time - food is delicious"

Cumbria

Couples will be drawn to Bangors but if it's a family break you are after, you may want to head for Cumbria where Paul Hughes and Julia Sayburn are leading the way. Certified in March 2004, they offer bed and organic breakfasts at Howbarrow farm in Cumbria where guests can experience life on the breathtakingly beautiful

southern fells.

Howbarrow is part of the Soil Association network of organic farms which are open to the public. Guests can walk the farm trail and see Jacob sheep, traditional laying poultry and traditional blue/grey suckler cows with calves. You can go further afield to the viewpoint overlooking Morecambe Bay or to the priory and heritage centre at Cartmel.

The farm is a must for anyone interested in herbalism as it produces its own organic herbal tinctures. Made fresh on site immediately after picking plants in full bloom, the tinctures capture "the whole of the life force" says Julia. "We use organic alcohol and local spring mineral water, made to British Herbal Pharmacopoeia formulas."

The 16th century farmhouse with its oak beams, open fires and slate floors is very much "a family house", says Julia. The organic breakfast is traditional and delicious, with most of the produce home-grown or reared on the farm. Like fond parents Julia and Paul find it satisfying knowing that they are sending their guests off for the day with "a good breakfast inside." So if that's what you need (with a bit of family fun thrown in) then head for Howbarrow.

Bangors House



Which to choose?

Bangors House and Howbarrow Organic Farm are offering accommodation discounts. For further information and other offers please see the Soil Association website www.whyorganic.org