

TRAVEL IN STYLE

SMART OFFERINGS AND INSIDER TIPS



NEW HORIZONS

Corlys Velaryon (Steve Toussaint) on St Michael's Mount, aka Driftmark island

FANTASY LANDS

As the *Game of Thrones* prequel *House of the Dragon* becomes our new TV obsession, **Hanna Woodside** delves into the dramatic locations bringing the epic universe to life

Few TV shows have inspired a pop culture frenzy quite like *Game of Thrones*. Over eight seasons, it dragged the fantasy genre into the mainstream, transforming George RR Martin's series of weighty novels into a blockbuster hit, thanks to a potent mix of love, war and the supernatural. Plot twists made news headlines. The cast, from Sophie Turner to Emilia Clarke, became overnight A-listers. Dragons were suddenly cool. And the spectacular filming locations used to create the fictional world of Westeros – from the winding stone streets of Dubrovnik to Iceland's magical black sand shores – remain must-visit destinations for *GoT* fans.

Naturally, there's a lot of hype around the prequel, *House of the Dragon*. Set 200 years before the events in *Game of Thrones* – and starring former *Doctor Who* lead Matt Smith – it tells the backstory of the dynastic power struggles that play out in *GoT*. For the spin-off series, production returned to the beautifully preserved mediaeval city of Cáceres in Spain's Extremadura region, where the walled Old Town and nearby Trujillo Castle stand in for parts of the bustling Westerosi 'capital' of King's Landing. Cáceres' blend of Roman, Moorish and Gothic architecture speaks to its storied past, much like the fictional city it represents.

The imagined geography of Westeros, as immortalised in the opening credits of *Game of Thrones*, lends itself to wildly different landscapes. The gigantic boulders that nestle amongst the cottages of the steep hillside village of Monsanto in Castelo Branco, Portugal, provide a suitably otherworldly feel that *House of the Dragon* location scouts seized upon (local residents were told to expect smoke and controlled fires in the area ahead of filming).

Meanwhile, the Cornish coast in southwest England provided the windswept beaches spotted in early promo shots for the show, with scenes filmed at Holywell Bay, near the popular party town of Newquay, and Kynance Cove on the southernmost tip of the Lizard Peninsula. The small island of St Michael's Mount – which you can walk to from the mainland when the tide is out – also features, with its looming castle rumoured to be the 'seat' of one of the great noble families in *House of the Dragon*. Local legend has it that St Michael's Mount was once home to the giant from the *Jack and the Beanstalk* fairy tale, which has its origins in Cornish folklore.

Like a great fantasy drama, these dazzling destinations, steeped in their own unique history, transport you to another world – where epic battles are fought, kingdoms rise and fall – and dragons might just be real.

House of the Dragon is on HBO and Sky Atlantic now



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ON LOCATION

WHERE CASTELO BRANCO, PORTUGAL

This region has much to offer: hike the Serra da Malcata nature reserve, marvel at glacial boulders in the remote villages of Monsanto and Sortelha, or stroll through the capital's baroque palace gardens.

STAY THE LUMIARES, LISBON

This one-time palace turned modern boutique offers fine views over the terracotta tiles and cobbles of the old city.

ba.com/lumiare

WHERE CÁCERES, SPAIN

Yes, it's a Unesco World Heritage Site, but the city also has a cutting-edge culinary scene (two-Michelin starred Atrio is the place to book).

STAY PALACIO DE ARENALES & SPA

Rural R&R amid centuries-old olive groves, plus five-star luxe within easy distance of the historic – and TV famous – sites of Cáceres itself.

ba.com/arenales

WHERE WEST CORNWALL, UK

Choose from 300 beaches, from quiet coves to surfing hotspots, and take in the Barbara Hepworth museum in St Ives and the Minack open-air theatre, carved into the cliff tops of Porthcurno.

STAY ATLANTA TREVONE BAY

Freshly opened and consisting of five holiday homes near its own private beach, the vibe is whitewashed beach cabin-meets-Hamptons. Perfect for families.

atlantatrevonebay.com

