

Thanet District Factsheet

The Experiential Offer – Opportunities & Gaps

September 2020



The following factsheet will review:

- ✓ Key trends that resonate with the Thanet District offer
- ✓ Pop Culture & Film experiences
- ✓ Area product strengths & opportunities
- ✓ Building on the current product for Thanet
- ✓ Thanet specific
 - ✓ Opportunities & examples
 - ✓ Gaps & considerations
- ✓ Experience product snapshot grid highlighting seasonal opportunities

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Key trends that resonate with the Thanet District offer

Thanet benefits from two leading attractions that set a precedent for consumer recognition, around nostalgia (Dreamland) and creativity (Turner Contemporary). Traditionally seen as a fun seaside offer, Thanet has the opportunity to build on current desires to spend more time with people we value, offering the perfect backdrop to reconnect, have fun and do something different.

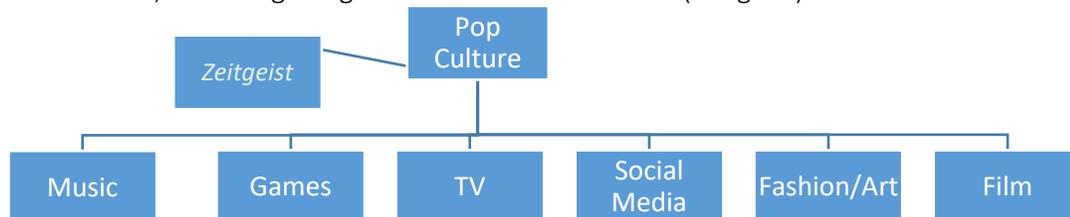
Tapping into the key trends around reconnect, local and authentic, will help Thanet engage visitors beyond the summer season. Product development around creative courses, developing new skills, or immersing into an experience with friends that's fun and connects via a shared love of popular culture. This offers the opportunity to develop tourism product that can attract visitors through the year.

From recent research we already know that:

- ✓ **BOOK IN ADVANCE** - When booking an experience, 65% of the domestic market book before leaving home.
- ✓ **WILL TRAVEL UP TO 1 HOUR** - Approximately 80% of domestic customers looking to book an experience are more than prepared to travel up to an hour, any longer and the % drops dramatically.
- ✓ **EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE DESTINATION CHOICE** - Nearly 60% of the domestic market are influenced by an experience when selecting a destination

What exactly is pop culture?

Everything that is undeniably associated with commercial culture and all its trappings: movies, TV, radio, social media, gaming, fashion, art and photography; it encapsulates the spirit of the times, reflecting the general mood of the nation (Zeitgeist).



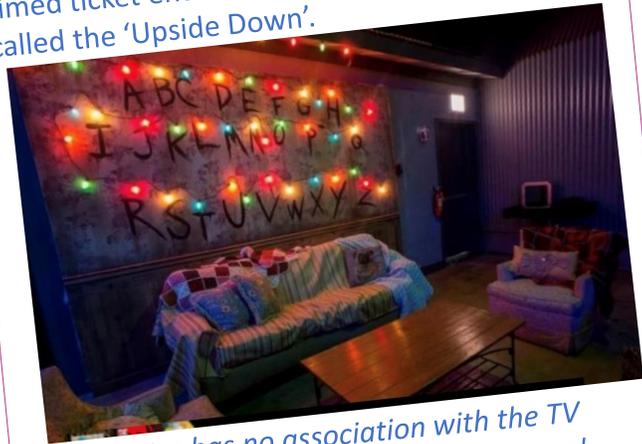
Thanet District experience product offer



Pop Culture and Film experiences

Recreating what people love

– The runaway success of the Netflix series, Stranger Things has led to the pop up ‘Upside Down Bar’ in Manchester. Revelling in all things 80’s, the Bar has been designed to emulate scenes from the cult nostalgic TV show – the experience means that attendees can dress in the 80’s, watch film clips from the 80’s, listen to music and eat the food. This Bar is linked to a timed ticket entrance panic room which is called the ‘Upside Down’.



Manchester has no association with the TV series, yet it does have a retro retail appeal.

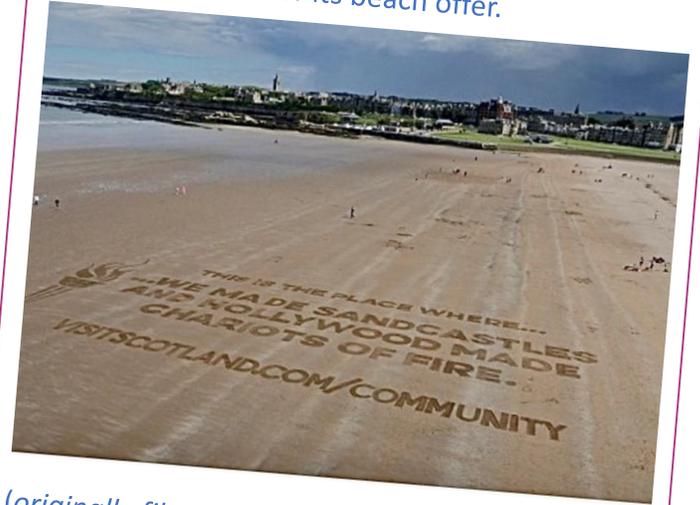
Immersive Cinema – Secret Cinema attracts over 120,000 over several months - The stranger Things production ran from Nov- Feb. Seasonality does not effect its popularity.



The appeal of pop culture is so strong, visitors can be drawn to a location whether it was the actual film location or not.

Creating a pop-culture based experience, is all about the established authenticity of the destination. Margate can directly benefit via association, by focusing on how it's core proposition can align.

The Recall of Pop Culture – in 1981 the iconic beach scene from Chariots of Fire was shot on St. Andrews beach in Fife. Nearly 40 years on, the recall of the scene is so strong that VisitScotland were able to capitalise on it to create an awareness piece for its beach offer.



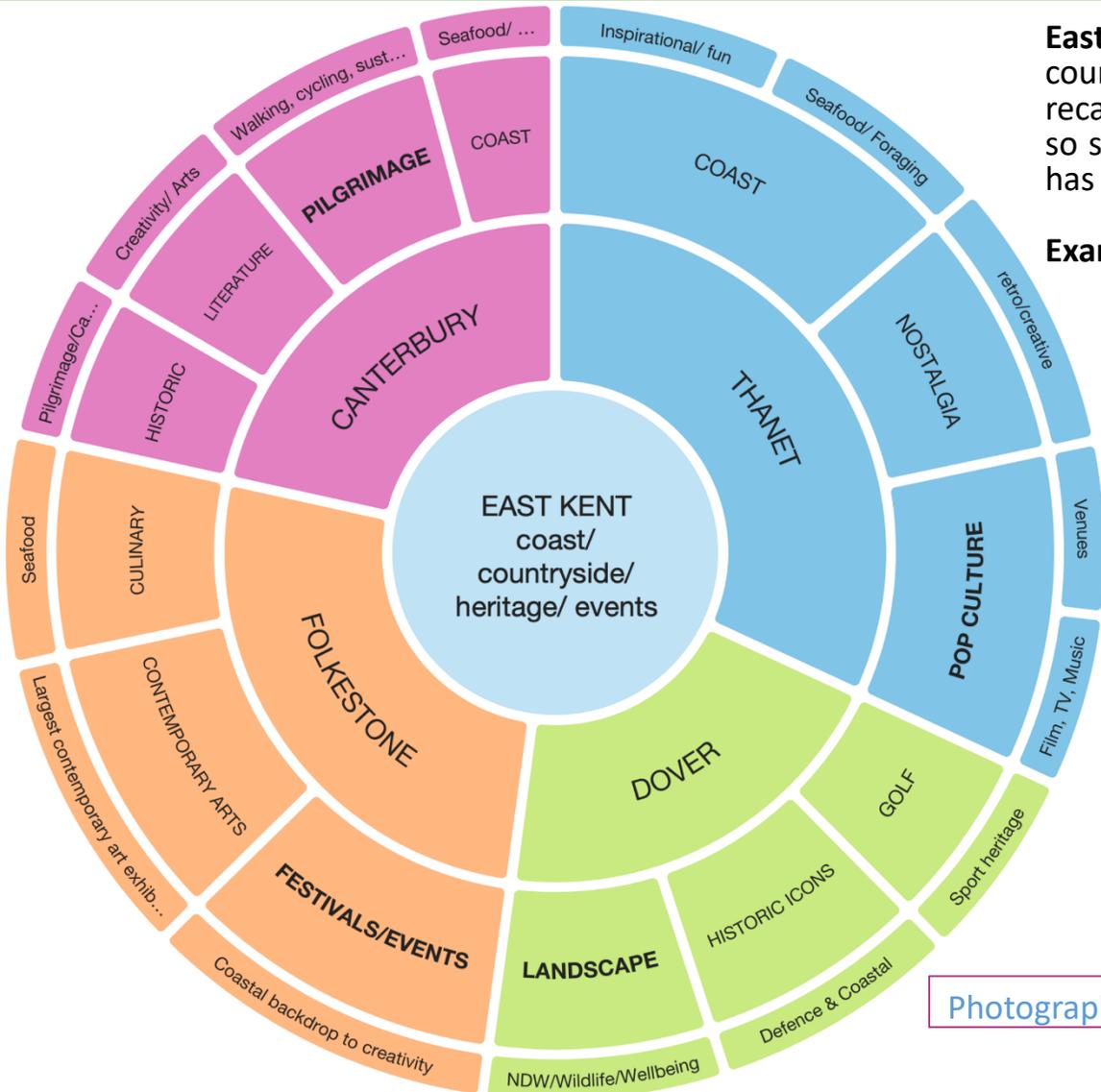
(originally filming was scheduled for Broadstairs which was the real life home of the beach race)

Little Icons - One of the UK's most iconic phone boxes is still visited by tourists 37 years after the film 'Local Hero' was shot in the small Scottish village of Pennan, Aberdeenshire.





Strengths & opportunities for East Kent and Thanet District



East Kent has an established product offer built around the coastal, heritage and countryside appeal, but it's dominated by icons. Because this recognition and recall of long-standing product such as Canterbury Cathedral & the White Cliffs is so strong, other key areas have often had to fight to be heard. Thanet however has a very distinct offer appealing to Gen Z as well as 40 somethings.

Examples of East Kent opportunities:

Pop Culture

- Music Venues & Festivals
- Film locations/ Games culture
- Nostalgic themes reflected in current trends

The Great Outdoors

- Walking and Cycling as a component product.
- Getting closer to Nature- Seal watching to fossils.
- Watersports - kite surfing, sand yachting, surfing
- Wellbeing, transformative and Pilgrimage

Seafood/ Closer to the coast – engaging more with the seasons and the sea

- Catch, cook, eat, learn, care
- Beaches & Coastline

Photography

- Stunning light/ sunsets
- Iconic coast – geological/ historical/ industrial



Building on the current product for Thanet District

Pop Culture – This is a strength across the board for Thanet with the potential to raise the profile of the retail experience and unique performance venues such as Tom Thumb theatre. There is also the opportunity to partner on niche areas e.g. Geek appeal around gaming events linking to the Micro museum and panic rooms. Or, the art of afternoon tea in unique locations such as Bleak House or the Italianate Glasshouse.

A nostalgic Experience – due to the heritage and architecture of the seaside towns – events and experiences could even reflect different time periods from Sea bathing Edwardian style, Victorian high Tea at Quex House – lessons in etiquette. Or a retro bike hire and fashion styling for 40 somethings wanting to relive their childhood favourite films such as The Goonies/ reaching out to the new Gen Z, Stranger Things following.

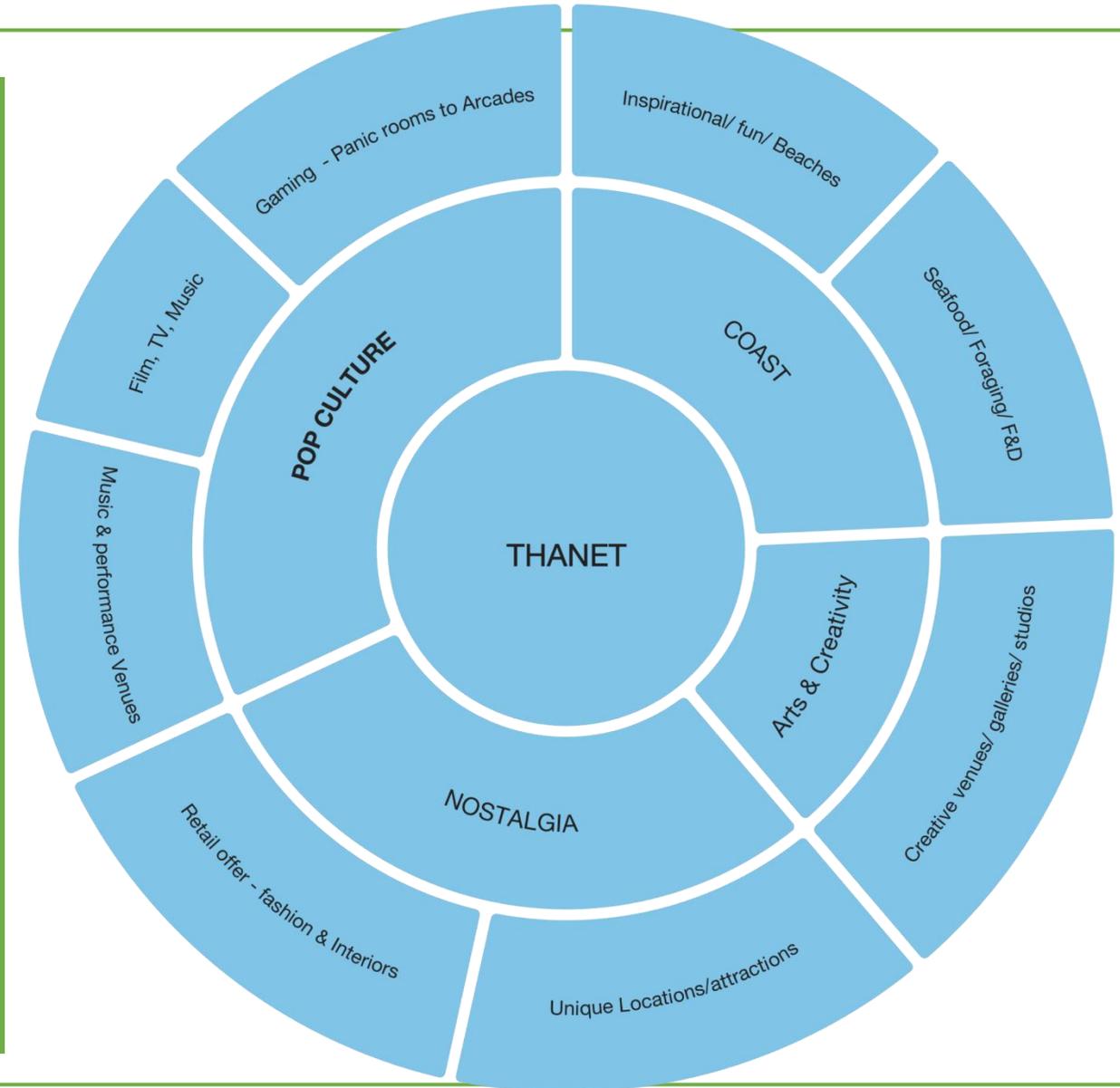
Getting more from the coast – organised experiences to get the visitors off the popular beaches to learn about local wildlife, hunt for fossils and areas where licenced beach cooking can take place.

Niche Experiences – The area has a phenomenal creative community who are poised to offer a number of unique experiences – Art, pottery, foraging, creative writing, how to be a mermaid! all have the potential to drive off season visits and also overnight stays.

Transformative and wellbeing: A great niche proposition around activity such as wild swimming and beach yoga.



Strengthened and enhanced via a sustainable commitment





Thanet – Experience product opportunities

Thanet: Margate, Broadstairs, Ramsgate Product Strengths: Art, Beaches, Family Fun, Seaside, Curiosities, Nostalgia.

Experience	Lead Opportunity underutilised at present	Product example
Home grown creativity	<p>Margate and Broadstairs are increasingly seen as a creative hotspot for visual art and retro style, appealing to the new wave of ‘escaping Londoners’ making their way to the coast. It is also recognised as a place that nurtures creative talent, hence the experience product opportunities here could accommodate pretty much anything.</p> <p>e.g. Cookery, creative writing, pottery, burlesque, woodwork, metalwork, beachcombing artwork, glass working, pop up music venues, costume hire, painting, fishing, surfing, photography, wild swimming, tea drinking and Japanese drumming... to name a few.</p> <p>All of this is underpinned by the presence of Turner Contemporary and the creative minds that have been inspired by the coast (Turner, Dickens etc...). Margate Creative as a collective group are a great source of ideas and potential experience hosts.</p>	<p>Capitalising on the historical art scene.</p> <p>www.barnoonworkshop.co.uk</p> <p>www.sandinyoureye.co.uk create stunning sand art and run beach-based workshops.</p>
Retro / pop culture appeal	<p>Seaside nostalgia and retro appeal are clearly interwoven within Margate’s appeal, along with a slightly geeky undertone supported by great little attractions like the Micro Museum, where you can immerse yourself in 80s video games. All of this is currently having a phenomenal revival thanks to the global success of Netflix’s Stranger Things, which is set to continue with season 4 releasing in 2021. This is reinforced by Dreamland as an established product, along with the retail and architectural offer of all 3 coastal towns.</p> <p>There is clearly an opportunity for Thanet to position its current product to appeal to this mass Netflix audience especially as the area has several escape rooms.</p> <p>In addition there is also the opportunity to build on components of themed events such as the Dickens festival to introduce genre specific experiences such as Victorian Bathing or exploring opportunities with organisations such as the Dreamland Trust.</p>	<p>Scotland Comicon is scheduled for October 2021 – the lead show featured is Stranger Things.</p> <p>www.designmynight.com will launch a Stranger Things retro bar in the centre of Manchester this autumn, with a ticketed experience.</p>
Photography/ Film and TV	<p>Although Thanet has featured in films, tv series and ad shoots, it is still waiting for its starring role. Screen tourism hinges on the audience’s ability to recall the location, even if they can’t name the actual location at time of viewing. In order to build Thanet’s reputation as a location, info on film locations need to be integrated into all types of tours e.g. Art, photography, history, will continually galvanise the consumers understanding that Thanet is a film destination, even if the product isn’t strong enough to stand alone just yet.</p>	<p>www.londonwalkingtours.com – numerous walks, regardless of subject will incorporate film location references to broaden the appeal of the tour product.</p>
Wild cooking / Seafood/ fossil hunting	<p>Bushcraft/ wild cooking is also on the rise – new local product like @bangersandballs and @taralezkhov could be great ambassadors to take this product forward. Development of the experience product around this interest, is a great way to manage and safeguard the beach environment, alternatively there could be an opportunity to approach national organisations that specialise in certain fields such as UKAFH and UK Fossils who currently organise fossil hunting experiences in Herne Bay.</p>	<p>July 2020, Ray Mears launched a new wild cookbook – highlighting the growth trend</p> <p>UKAFH and UK Fossils already run fossil hunting experiences in Herne Bay</p>



Thanet Product Priorities – Opportunities & Gaps

	Primary Themes	Gaps analysis for selected themes
Thanet	Music, Pop Culture and film	<p>There is no doubt that screen tourism can be an overnight success story for any destination, however the destination must be a leading star of the drama or film, whether it is the lead location or named destination.</p> <p>For example - Peaky Blinders was predominantly shot in Yorkshire with additional locations in Liverpool and just outside of Birmingham. However, the audience were repeatedly told in the storyline that this was Birmingham... as a result 'The Real Peaky Blinders' tour developed, telling the true but sometimes gruesome history of Birmingham's backstreets, using the TV drama as the bait. Equally 'Call the Midwife' is set in SE London in the 50's/60's but is predominantly shot on location at the Historic Dockyard – Due to the repeated use of key locations, the dockyard has a successful 'Midwife' tour based on audience location recall, due to its popularity in the UK and with anglophile audiences.</p> <p>Thanet still needs to land a key drama series in either name or location to reasonably activate its screen tourism appeal. To date the district has made numerous appearances in film and TV series, but possibly not enough for clear audience recall.</p> <p>The district is however brimming with potential to capitalise on the current popular culture revival for the 80's. Thanet's strengths are its nostalgic authenticity, its retro style and the strength of the creative community.</p> <p>The gap is the collective partnership that's needed to glue together SME's such as costume hire, retro shops, themed museums, bike hire, not to mention 5 escape rooms, to potentially deliver a coordinated experience offer.</p> <p>Music is another hidden strength, from resident artists to exclusive locations, all have potential to offer a great experience.</p> <p>Finally, hands on creativity... Thanet not only has the Turner as an artistic anchor, but a creative and inclusive community whose imagination seems to know no bounds... offering extensive opportunity to offer creative courses and experiences to the visitor. The gap is bringing this creative community one step closer to the destination story, rather than delivering alongside.</p> <p>For smaller attractions, there is the possibility to partner with other businesses to deliver 'pop up pop culture' experiences to raise awareness – e.g. the Micro Museum delivering a pop up arcade in a central location.</p>



**Music,
Culture &
Film**

Appendix 1

Kent/Lead District Snapshot - Strength, Opportunity and Gap analysis

– Experience led product only

Please note: This is not a definitive list of the county's tourism product, each district factsheet will have a more in-depth product snapshot.

Strength (S) – The product is already established but could be more experiential/ season lengthened

Opportunity (O) – There is an opportunity to develop this product to raise the profile of the area through experience

Gap for development (G) – There is a consumer interest and potential for the destination to showcase this product

Seasonality Key for product delivery (Actual and Potential)

High	Potential for high product delivery in this quarter – This product may not be currently delivering in this month
Med	Potential for Medium level product delivery in this quarter due to - weather, product, availability of local support
Low	Low product delivery in this quarter due to – Reliance on weather, volunteer base, product availability

Product Grid	Kent (All)	Kent Downs AONB	White Cliffs Country NDW/AONB	Folkestone & Hythe District	Canterbury NDW/ AONB	Thanet	Ashford NDW/AONB	Tun Wells	Gravesham NDW/AONB	Medway	Seasonality				
											Jan - Mar	Apr - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	
Golf	O		S/O	O			O								
Hidden Heritage	S	S/O	O	O/S	S/O	O	S	S	S/O	S/O					
Archaeology	O		O/G		O/G					O					
Gardens/ Gardening Courses	S/O	O		O			O	S	O						
Fossil Hunting	O		O	O/S	O	O									
Military heritage	O		S	S			O		S/O	S					

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											Jan - Mar	Apr - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec
Wildlife	O	S	S/O	S/O	S/O	O	O	O	O	O				
Walking & Cycling	S/O	S	O/G	O/G	O/G	O	S/O	O/G	O/G	O/G				
Water sports	O	O	O	O	O	O								
Food & Drink	S	S/O	O	S/O	S	O	S/O	O	O/G	O				
Multicultural	O	G	O	O	O	O	O		S/O	O				
Foraging	O	S/O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O					
Pilgrimage	O	S/O	S/O		S/O		O		O	O				
Photography	O/G	S/O	O/G	O/G	O/G	O/G	O	O	O	O				
Agriculture		S/O	S/O	S/O	S/O	O	S	S	O					
Vineyards	S/O	O	O	O	O		S	O	O					
Theatre/ Music	O		O	S/O	S/O	S/O		S/O		O				
Creative courses	O	O	O	S/O/G	O	S/O/G	O	O	O	O				

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											Jan - Mar	Apr - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec
Art tours	O			S/O/G		O				O				
Lux escapes	O			S/O	O		O	O						
Wellbeing	O	S/O	O	O	O	O	O	S/O	O	O				
Maritime	S/O		O	O	O				S	S				
Seafood	O		O	S/O	O	O								
Outdoor pursuits			O	O/S	O	S/O								
Events	S/O		O	S/O	S/O	S/O/G	O	O	O	S/O				
Markets	O				O		O	O	O	O				
Retro culture	O		O	O	O	S				O				
Pop Culture	O			O		O			O	O				
Screen tours	O		O	O	O/G	O/G	O			S/O				
Fishing	O		O	O	O	O								
Cooking	O	O	O	S/O	O	O	S/O	O	O	O				
Family/ small group focus			O	O	S/O	S	O	O	O	O				
Bespoke tours	S	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O				

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