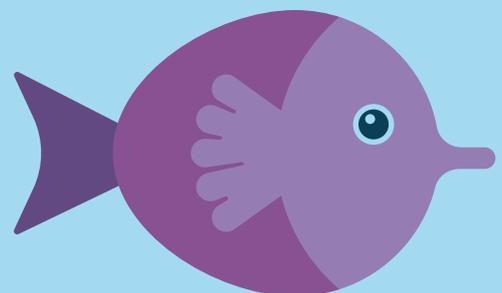
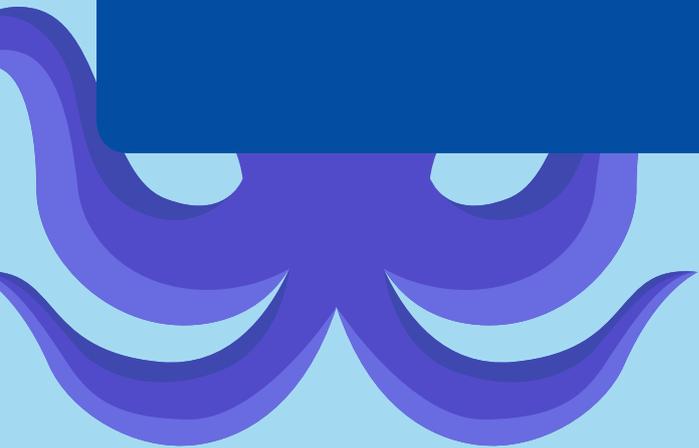


# A Guide to Rockpooling



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# Introduction

You don't have to dive the depths of the ocean to witness the mysterious creatures of the deep — the seashore is packed with all manner of sea dwellers, from anemones to starfish!

Rockpooling is one of the most fun and educational activities that all the family can enjoy. If you know where to go, when to go and what to take with you, you can discover whole new underwater communities you may never have known existed before.

In this guide, you'll find out everything you need to know about rockpooling around the coasts of the UK, including the creatures you might find and how to keep safe. So what are you waiting for?

**Grab your bucket and let's go!**

# What equipment will I need?

**You'll need specific shoes, clothes and items to get the most from your rockpool experience. This includes:**



**Sunscreen and sun-hats** - make sure you protect yourself from the sun — the water can reflect the sun back at you, and before you know it, you're burnt to a crisp (even on sunny days!).

**Comfortable clothes** - dress for comfort, the chances are you might get a bit muddy or sandy, so leave your Sunday best at home!

**Forget the net** - nets can actually damage the delicate eco-systems of the rockpools. Instead, you should carefully pick up the creatures with your hands.

**Clear buckets or Tupperware containers** - with these, you can see more of the creatures and study how they move, and how they acclimatise to their new surroundings. Make sure you bring a number of different buckets to keep different creatures separate.

# Where should I go?

**Not every beach in the UK will be good for rockpooling. The best places to find creatures are sheltered and rocky seashores, or under piers.**



On rocky shores, there will be all kinds of creatures to discover. On muddy shores, you will be faced with cockles and lugworms and a large variety of seabirds. Sandy shores are best for seashells, and shingle shores are best for finding mermaids' purses and creatures hiding among the seaweed.

Some of the UK's best rockpooling beaches are...

- Samphire Hoe, Kent
- Polzeath Beach, Cornwall
- Porth y Pwll, North Wales
- Roome Bay, Scotland
- Newton Haven, Northumbria
- Blackpool Beach, Blackpool
- Shoalstone Beach, Devon
- Cemlyn Bay, Anglesey

# What time should I go?

**The lower the tide, the more likely you are to find interesting creatures in the lowest part of the shore.**

It's really important to take into consideration the tides before you set off. You can check tide predictions for the next 6 days via [EasyTide](#), or you can download the My Tide Times App.



Always make sure you remain vigilant when it comes to tides, because they are unpredictable and can be dangerous. The tide comes in and out twice a day, which means that the beach you arrived at in the morning can be a very different place in the afternoon. For example, if you walk out at low tide, you may not be able to return if the tide comes in and the water rises.

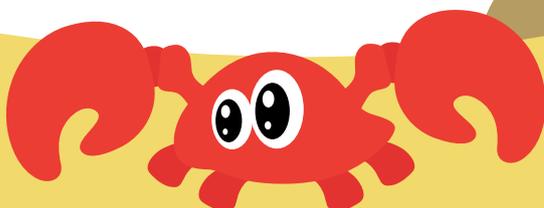
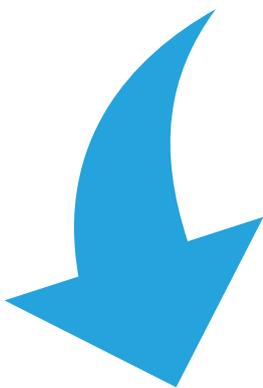
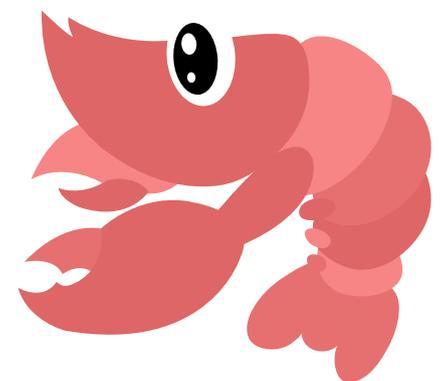
Understanding tides can help you stay safe while rockpooling, which ensures that everyone enjoys the activity.

# What might I find?

**One of the amazing things about rockpooling is the massive variety of creatures you can find around the country. There are, however, some creatures that you can find on almost all UK beaches. Keep your eyes out for...**

**Prawns** - prawns are small crustaceans that are usually found swimming around the shoreline. You can find them in rockpools around the country. The ones in Blackpool SEA LIFE rockpools will even clean your nails for you!

**Crabs** - crabs have eight legs and two claws. There are many different types of crabs in the UK's rockpools, including common shore crabs and velvet swimming crabs.

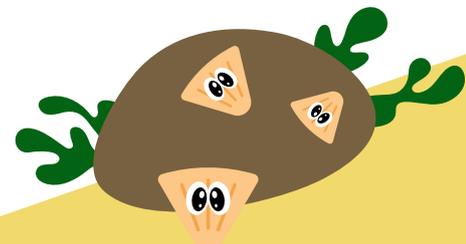
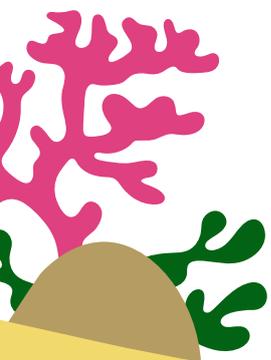


**Sea Anemones** - these creatures look like underwater flowers and got their name from the anemone flower. They have no brain, heart or blood, but are still great predators! In rockpools, when the water level drops, they tuck their tentacles inside their bodies to stop them from drying out.



**Common Limpets** - a limpet is an aquatic snail with a shell that is mostly conical in shape. When the water covers them, they crawl around looking for seaweed to eat. When the rockpools are dry, they clamp their shells onto the rocks, keeping them safe from predators and stopping them from drying out.

**Starfish** - did you know that starfish are found in every ocean in the world? There are over 2,000 known species! One of the most common starfish found in rockpools are cushion stars. They crawl around rockpools eating small sea snails and worms that live on the rocks.



# Best rockpooling tips



**Be patient** - if you cast a shadow or splash the water, the creatures might freeze or flee. Spend a few minutes at the edge of the rockpool, and your patience will pay off.



**Look for variety** - rockpools with rocks, ledges and lots of seaweed usually have the best selection of creatures.



**Take a bird identification guide** - creatures in the rockpools aren't the only forms of animal life you'll come across. Keep your eyes peeled for all different types of birds that make the coast their home, such as oystercatchers, godwits, and redshanks.



**Don't forget to look under rocks** - many creatures hide under rocks in rockpools. Make sure you don't pick up any rocks that are too big – because you might drop them and ruin the creature's habitat – and always put them back carefully.

# Staying safe

**Rockpools can be dangerous. Some can get be 8ft deep — enough to fully submerge a tall adult! As well as this, tides can be dangerous, and rocks can be slippery. Make sure you follow these safety rules so there are no accidents!**

1.

Always supervise children when they are investigating the shore

2.

Wear appropriate clothing — non-slip shoes, warm clothing in the colder months, sun-hats and cover-ups in the warmer months

3.

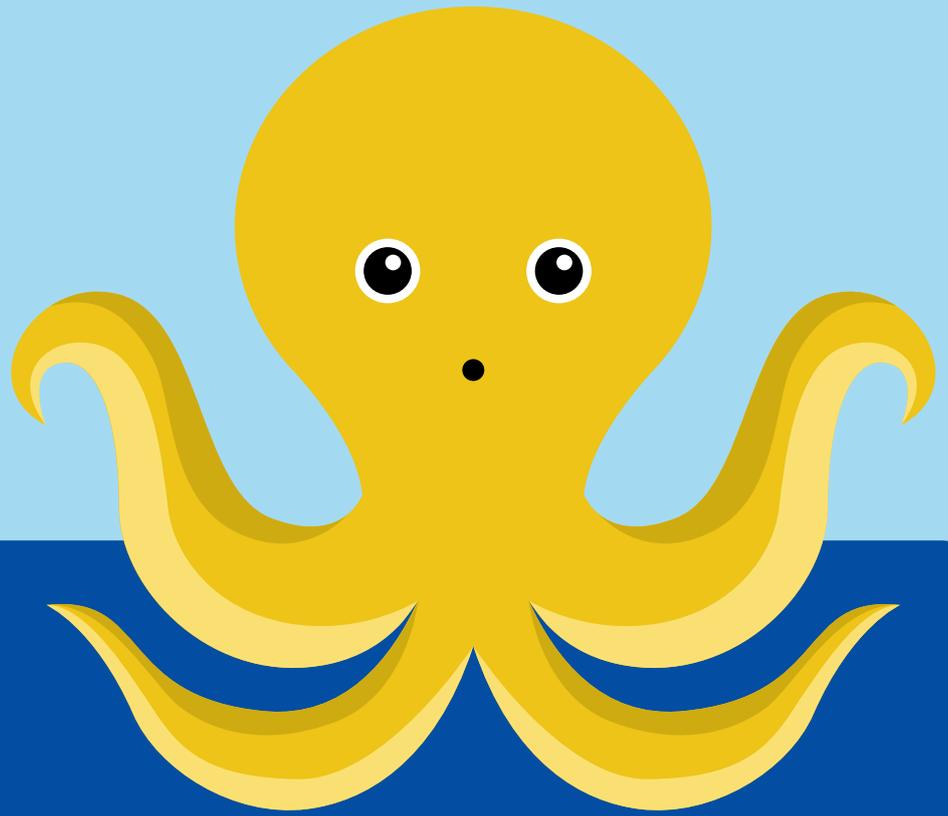
**ALWAYS** check tide times before you arrive

4.

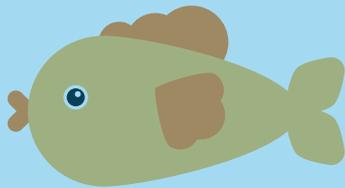
Try not to disturb the delicate eco-systems by removing plants or other forms of life from the shore

5.

Always tell someone where you're going before you start rockpooling



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