

Guide to Shore Fishing for Cod on Chesil Beach



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The UK has plenty of excellent fishing destinations, but few beat Chesil Beach when it comes to cod. With 18 miles of shingle, easy access, and some of the best [fishing in the UK](#), it should be on the bucket list of any serious angler.

Let us help you plan your trip with tips on where to go, what gear you will need, and how to target big cod.

The Best Shore Fishing Zones on Chesil Beach for Catching Cod

With 18 miles of oceanfront, the first step is determining where you should fish. It's easier to understand the area if you break it down by the various zones or marks used to identify different parts of the beach.

From east to west (Portland to West Bay), there are 13 zones:

- The Cove

- Masonic
- Ferrybridge
- Moonfleet
- Langton Herring
- Dragon's Teeth
- Abbotsbury
- West Bexington
- Cogden
- Burton
- Bradstock
- Freshwater
- West Bay

Each offers a preferred south-southwest exposure and excellent fishing opportunities. However, Abbotsbury and Dragons Teeth are best known for their cod fisheries.

Abbotsbury



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Abbotsbury is located almost in the middle of Chesil Beach and is one of the most popular spots. Not only does it offer excellent fishing, but it also is easy to access with a sizable pay-to-park lot adjacent to the boardwalk. Restrooms and a cafe make it one of the most comfortable locations you will ever fish at to target cod.

The only downside to fishing Abottsbury is the potential for larger crowds. Although the most significant groups are encountered during the summer, there is the potential for an increased number of anglers during the winter cod season.

Dragon's Teeth

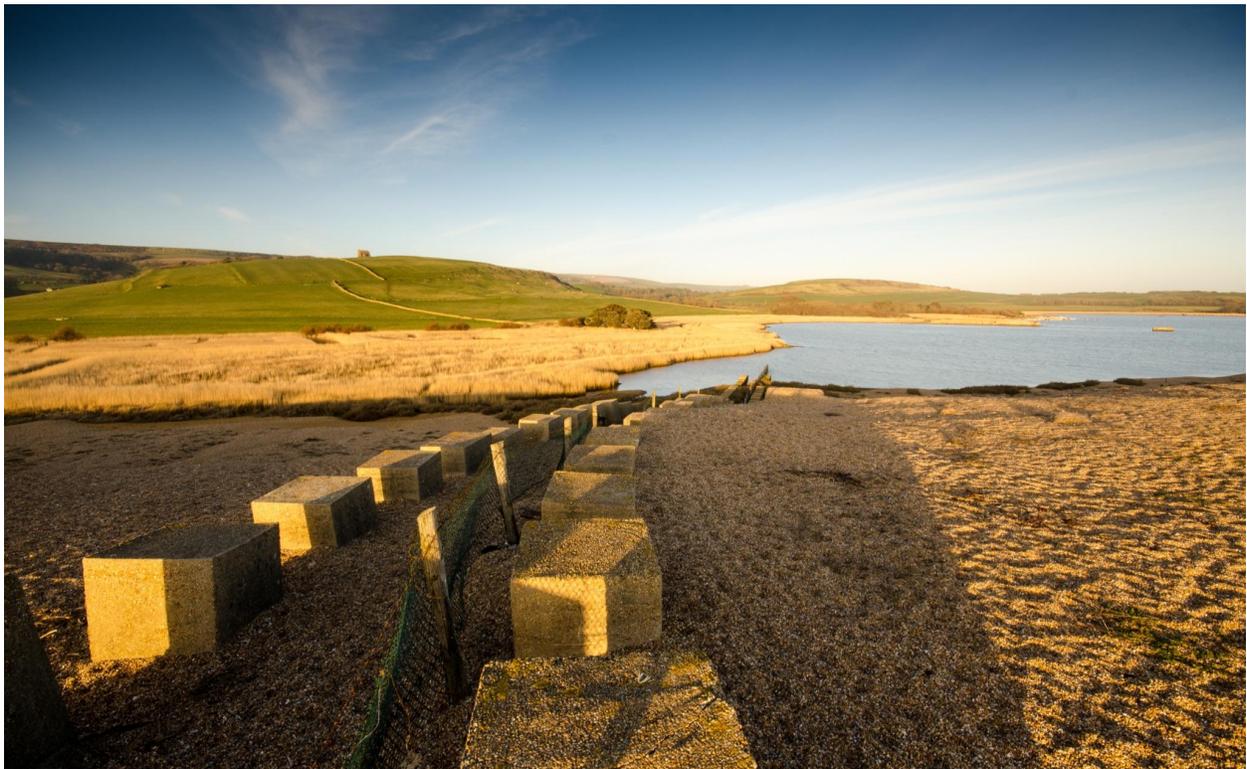


Image by [Joe Dunckley](#) on Shutterstock

A short distance down the beach will take you to the next zone, Dragon's Teeth. Named for the leftover anti-tank structures constructed during World War 2, you will immediately know you are in the correct location.

This spot is considered by many to be the premier cod fishing location. However, some find the hike over loose shingle a bit rough. Although the access is a bit more complicated, this is sometimes to your advantage as it helps keep crowds to a minimum.

Whether you go to Abbotsbury or Dragon's Teeth, both offer easy access to deep water without having to climb up a [boat ladder](#) and head out into the channel. And they offer an abundance of cod during winter.

If you set up above the tide line, you will likely be able to stay in the same spot all day. However, solid southerly winds can increase wave size and make some areas unsafe. You should [check the weather](#) and sea state predictions before fishing.

The Best Time to Fish Chesil Beach

Abbotsbury anglers catch some of the first cod of the season, often as early as late August. The number of fish will increase through September and October. Although numbers will dip during November, the biggest cod will typically not arrive until December or January.

Exactly when cod arrive depends on water temperatures. They can live in temperatures ranging from around -1 to 21° Celsius. However, their preferred range is around -1 to 12°. Look for dropping water temperatures to draw in the season's first fish.

Useful Tips for Shore Fishing

Here are some things to keep in mind for a successful cod fishing experience on Chesil Beach.

Best Waters

Cod is not the easiest fish to catch from shore. They prefer **deep, cool, offshore waters**. These requirements often put them out of reach to surf anglers.

However, the seas off Chesil Beach drop off very close to shore, allowing easier

access to the cod. Nonetheless, knowing [how to cast](#) will improve your odds, even here.

If you can't reach deeper water, cast into the rip current or area between sand bars. Cod will sometimes hide in these areas to ambush passing prey, and the current will help carry your tackle further offshore.

Aside from water depth, **cod prefer a mixed bottom** with combinations of kelp, weeds, and rocks. They rarely stay in areas with plain sand bottoms as it makes them vulnerable to predators.

Cod also prefer murky water. Clear sunny days when the water is flat may be welcomed when targeting other species, but not cod. The best fishing will occur when the water has kicked up some color and is rough.

Gear to Bring

When fishing for cod, you will need a **rig capable of casting long distances**, often with large weights. The 7-8 ft. surf rod you're probably used to will not be enough. Instead, you will want to bump up to 11-15 ft.

The weight needed will vary with conditions but may be as heavy as 5 ounces. **Breakaway sinkers** are great for avoiding losing tackle to snags.

Due to the casting distances, you will need plenty of line. Thankfully, even big cod can be caught on a moderate weight line, so a 4,000-6,000 series reel will be able to hold the minimum of 300 yards needed. You will also want to **keep your terminal tackle as simple as possible** to improve aerodynamics.

Unless you target late-season trophies, a **15-20 lb test line will be suitable for most cod**. However, a 30-40 lb braid will offer the same size and protect against other predators cruising the same waters.

The best terminal rig for cod is the **1-hook version of the paternoster rig**. The pulley rig can be more suitable as it helps avoid snags during the fight and has good aerodynamics. Regardless of which rig you choose, you **must include a**

50-70 lb shock leader. This leader will help absorb stress during the cast and the initial bite.

Bait to Use

Finally, there is the question of bait. Everyone has a favorite, and each will swear their bait is the best. But when it comes down to it, cod are not that picky.

Generally speaking, if they can find your bait, they will take it. You need to [select a bait](#) that will be **easy to find and hold up to long, forceful casts**.

Lungworms are a local favorite. They are easy to handle. They can be repeatedly threaded on 6/0 hooks to prevent falling off during the cast. Most importantly, they are active on the hook and give off an enticing scent. Peeler crabs are also very effective, especially when targeting large cod in the late season.