



Charms of Coastal Kent

Recapture your favourite seaside holidays

Whether you're after traditional family entertainment, adrenaline watersports or somewhere to chill out, Kent's varied coastline has just the beach or resort. Clean, safe, Blue Flag and award-winners, they're all here. Share romantic moments beneath 'the loveliest skies in Europe', get in touch with nature (and yourself) in stunning wildlife havens, sample the succulent seafood that tempted Julius Caesar to Britain.

Day One – [Thanet](#)

Relive the unadulterated bucket-and-spade exploits that made every childhood seaside holiday golden on the Isle of Thanet. Thanet's 26-mile coastline embraces the resorts of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate and has 14 sandy bays and beaches, including three in *The Independent* guide to Britain's top 50 – Botany Bay, Joss Bay and Minnis Bay.

Suggested activities:

- Cycle sections of the 28-mile circular Viking Coastal Trail. There are six themed mini-routes, taking in sandy beaches and bays, spectacular cliffs, and seaside resorts.
- Visit Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve which is renowned for its orchids, wildlife and wetland birds
- Try your hand at some watersports – there are good sailing waters from Margate, Joss Bay is a popular spot for surfing or there are ideal conditions for kite surfing at Minnis Bay.
- Dickens House Museum, Broadstairs
- Take an evening stroll and be swayed by the predilections of artist JMW Turner who lived in Margate and adored the glorious local sunsets, 'the loveliest skies in Europe'.

Don't forget a trip to the seaside is incomplete without sampling the local Fish and Chips.

Day Two – [Whitstable & Herne Bay](#)

Head towards Whitstable and Herne Bay on the north Kent coast.

Get a sense of Whitstable's magic wandering past pretty weather-boarded cottages, main streets packed with crafts shops, delis, butchers and bakers. Whitstable's engaging arts scene is underpinned by its theatre, museum and gallery.

According to old Kentish tradition Julius Caesar was enticed to Britain by Whitstable's oysters and their seductively succulent qualities are reason enough to visit today – they're in season from April until September. Sample them in restaurants, take some home from the harbour, or visit during for the annual summer oyster festival (July).

After lunch visit Herne Bay, lapped by a two-mile stretch of sea with superb beaches. If you want a break from paddling, try crazy golf, the amusement arcades or browsing the largely pedestrianised town centre. The annual Herne Bay Festival (August) features a lively variety of family entertainment and activities, from music and artistic performances to fireworks.

Suggested activities:

- Take an excursion out to sea from Herne Bay. Bayblast will take you so see the seal colony and wind farm and Wildlife Sailing offers bird and seal watching cruises, including the chance to actually swim with seals.
- For some high-speed action, Transition Kiteboarding, based at Whitstable, runs courses that include kitesurfing and riding. Many of the world's best riders come to the area to train because of its natural shallow bays and flat waters, which suit windsurfers, too.
- Blow away the cobwebs on the open grassy slopes of Tankerton
- Walk along the coast from Herne Bay to Reculver
- If you have children in tow visit Wildwood
- Cycle the 7.5 mile Crab and Winkle Way

Day Three – [White Cliffs Country](#)

Stretch your legs and your imagination along the world-famous White Cliffs of Dover, which took 80 million years to form. Nowadays the cliffs are home to many species of flora and fauna and are designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Ramble public footpaths and breathe in energising views of the English Channel from vantage points along the Heritage Coast.

Also in White Cliffs Country is Samphire Hoe, a wildlife haven reclaimed from the sea. Follow secluded footpaths, spot rare flowers and birds, linger over a picnic.

You can while away carefree hours shell hunting and bird watching on the sandy beaches around Dymchurch. The flat countryside here is ideal for gentle walking and cycling, and you can really get away from it all in the hauntingly beautiful landscapes of Romney Marsh or on the unique shingle bank of Dungeness. It's the largest shingle beach in Europe and around a third of all known plant species grow among the pebbles. Spring and autumn migratory birds arriving in England head straight for the RSPB Nature Reserve at Dungeness – join them to view some eye-catching natural theatre.

For more information see www.visitkent.co.uk/trade