

Cycle the Viking Coastal Trail

The Viking
Coastal
Trail



Explore the Viking Coastal Trail - Margate, Broadstairs, Ramsgate - and circle the spectacular Isle of Thanet by bike.

Romans, Saints and Saxons landed here, artists and writers drew inspiration here, so hop on your bike and discover why visitors have been coming to the Isle of Thanet for centuries. Whichever section of the **32 mile (51.4 km)** Viking Coastal Trail you choose to explore, you are sure to find dramatic scenery and a wealth of local historical gems.

Divide the trail up into manageable sections and you'll find a variety of fantastic days out; from pedalling your way through rural villages to winding your way along the coast, taking in vibrant seaside towns and the haunts of Charles Dickens and JMW Turner.

The route is known as the Regional Cycle Network 15 and is well signed throughout with the trail logo and the National Cycle Network. Please see 'Getting Around' information within this leaflet.



Minnis Bay

1 The Six Churches Ride

Location: St Nicholas-at-Wade (CT7 ONG) – Ramsgate

Distance: 9.5 mile (15.25 km)

Time: Allow 1.5 hours

OS Explorer Map: 150

Terrain: Mainly on-road

Refreshments & facilities: Restaurants and pubs in St Nicholas-at-Wade and Ramsgate

Parking: Ramsgate CT11 8NA, CT11 8LS, CT11 9EF

Take on the trail from **St Nicholas-at-Wade**, passing six ancient churches and charming villages to meet the coast and cosmopolitan Ramsgate.

St Nicholas-at-Wade's grand flint and ragstone church dates back to the 13th century.

Cycle across peaceful marshland and you'll reach Thanet's smallest ancient church, **St Mary Magdalene**, nestled in the traditional village of Monkton.

Minster's 12th century **St Mary the Virgin Church** is a stark reminder of the Reformation; the 1160 nave was the only part of the church to survive destruction.

One of England's oldest religious buildings, **Minster Abbey** was founded by Princess Ermenburga in the 7th century; it is said to have been funded by her cousin and King of Kent, Egbert, after he murdered her two brothers.

St Augustine's Cross marks a piece of ancient local legend; it is said that this is the spot where St Augustine met with King Ethelbert nearly 1,500 years ago.

Along the cliff tops overlooking Ramsgate Royal Harbour, you'll see the architectural splendor of **St Augustine's Church**, also the shrine of St Augustine designed by the great Gothic architect Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin.

The small **Sailor's Church** is your final stop, a contrast to the grand St Augustine's Church. Built in 1878 by the Vicar of Christ Church, it was a refuge for the men and boys of the Ramsgate fleet.

2 History, Art and Architecture

Location: Ramsgate (CT12 5HY)

Distance: 4.5 mile (7km)

Time: 45 minutes

OS Explorer Map: 150

Terrain: Mainly off-road, some on-road sections

Refreshments & facilities: Restaurants and pubs in Ramsgate and public toilets at Pegwell Bay (close by), Ramsgate and King George VI Memorial Park.

Parking: Car park at the Viking Ship Hugin CT12 5JB

Viking ships and nostalgic villages pepper this section of the trail, not to mention the obligatory backdrop of fantastic coastal views along the entire ride.

This ride begins at the very heart of the Isle of Thanet's heritage with the Viking invasion. The **Viking Ship 'Hugin'** is a replica of the 1949 'Hugin', which sailed from Denmark to Isle of Thanet to mark the 1500th anniversary of the invasion of Britain.

The grand **St Augustine's Church**, now the **Pugin and St Augustine Shrine and Visitor Centre** was designed by the Victorian architect Augustus Pugin, designer of the interiors of the Houses of Parliament. The Grange, Grade I listed house next door was designed by Pugin for his family. A self guided walking tour from East Cliff to West Cliff 'Pugin's Town Trail' highlights Pugin's influence in Ramsgate.

Ramsgate's harbour lies along your trail, a perfect place to stop and enjoy lively restaurants and bars or take a tour of **Ramsgate Maritime Museum**. Wander through the town and you'll be distracted by sweeping crescents, Regency squares and Georgian terraces.

Rounding the coast from Ramsgate to Broadstairs, you'll ride through King George VI Memorial Park where the 19th century **Italianate Glasshouse** sits within a sweep of parkland.



3 Historic Broadstairs

Location: King George VI Memorial Park, Ramsgate (CT11 8BD) – North Foreland Lighthouse

Distance: 3.25 miles (9km)

Time: Allow 30 minutes

OS Explorer Map: 150

Terrain: On-road

Refreshments & facilities: Restaurants and pubs in Ramsgate and Broadstairs. Public toilets at King George VI Memorial Park, Broadstairs and Joss Bay.

Parking: Ramsgate CT11 8BD, Broadstairs CT10 1NG, CT10 1QN and CT10 1EU, Joss Bay CT10 3PG

Explore the landscape that inspired famous figures including Charles Dickens and Thomas Crampton on this ride to timeless Broadstairs.

Pedaling along the cliff tops above **Louisa Bay**, you'll soon reach Broadstairs; a short detour up the High Street leads you to **Crampton Tower Museum**. Situated in the original Broadstairs Waterworks, the museum is dedicated to the famous Victorian civil engineer, Thomas Russell Crampton.

This striking coastline attracted many creatives. Broadstairs was a favourite holiday spot for Charles Dickens and the **Dickens House Museum** on the seafront boasts a fascinating collection of his belongings. **Bleak House**, (external viewing only) Dickens' holiday home was famously where he wrote much of David Copperfield.

Seven glorious bays make up the Broadstairs coastline. The most notable bay, **Viking Bay** was named after the landing of the anniversary Viking Ship 'Hugin' at Broadstairs.

The curved **York Gate** on Harbour Street stands as testament to George Culmer's shipyard of the 16th Century. York Gate stood to protect Culmer's prosperous business. The **North Foreland Lighthouse** is the final stop on your tour.

This great tower marks the southern entrance to the Thames and was the last manned lighthouse in the country until its conversion in 1998. External viewing only.

4 The Path of St Augustine

Location: St Augustine's Cross (CT12 5JN) - Monkton
Distance: 4.5 miles (7 km)
Time: Allow 45 minutes
OS Explorer Map: 150
Terrain: On-road
Refreshments & facilities: Restaurant and pub in Minster
Parking: Car park at the Viking Ship 'Hugin' CT12 5JB

Retrace the footsteps of St Augustine, the intrepid missionary of Pope Gregory the Great, charged with the task of bringing Christianity from Rome to England in 597 AD.

Ebbsfleet was where St Augustine and 40 monks first stepped on to English soil. **St Augustine's Cross** marks the spot where it is said he first met King Ethelbert, a sovereign he later converted to Christianity.

As Britain's oldest inhabited house it is no surprise that **Minster Abbey** has had a stormy past. Founded as the first English monastery in 670 AD, the Abbey was destroyed by Vikings, rebuilt by King Canute and then razed to the ground during the Norman Conquest.

From an ancient monastery to an ancient church, Minster's **St Mary the Virgin Church** was the first church on the Isle of Thanet. The peal of five bells carries across the marshland from the church, four of which date back to the 17th century.

A little way off the trail, the 16-acre **Monkton Nature Reserve** is worth a small detour. The abandoned chalk quarry provides a fantastic site for animals, wild flowers and bats to flourish.

5 Smugglers' Haunts Ride

Location: Joss Bay (CT10 3PG) – Margate
Distance: 3.5 miles (6km)
Time: Allow 30 minutes
OS Explorer Map: 150
Terrain: Mainly off-road
Refreshments & facilities: Restaurant, pubs and public toilets at Joss Bay and Margate
Parking: Joss Bay CT10 3PG and Margate CT9 1HR, CT9 1EU and CT9 5QH

Cycle this stretch of the trail from the sweeping Joss Bay to vibrant Margate. Evidence of smuggling legend is found all along this trail, from bays named after notorious crooks to a museum packed with smuggling history.

The notorious 18th century smuggler Joss Snelling was named after the glorious **Joss Bay**. Unlike his peers, Snelling escaped hanging, his status reaching lofty heights, so much so that he was even introduced to Queen Victoria as "the famous Broadstairs smuggler".

Botany Bay is said to have been named after Botany Bay in Australia; the fate for many smugglers was deportation to Australia by convict ship!

Riding into Margate, the **museum** and harbour offer a perfect end to your smuggling trail. The museum tells the town's tale, from the town's smugglers to its important role in the evacuation of Dunkirk.

A departure from the history and heritage of the area, the visually dynamic **Turner Contemporary**, next to the 19th century harbour, offers a refreshing end to your ride.



6 Beaches and Bays

Location: Margate (CT9 1JD) – Minnis Bay
Distance: 3.75 miles (6.25 km) optional extended route to Reculver – 3.75 miles (6.25 km)
Time: 30 minutes (Allow 1 hour with extension to Reculver)
OS Explorer Map: 150
Terrain: Mainly off-road
Refreshments & facilities: Restaurants, pubs and public toilets at Margate, Westgate-on-Sea and Minnis Bay
Parking: Margate CT9 1HR, CT9 1EU and CT9 5QH, Westgate-on-Sea CT8 8AD and CT8 8QG, Minnis Bay CT7 9LX

Enjoy the trail from Margate harbour to the family haven of **Minnis Bay**, discovering six sandy bays and hidden coves along this largely traffic-free route.

What better way to start this beach-hopping tour than taking in some of the traditional trappings of a seaside town? Make the most of ice cream stalls overlooking the magnificent stretch of **Margate Main Sands** or take a trip in Dreamland vintage amusement park.

At **Westbrook Bay** take in a deep breath of sea air or have a game of golf at **Stroke Adventure Golf**.

St Mildred's Bay at Westgate-on-Sea offers plenty of distractions. Take in stunning views from the chalk cliff tops, wander the sandy beach, complete with chalk reef or visit the cafes. Scan the digital plaque to learn about the former WWI seaplane base.

West Bay features a promenade, cliffs, a café and rock pools surrounding a glorious sandy beach. From here your route continues along the cliff top road to the promenade at **Epple Bay** where you can view the chalk sea caves.

You'll find tranquil bays at **Beresford Gap** and **Grenham**, each with an extensive chalk reef habitat and wildlife. Finish your trail with a stroll along **Minnis Bay**. Kiteboarding, sailing and windsurfing are all popular here. You can continue the route along the sea wall and on to **Reculver Towers**.

Reculver to St Nicholas-at-Wade

Location: Reculver Towers (CT6 6SU) - St Nicholas-at-Wade

Distance: 5 miles (7.9 km)

Time: Allow 55 minutes

OS Explorer Map: 150

Terrain: Mainly on-road

Refreshments & facilities: Pubs at St Nicholas-at-Wade and Reculver. Public toilets at Reculver

Parking: Reculver and St Nicholas-at-Wade CT6 6SU

Complete your circle of the Isle of Thanet peninsular and ride along the final section of the Viking Coastal Trail.

Pedal on from the magnificent **Reculver Towers** and take on this final 5-mile section, heading away from the glorious beaches and busy seaside towns and back through peaceful countryside and marshland towards the village of **St Nicholas-at-Wade**.

Reculver to Herne Bay

Location: Reculver Towers (CT6 6SU) - Herne Bay

Distance: 7 miles (11.3 km)

Time: 1 hour

OS Explorer Map: 150

Terrain: Mainly off-road

Refreshments & facilities: Pubs at St Nicholas-at-Wade and Reculver. Public toilets at Reculver.

Parking: Reculver and Herne Bay

Stretching on from **Reculver Towers**, the section of the Oyster Bay Trail to Herne Bay is a fantastic addition to your exploration of the Viking Coastal Trail.

Your tour will take in Reculver Towers, an imposing landmark which can be seen across the coastline as you make your way to Herne Bay. These 12th century towers stand amid the ruins of a Saxon monastery and a Roman fort.

Travel along the coast on traffic-free cycle paths and residential roads and you'll soon reach Herne Bay seafront, lined with a rainbow of beach huts and with views back to the magnificent towers.

Walking Trails

Walk the Viking Coastal Trail

Explore the Viking Coastal Trail on foot and you'll discover more fantastic days out. Whether you are looking for a bracing cliff top walk on an autumn morning or a summer stroll along the beach, the Isle of Thanet has a range of walks for any season.

Active Ramsgate

Try one of the Active Ramsgate walking trails which lead you from the lively harbour town of Ramsgate to the tranquil Pegwell Bay, the sandy beaches of Broadstairs, a historic tour through the heart of Ramsgate's town and along the sweeping bays towards Margate.

If you are feeling adventurous try their new Pier to Pier cycle ride between Ramsgate and Deal ramsgatetown.org/activeramsgate

Turner and Dickens Walk

Take a tour between Dickens' Broadstairs and Turner's Margate on the 4 mile (6.4 km) signposted Turner and Dickens Walk.

Explore the area's connections to these two creative giants with colourful mosaics documenting their lives and works. turneranddickenswalk.co.uk

Explore Kent

Discover the great outdoors with a choice of over 400 walks, rides, parks, open spaces and events across the Garden of England. To find out more visit explorekent.org

Download the Kent Connected app kentconnected.org/our-app



For information on more self-guided and guided walks and tours in Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate visit visitthanet.co.uk/walking

Places to visit

- 1 Bleak House (external viewing only) **N5**
 - 2 The Boating Pool **L1**
 - 3 Kids Mayhem Clubworld **I8**
 - 4 Crampton Tower Museum **M5**
 - 5 Dickens House Museum **N5**
 - 6 Drapers Windmill **K7**
 - 7 Dreamland **I8**
 - 8 Pugin and St Augustine Shrine and Visitor Centre **L1**
 - 9 Hartsdown Leisure Centre **I7**
 - 10 Kent Surf School **N5**
 - 11 Go2Sea **M2**
 - 12 Hornby Visitor Centre **K6**
 - 13 Italianate Glasshouse **N3**
 - 14 Joss Bay Surf School **N7**
 - 15 Lillyputt Mini Golf **N4**
 - 16 Margate Museum **J8**
 - 17 Minster Abbey **F1**
 - 18 Monkton Nature Reserve **C3**
 - 19 Quex Park Estate **E5**
- Attractions on site - Powell Cotton Musuem, Quex House and Gardens, Quex Barn, Quex Adventure Golf, Maize Maze, Quex Activity Centre, Quex Craft Village and Llama Walking
- 20 Manston History Museum **H3**
 - 21 Spitfire & Hurricane Memorial Museum **H4**
 - 22 Ramsgate Maritime Museum **M2**
 - 23 Ramsgate Sports Centre **L2**
 - 24 Revolution Skatepark **L6**
 - 25 Ramsgate Tunnels **M2**
 - 26 Sandwich & Pegwell Bay National Reserve **I1**
 - 27 Sea Searcher Boat Trips **M2**
 - 28 Shell Grotto **J8**
 - 29 St Augustine's Cross **H1**
 - 30 Strokes Adventure Golf **I8**
 - 31 Tudor House **J8**
 - 32 Turner Contemporary **J8**
 - 33 Viking Adventure Playground **K8**
 - 34 Viking Ship 'Hugin' **J1**
 - 35 Walpole Bay Hotel and Museum **K8**
 - 36 Lost Island Adventure Golf **J8**
 - 37 Margate Caves **J8**
 - 38 Rascal Bay Adventure Golf **J3**
 - 39 Crab Museum **J8**

Cycle Hire and Clubs

Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate have a huge variety of accommodation, many welcoming walkers and cyclists. Visit visitthanet.co.uk

Cycle Hire

Ride The Bike Shed

71 Canterbury Road, Margate CT9 5AS /
Margate Train Station CT9 5AD
Tel: 01843 228866

VCT Bike Hire

The Parade, Minnis Bay, Birchington CT7 9QP
Tel: 01843 843309

Harbour Bikes

Arch 20, Military Road, Ramsgate CT11 9LG
Tel: 01843 585060

Margate Bikes and Hire

87a Canterbury Road, Margate CT9 5AX
Tel: 07756 041452

Cycle Groups

Spokes East Kent Cycling Campaign
spokeseastkent.org.uk

Wheelability

Cycle club aimed at people with disabilities
Tel: 0333 366 0834
yourleisure.uk.com/wheelability


Thanet Road Club

thanetrc.org

Col's Kent Bike Tours

Small guided group tours for all cycling abilities
Tel: 07734 800812
colskentbiketours.co.uk

Parking

Cycle parking around Isle of Thanet  is located in a number of town centre locations, including all train stations, beaches and a number of visitor attractions.

Observe the Coastal Codes

Your enjoyment is maximised by keeping to the Coastal Code. Staying safe, looking out for other coastal users and protecting precious habitats, marine and birdlife is the basis. Remember to check tide times before you travel. More information can be found at nekmpa.org.uk/factfile/thanet-coastal-codes/

Getting around

For information on taking bikes on buses or trains, please visit:

Trains southeasternrailway.co.uk

Buses stagecoachbus.com

Whilst cycling is allowed on the promenade, seasonal restrictions are in place from 1st May to 30th September. These promenades are shared spaces with PSPOs (Public Space Protection Order) in place to ensure the safety of all users. Please make sure you follow instructions on localised signs which require you to dismount and slow down. Promenades are designed for walking so be aware in all locations of all users especially in busy areas and where there are beach huts.

Be Courteous

Cycle paths make your journey safer, cyclists must give priority to pedestrians - Share with care and dismount where signs advise

Sharing Is Caring

Please pass people with care and slow down when approaching others. Try to stay to one side of the path.

Be Protected

Wear a cycle helmet. Make sure it is the right size, properly fitted and fastened at all times. Only buy a helmet that conforms to BS6863, Snell B90, B95 or ANSI standards.

Be Heard

Fit a bell or horn, and use it if you think drivers or pedestrians have not seen you.

Be Safe

Look after your bike. Check moving parts regularly, giving special attention to brakes. Make sure tyres are properly inflated, and that you can see the tread on them clearly. Ensure your reflectors and lights are clean.

Be Wise

Over 100,000 cycles are reported stolen every year. Always lock your bike when you leave it, even if it is only for a few minutes. Get your bike frame marked with your postcode and stick on a 'Coded Cycle' sticker.

Be Trained

Find out about cycle training:

www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-safety/road-safety-training/cycle-training

Kent County Council

Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XX



explorekent.org

explore@kent.gov.uk

Thanet Visitor Information Service
Serving Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate
The Droit House Stone Pier, Margate
Kent CT9 1JD



visitthanet.co.uk

[visitorinformation@](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)

thanet.gov.uk

01843 577577

Supporting information points at:

Royal Albion Garden Kiosk,
Broadstairs CT10 1AN

The Custom House, Harbour Parade,
Ramsgate CT11 8LP



@VisitThanet

This guide is available in other formats and can be explained in other languages. To obtain a copy please call: 03000 41 71 71. Textphone users please call: 18001 03000 41 71 71. Cartography © FourPoint Mapping
Photos: Explore Kent, Thanet Tourism & Visit Kent

Thanet is well-served by mainline train stations and bus routes including the Thanet Loop which runs every 8 minutes. For more information visit kentconnected.org



