

# RAMSGATE CANOE TRAIL

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# CANOE

SEA, SEALS & THE RIVER STOUR  
RAMSGATE TO SANDWICH CANOE TRAIL

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# SEA, SEALS & THE RIVER STOUR

Nature and wildlife abound on this 6.8 mile canoe trail, setting off just down the coast from Ramsgate's Royal Harbour and providing spectacular views across the sea towards the national gem of Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve.

## RAMSGATE TO SANDWICH CANOE TRAIL

**TYPE OF TRAIL:** Sea Water / Tidal River

**DISTANCE:** 6.8 miles (10.9km)

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 4 out of 5

**TIME:** 2 hours 40mins (one way). This trail is best taken on 2 hours before high tide at Ramsgate.

For tide tables visit [tidetimes.org.uk](http://tidetimes.org.uk)

**Note** - Time taken depends on wind and tide.

*Paddling against wind and tide slows the journey time and requires greater effort.*

**START:** Western Undercliffe, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 9PH

Free on road car parking is available adjacent to the beach at Western Undercliffe. More parking is available adjacent to the Upper Promenade. Western Undercliff Cafe opens 8am-3pm daily.

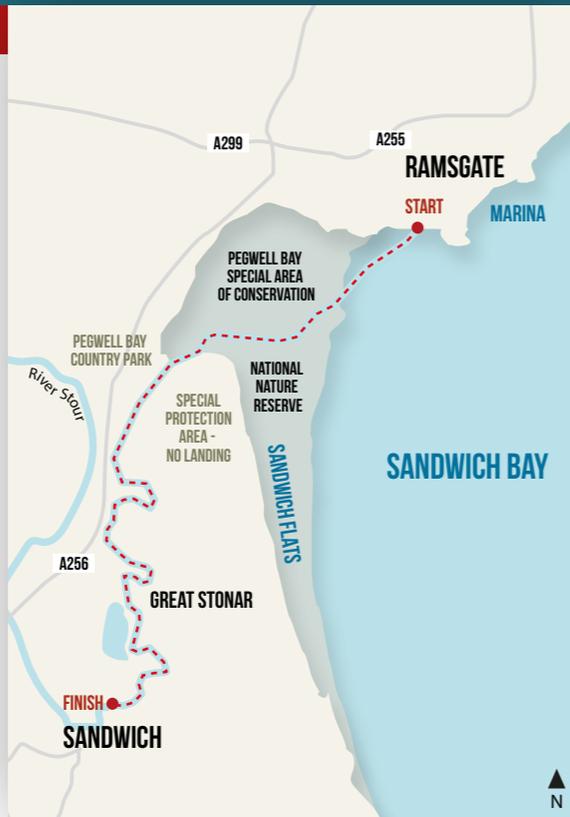
**FINISH:** Sandwich Quay, Kent CT13 9EN

Car parking is available at the Quay car park (parking fees apply).

**ACCOMMODATION:** For a selection of quality accommodation in Ramsgate visit [ramsgatetown.org](http://ramsgatetown.org)

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** Stagecoach buses run between Sandwich and Ramsgate (not on Sundays).

For timetables visit [stagecoachbus.com](http://stagecoachbus.com)



Cover Photo: Western Undercliffe, Ramsgate. Top Photo - West Cliff Arcades, Ramsgate



Leaving the vibrant coastal town of Ramsgate behind, hopefully after fuelling up for the journey ahead with a hearty breakfast or lunch in one of the many tempting waterfront eateries and restaurants around the Royal Harbour, you'll paddle out to sea and head towards the mouth of the Stour estuary with sightings of seals basking on the sand banks.

The trail then continues along the tidal River Stour passing through stunning Kentish countryside and ending at the Quay in the historic market town of Sandwich. Formerly one of the Cinque Ports, but now two miles from the sea, this picturesque coastal town still has many original medieval buildings and several listed public houses.

## THE TRAIL

Launch from the concrete slipway at the western end of the beach and begin to paddle in a southwesterly direction away from Ramsgate with the mouth of the River Stour in your sights. This paddle to the mouth of the river should take about 40 minutes depending upon tide and wind.

As you leave Kent's Mediterranean-style coastal town of Ramsgate behind you, look out towards Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve and you're almost guaranteed to see seals bobbing around in the water or basking on the sandy banks of the Nature Reserve.

Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve, with its spectacular stretch of fragile windswept coastline, including chalk cliffs, mud flats, saltmarsh and sand dunes, is internationally important for wading birds and wildfowl, both on migration and over-wintering.

These varied habitats mean your paddle into the mouth of the Stour is sure to be accompanied by rewarding sights of

Oystercatchers, Terns, Shelducks, Dunlins and Curlews, to name just a few of the rich array of wetland birds found here!

The National Nature Reserve is a perfect breeding area for Terns and Waders during spring and summer and an important spot for roosting during high tide. Please note that landing on the reserves seaward margin is not permitted at any time of year, however you should still see plenty of wildlife.

Paddling up the Stour you may spot even more seals, relaxing on the river bank. This section of the trail has some dramatic views across the complex mosaic of habitats of international importance for birds as you pass through the Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve on either side of you.

Winding further along the river, you'll paddle past Stonar Lake. This great lake is a popular haunt for local anglers with its promised catches of carp and bream.

2 hours from the mouth of the river and you should be reaching medieval Sandwich at about the High Tide mark. A concrete slipway is located on the left hand bank at the very start of the Quay. As one of the historic Cinque Ports, Sandwich's ancient medieval buildings and maritime past is a fitting end to your trail.



# BEING A RESPONSIBLE CANOEIST

Following a few simple tips whilst paddling this trail will ensure your own personal safety, protect the wildlife you encounter, and conserve the fragile environment of the National Nature Reserve.

## Let sleeping birds and seals lie!

Never approach wildlife so close that your presence disturbs it or interferes with its natural behaviour. If birds take to flight or seals take to the water then you are too close and need to back away.

**Keep to a whisper.** Wildlife will move away or freeze if they hear human voices. To watch seals continue with their normal behaviors you should lower your voice.

**On a tangent.** Always approach wildlife to be viewed from an angle, never head on, as this will scare them and they will move off.

**Keep on track.** Paddling down the small inlets leading off the River Stour into the National Nature Reserve is strictly prohibited as this disturbs the wildlife and impacts on this fragile environment. You should at all times keep to the main river.

**Know your limits.** Ensure you have the right level of experience and expertise to tackle this tidal trail.

## Wear appropriate clothing.

Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without proper attire.

**Check the forecast.** Find out the weather forecast before you set out on your canoe trail.

**Safety first.** Check the tides, inform someone of your route and timings.

**Equip yourself.** Make sure you have the correct equipment: boat, paddle, bailer/sponge, buoyancy aid, small first aid kit, penknife, mobile phone (in a waterproof bag), fresh drinking water, sun cream, hat and sunglasses, light waterproof jacket, footwear.

For information on the protected landscapes this canoe trail passes through please visit [www.thanetcoast.org.uk](http://www.thanetcoast.org.uk)



**CanoeWild**

For inexperienced canoeists, those without your own canoe, or those who wish to join in a group for a great experience why not join specialist canoe operator **Canoe Wild** on a group paddle / Taster Session along this trail (all equipment provided). Visit [canoewild.co.uk](http://canoewild.co.uk) or phone **01227 469219** for details.

This canoe trail is an initiative of Active Ramsgate and Explore Kent. For information on canoeing, walking and cycling trails in and around Ramsgate visit [www.ramsgatetown.org/activeramsgate](http://www.ramsgatetown.org/activeramsgate)

Funded by



Active Ramsgate is a  
Ramsgate Town Council initiative



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Explore Kent is a  
Kent County Council initiative