



Walking Holidays in Britain's most Beautiful Landscapes

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South Downs Way

The South Downs Way starts at the ancient and historic city of Winchester and follows the northern crest of the chalk escarpment of the South Downs, all the way to the sea. Stretching for 100 miles through England's newest National Park, to the seaside town of Eastbourne, this walking holiday offers a fabulous taste of this lovely rural area, with spectacular views, expansive fields, beautiful woodlands, picturesque villages and huge amounts of history.

The South Downs Way is well marked and easy to follow. It is used by horses and cyclists, so is very accessible, with almost no stiles. It links many ancient and historic tracks, used by travellers and traders since the Stone Age. It is one of the easiest National Trails, with few steep sections, apart from when the route drops down into river valleys, and for the descent to overnight stays in the pretty towns, villages and farms along the way.

Although seldom exceeding 250m (820ft), this walking holiday gives a great feeling of space, and a sense of being 'on top of the world'. Passing iron age hill forts, the spectacular chalk formations of The Devil's Dyke and the Seven Sisters, and rolling countryside with fields of grazing sheep, corn and wild flowers. The South Downs Way offers a magnificent sense of solitude, centuries of history and a cross section of one of the most beautiful parts of southern England.



Why do this walk?

Enjoy a beautiful, well marked trail through rolling countryside - a great introduction to Britain's long distance paths.

Start in historic Winchester, King Arthur's capital city, and pass through many historic sites from pretty villages to ancient hill forts.

Discover the rolling chalk heathlands of England's newest National Park, with a great diversity of habitats and an abundance of butterflies and wild flowers.

Finish over the spectacular chalk cliffs of Seven Sisters and Beachy Head with great views over the English Channel and Isle of Wight.

Essential Info

Length:	3 - 10 nights
Full Route Length:	104 miles/167km
Shortest Break Length:	19 miles/31km

Average Grade:



Easy to Moderate

This is another relatively easy National Park Trail which is clearly way-marked along the length of the path. A good route for a first long-distance walk.

Terrain: Varied - but these are gentle downs and heathlands, not mountains! The path spends most of its time on the South Downs, undulating over farmland and through woodlands.

What's it like underfoot? Pretty good. Well maintained paths, tracks, and green lanes throughout, although sections can get a bit muddy in wet weather.

How Much Up & Down? Once up on the Downs, the trail is rolling rather than hilly. It does drop down to the valley floor to visit villages and cross river valleys, followed by climbs of up to 700 ft (200m). There are some short steeper sections, but they don't go on forever. The highest point is 886 ft (270m).

Signposting: Generally good.

Navigation: Pretty straightforward. Well defined paths, and good signposting.

Weather: You may be lucky enough to encounter warm, dry weather over the whole route and enjoy dry paths and tremendous views, but you must be prepared because the weather can change quickly. Good clothing and waterproofs essential!

Route

Winchester to Buriton

Before leaving Winchester make sure you explore this ancient city with its links to the Romans, King Arthur, King Alfred the Great, William the Conqueror, Winston Churchill and Keats, to name but a few. The route starts near the Cathedral and

on entering the rolling Hampshire countryside, it passes through fields, along quiet lanes, following the lower slopes of the downs, and then up to Beacon Hill, which gives you the first real taste of the down land scenery you'll be walking through for the next few days. A steep descent takes you into the village of Exton where most routes spend the first night.

Leaving Exton along the banks of the River Meon, you eventually come to the top of Old Winchester Hill, with its Iron Age settlement. The route descends to the valley, and then climbs up through fields to Coombe Cross. There is a path off here to East Meon, otherwise the route continues on up to Salt Hill, before descending to the foot of Butser Hill then into Queen Elizabeth Country Park. A walk through the woods eventually brings you down to the pretty village of Buriton.

Buriton to Amberley

After walking back up onto the trail, you follow the high crest of the South Downs, along tracks and lanes, and through woods. The Way continues above South Harting, to Beacon Hill then through more woods to Coking Down, where the views open out again. From here most routes have an overnight stop in Coking. More fields and woods are interspersed with fine views, before descending again to cross another road. The wide chalky track then winds its way between large arable fields. You



are rewarded with more spectacular views as you follow the track over Bignor Hill, where you can see the River Arun snaking through the water courses of Amberley Wild Brooks. The trail finally leads down into the Arun valley, and passes close to the picturesque village of Amberley, where most routes will spend the night.

Amberley to Kingston

From this point onwards there are a lot less trees along the trail. The track offers an easy walk through vast arable fields and meadows with grazing sheep and cows. It passes above the town of Storrington before descending to cross the footbridge over the A24 near Washington. Back up onto the escarpment, it passes the famous Chanctonbury Ring, and then continues above Steyning, Bramber and Upper Beeding, crossing the River Adur. Climbing out of the valley, it follows the escarpment, before descending beside the Devil's Dyke, Britain's largest chalk coombe, then on to the village of Pyecombe. After crossing a footbridge, you pass Jack and Jill – two landmark windmills.

Walking through the now familiar landscape of grazed downland and arable fields, you ascend to the summit of Ditchling Beacon, the highest point in Sussex, offering far reaching views. Continuing along the escarpment, the trail takes a sharp right turn at Blackcap and heads south.

Ascending again, you join Juggs Road, a historic trading track. If you are staying at Kingston for the night you can continue on this track down into the village.

Kingston to Alfriston

Continuing along the trail, over grazing and arable land, you eventually come to the historic village of Southease, with its unusual church. Here you cross the River Ouse, and may get your first view and smell of the sea. The Way proceeds for a few miles over grassland, and, as the Downs curve towards the coast, there is a sense that the end of your journey is near. From Firls Beacon there are fine views of Seaford Head and the start of the Seven Sisters, spectacular chalk cliffs where the South Downs meet the sea. There are more panoramic views from Bostal Hill, then, as Alfriston comes into view, so also does the Cuckmere Haven estuary. The Way meets an ancient shepherd's track, which leads into the village of Alfriston and its long association with smugglers.

Alfriston to Eastbourne

The final section of the route is most diverse and spectacular. Leaving Alfriston, you walk along the banks of the meandering Cuckmere River to Litlington. From here you go back up onto the Downs, and then walk through Friston Forest. Passing through the tiny hamlet of West Dean, you eventually emerge from the woods at Exceat.

The trail descends to the marshes alongside the Cuckmere River, through the Seven Sisters Country Park towards Cuckmere Haven.

Finally reaching the sea, the South Downs Way takes a rollercoaster route over the spectacular high chalk cliffs of the Seven Sisters. It descends briefly to Birling Gap, before rising again, passing the old Belle Tout lighthouse. The last ascent of the Way leads on to Beachy Head, a dramatic chalk cliff with the red and white Beachy Head lighthouse below. Finally you descend into Eastbourne, with views of its famous Victorian pier and Martello Tower. The Way ends on the outskirts of Eastbourne, but most people will continue into the town for a well-earned rest and celebration.

Additional Days

Winchester

Winchester is one of England's most historic cities and well worth an extra day. It was the ancient capital of Wessex, and seat of King Alfred the Great. Winchester Cathedral has been a place of worship for 900 years and houses, amongst other treasures, Jane Austen's tomb. King Arthur's famous Round Table is worth a visit, in the Great Hall, and the City Museum has many fascinating displays and artefacts. There are many places to eat and drink, too.



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Amberley

Nestling at the foot of the Downs, Amberley, with its many thatched cottages, is a lovely place for a day off. Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre covers a 36 acre site, and is dedicated to the industrial heritage of the area. There is a narrow gauge steam train and vintage bus service to take you around the site, as well as many traditional craftsmen, such as stained glass makers and wheelwrights. Amberley also has a castle, which can be viewed from the outside, and a train station with regular services to nearby the historic town of Arundel.

Kingston-nr-Lewes/Lewes

Kingston is a beautiful village with many historic buildings in its centre, including the Normand St Pancras church, and the 14th Century pub The Jiggs.

The historic market town of Lewes lies 2 mile away, with Lewes Castle sitting above the town. There are a number of other historic buildings, including the remains of Lewes priory, as well as shops, inns and restaurants.

Eastbourne

This Victorian seaside town boasts the title of the sunniest place in Britain, thanks to its sheltered position. If the weather is warm, there are some great beaches to laze on, giving those feet a well-earned rest and even perhaps dipping them in the

sea. There's also the elegant seafront and famous pier to stroll along, as well as the Redoubt Fortress and Military Museum to explore.

There are regular concerts at the Eastbourne Bandstand, and a wide variety of galleries and studios to explore, as well as 5 theatres. There's a huge range of restaurants and cafes to choose from, offering you a change if you've had one too many pub meals. And if you're in need of some retail therapy after your walk there's a wide selection of shops to choose from, from high street names to quaint Victorian shopping streets and exclusive boutiques.

Getting There and Away

Detailed instructions on getting to your first night's accommodation by car, or on foot from the nearest train or bus station, will also be included in the holiday pack on individual accommodation maps.

Getting There:

By Air: The nearest International Airports to the trail are Southampton (European and domestic flights only) and London Heathrow. There is a railway station at Southampton Airport (Southampton Airport Parkway) with fast and frequent trains to Winchester (journey time approx. 10 mins). Trains also run frequently between London Heathrow (Terminals 1, 2 and 3) and Winchester changing at Hayes & Harlington and

Reading (journey time approx. 2 hours).

By Public Transport: There is a railway station at Winchester (WIN). Winchester Railway Station is located on the South Western Main Line with frequent trains to and from London Waterloo station (journey time approx. 1 hour). There is a taxi rank at the station if needed.

By Road: Winchester is located not far off the M3 motorway at Junctions 9 and 10. If travelling from the North, follow the M6 motorway onto the M40. Leave the M40 at Junction 9 (Bicester/Oxford) and follow the A34 towards Oxford and Newbury. Continue on the A34 until you reach Winchester.

Getting Away:

By Public Transport: There is a railway station at Eastbourne (EBN). Eastbourne Railway Station is located on the East Coastway Line with frequent trains to and from London Victoria station (journey time approx. 1 ½ hours). There is a taxi rank at the station if needed.

By Road: Eastbourne is located off the M25 London Orbital motorway at Junction 6 (Eastbourne/Godstone). If travelling from the North, leave the M25 at Junction 6 and follow the A22 through East Grinstead. Continue on the A22 until you reach Eastbourne.



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Returning to the start of the trail: Trains run regularly between Eastbourne and Winchester changing at Clapham Junction (journey time approx. 3 hours). Alternatively, you may wish to return to the start of the trail by taxi (journey time approx. 2 hours).

What we provide

Accommodation: Overnight Bed and Breakfast accommodation in selected hotels, farmhouses, village inns, guest houses and family B&Bs. Full English or Continental breakfast.

Guidebook: A detailed guidebook with route information, maps, photos and background information.

Maps: A waterproof map from Harvey Maps covering the whole route.

Information of Services along the Route: A comprehensive Service Info sheet, including services such as cash points, banks, post offices, village shops, inns, cafes and taxis.

Personal Itinerary: A personal itinerary setting out each overnight stop, including large scale maps of each accommodation, to ensure you find it easily.

Emergency Telephone Support: If you get in to difficulties during your holiday, we are always available to help, even out of office hours.

15% discount at Cotswold Outdoors: We will issue you with a 15% Discount Card valid at all Cotswold Outdoor stores, and online, for the whole year on confirmation of your booking.

Options

Luggage Transport: We will transfer your luggage between each overnight stop – if you leave your luggage at the accommodation when you set off in the morning, it will be moved on to your next B&B. You only need to carry a small day sack with the clothes and provisions you require during the day's walk.

Packed Lunches: Provided for each day's walking and recommended on this holiday as there will not always be a handy shop or cafe on the route.

Off Road Parking: If you are travelling by car we can usually arrange off road parking for the duration of your trip. (There may be a small charge for this).

Arrangement of return transport: We can also arrange your transfer back to your car, (or advise you when public transport is a better option)!

What's not Included?

Evening Meals: Your evening meal isn't included in the package, but we include full details and recommendations for each evening meal in your itinerary. You will normally be within walking distance of a pub and/or restaurant, or where there is good food available at the accommodation, we'll book that for you. Allow about £20.00 per night.

Transport to the Start & Away from the Finish: Have a look at the "Travel Info" tab above for suggestions. If you're still struggling, get in touch and we'll help you sort it out.

Travel Insurance: Even if you are based in the UK travel insurance is worth having.

Prices

Detailed prices for all our holidays are available on our website www.mickledore.co.uk

About Mickledore

Mickledore Travel is based in Keswick at the heart of the English Lake District. We are one of the leading specialists in self guided walking and cycling holidays in the UK, and provide a friendly, professional and flexible service.

We are walkers and cyclists ourselves, so it really matters to us that you have a good holiday. We are still a small business, with a lot of local knowledge, and personal enthusiasm for the outdoors. If you've got any queries, we're always happy to help, so don't hesitate to pick up the phone or drop us an email.

We specialise in UK holidays, and by concentrating on what we consider the best routes, we get to know the trails, accommodation, and local area really well.

Accommodation is critical to your holiday and we make a special effort to find the hidden gems, as well as keeping a close eye on the quality of the more mainstream accommodation. Whether



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you are staying in a village inn, farmhouse B&B, country hotel, or local guesthouse, you can be sure it has been selected for its comfort, welcome, and character. We have three former Keswick guest house owners on the staff – so we know the industry well.

We listen to you and tailor each holiday **to meet your requirements.**

We have an excellent level of **customer service.**

We have 15 years experience, and very high levels of customer satisfaction.

Peace of mind – help is only ever a telephone call away.

We are all outdoor enthusiasts – we know what makes a good holiday, and we want you to have one!

15% discount card for all your outdoor equipment purchases from Cotswold Outdoors.

100% financial protection – in the very unlikely event of Mickledore's financial failure, you receive a full refund.

Our aim is simple – we want you to enjoy our countryside as much as we do, then come back and explore a new area next year!



Book with Confidence

Financial Protection

Your payments are fully protected against our financial failure. We are members of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO), and the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA). We have arranged bonding through ABTA. This means that in the unlikely event of our financial failure, any monies you have paid to us will be refunded. This bonding is fully compliant with the Package Travel Regulations and provides 100% financial protection.



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Our Itineraries

[more options →](#)

South Downs Way

Winchester to Eastbourne 104 miles / 167 km

We offer 4 holidays covering the whole route. The 6 day holiday has 4 long days and should only be attempted if you are fit and used to walking long distances day after day. The 9 day trip is done at a more leisurely pace. Most people spend 7 days walking the whole South Downs Way. Please bear in mind that both the 7 and 8 day options include one longer day of about 18 miles.

	6 days walking (7 nights) Code: SD7			7 days walking (8 nights) Code: SD8		
		Miles	km		Miles	km
Day 1	Travel to Winchester for your first night's accommodation			Travel to Winchester for your first night's accommodation		
Day 2	Winchester to East Meon	17	27	Winchester to Exton	12	19
Day 3	East Meon to Cocking	21	34	Exton-South Harting	17	27
Day 4	Cocking to Amberley	13	21	South Harting - Amberley	21	34
Day 5	Amberley to Pyecombe	20	32	Amberley - Upper Beeding	13	21
Day 6	Pyecombe to Alfriston	22	35	Upper Beeding - Kingston/ Lewes	18	29
Day 7	Alfriston to Eastbourne (Via Seven Sisters)	11	18	Kingston-nr-Lewes/Lewes to Alfriston	11	18
Day 8	Depart from Eastbourne after breakfast			Alfriston to Eastbourne (Via Seven Sisters)	11	18
Day 9				Depart from Eastbourne after breakfast		
	8 days walking (9 nights) Code: SD9			9 days walking (10 nights) Code: SD10		
		Miles	km		Miles	km
Day 1	Travel to Winchester for your first night's accommodation					
Day 2	Winchester to Exton	12	19	Winchester to Exton	12	19
Day 3	Exton to Buriton/Petersfield	14	23	Exton to Buriton/Petersfield	14	23
Day 4	Buriton/Petersfield to Cocking	12	19	Buriton/Petersfield to Cocking	12	19
Day 5	Cocking to Amberley	13	21	Cocking to Amberley	13	21
Day 6	Amberley - Upper Beeding	13	21	Amberley - Upper Beeding	13	21
Day 7	Upper Beeding - Kingston/ Lewes	18	29	Upper Beeding -Pyecombe	7	11
Day 8	Kingston-nr-Lewes/Lewes to Alfriston	11	18	Pyecombe - Kingston/ Lewes	12	19
Day 9	Alfriston to Eastbourne (Via Seven Sisters)	11	18	Kingston-nr-Lewes/Lewes to Alfriston	11	18
Day 10	Depart from Eastbourne after breakfast			Alfriston to Eastbourne (Via Seven Sisters)	11	18
Day 11				Depart from Eastbourne after breakfast		



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South Downs Way Western Section

Winchester to Amberley 50 miles / 80 km

The section between Winchester and Amberley has many wooded areas, offering shade from the sun and a variety of views. It is steeped in history from start to finish.

	3 days walking (4 nights) Code: SDW4			4 days walking (5 nights) Code: SDW5		
		Miles	km		Miles	km
Day 1	Travel to Winchester for your first night's accommodation			Travel to Winchester for your first night's accommodation		
Day 2	Winchester to Exton	12	19	Winchester to Exton	12	19
Day 3	Exton-South Harting	17	27	Exton to Buriton/Petersfield	14	23
Day 4	South Harting - Amberley	21	34	Buriton/Petersfield to Cocking	12	19
Day 5	Depart from Amberley after breakfast			Cocking to Amberley	13	21
Day 6				Depart from Amberley after breakfast		

South Downs Way Eastern Section

Amberley to Eastbourne 53 miles / 85 km

The eastern section has wide panoramic views. It finishes with a spectacular cliff walk over the Seven Sisters, where the South Downs meet the sea.

	4 days walking (5 nights) Code: SDE5			5 days walking (6 nights) Code: SDE6		
		Miles	km		Miles	km
Day 1	Travel to Amberley for your first night's accommodation			Travel to Amberley for your first night's accommodation		
Day 2	Amberley - Upper Beeding	13	21	Amberley - Upper Beeding	13	21
Day 3	Upper Beeding - Kingston/ Lewes	18	29	Upper Beeding -Pyecombe	7	11
Day 4	Kingston-nr-Lewes/Lewes to Alfriston	11	18	Pyecombe - Kingston/ Lewes	12	19
Day 5	Alfriston to Eastbourne (Via Seven Sisters)	11	18	Kingston-nr-Lewes/Lewes to Alfriston	11	18
Day 6	Depart from Eastbourne after breakfast			Alfriston to Eastbourne (Via Seven Sisters)	11	18
Day 7				Depart from Eastbourne after breakfast		



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Our Itineraries

[Turn over for our Booking form →](#)

Seven Sisters and the Long Man - South Downs Short Break

Alfriston to Alfriston 18 miles / 29 km

This is a 2 day circular walk from Alfriston, passing the famous Long Man of Wilmington, Britain's largest chalk figure. After spending the night in Eastbourne, you walk along the top of the spectacular Seven Sisters before heading inland, via the Cuckmere River, back to Alfriston.

2 days walking (3 nights) Code: SDS3			
		Miles	km
Day 1	Travel to Alfriston for your first night's accommodation		
Day 2	Alfriston - Eastbourne via Long Man	8	13
Day 3	Eastbourne - Alfriston via Seven Sisters	11	18
Day 4	Depart from Alfriston after breakfast		



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Booking Form

Contact Details

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Mobile / Alternative Tel: _____

Email: _____ Emergency Contact No: _____

Your Holiday

Holiday Name: _____ Holiday Code: _____ *(Hadrian's Wall: Add an "R" if starting in the West)*

Date of First Night: _____ Date of Last Night: _____

Party Members

Title	First Name	Last Name	Date of Birth

Options	Rooms Required:	Rest Days (give date & location)
Luggage Transport <input type="text"/>	No. Double Rooms <input type="text"/>	
Packed Lunches <input type="text"/>	No. Twin rooms <input type="text"/>	
Off Street Parking (there is normally a charge for this) <input type="text"/>	No. Single Rooms <input type="text"/>	
Transfer required (additional charge) <input type="text"/>	No. Triple Rooms (Double & Single) <input type="text"/>	

Comments (special diets, other requirements, etc): _____

Payment

Holiday cost per person <input type="text"/>	I enclose a cheque for the deposit value (GBP only, made payable to Mickledore Travel) <input type="checkbox"/>
Rest Days <input type="text"/>	I would like to pay by card (we will contact you to arrange this). <input type="checkbox"/>
Total cost per person <input type="text"/>	I would like to pay by bank transfer (we will contact you to arrange this). <input type="checkbox"/>
Number in group <input type="text"/>	
Total group cost <input type="text"/>	I confirm that the above details are correct and that I have read the terms and conditions available on the website. Signed _____ Date _____ Name _____
Deposit (20% of Total Cost) <input type="text"/>	
Single and solo supplements will be added where applicable.	

How did you hear about Mickledore Travel: _____