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South Downs Way

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Dedication – to Zoë

For the wonderful company, from start to finish. Thank you darling – it was great fun!

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To the other walkers we met during this update walk, thanks for your suggestions. I'm also grateful to all those readers who wrote in with updates and recommendations, particularly Stuart Blackburne, Anne Conchie, David Cocovini, Susan Corbett, Bea Delannoy and Olivier, Rodney Duggua, Keith Good, Rachel and Karl-Peter Hammer, Tricia Hayne, Andrew Hilton, Jennie Hiscock, Susie Lapwood, Richard Marshall, Jasmin McMillan, Nick Price, Trudi & Andy Rintoul, Catherine Sharp, Danny Shone, Malcolm Simister, Sue Tucker, and Sue Wood. Back at Trailblazer HQ, many thanks to Anna Jacomb-Hood and Nick Hill for their stellar work on editing and mapping, to Nicky Slade for proofreading and Jane Thomas for the index.

A request

The author and publisher have tried to ensure that this guide is as accurate and up to date as possible. Nevertheless, things change. If you notice any changes or omissions that should be included in the next edition of this book, please write to Trailblazer (address above) or email us at  info@trailblazer-guides.com. A free copy of the next edition will be sent to persons making a significant contribution.

Warning: coastal walking and long-distance walking can be dangerous

Please read the notes on when to go (pp12-16) and outdoor safety (pp54-6). Every effort has been made by the author and publisher to ensure that the information contained herein is as accurate and up to date as possible. However, they are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained by anyone as a result of the advice and information given in this guide.

Updated information will be available on:  trailblazer-guides.com

Photos – Front cover: Walking west towards Belle Tout. **This page:** On the Seven Sisters looking across to Birling Gap. **Previous page:** On the Downs above Kingston-near-Lewes. **Overleaf:** Marching up to Chantonbury Ring.

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This guidebook contains all the information you need. The hard work has been done for you so you can plan your trip without having to consult numerous websites and other books and maps. When you're packed and ready to go, there's comprehensive public transport information to get you to and from the trail and detailed maps (1:20,000) to help you find your way along it. It includes:

- All standards of accommodation with reviews of campsites, camping barns, hostels, B&Bs, pubs/inns, guesthouses and hotels
- Walking companies if you want an organised tour, and baggage-transfer services if you just want your luggage carried
- Suggested itineraries for all types of walkers
- Answers to all your questions: when to go, degree of difficulty, what to pack, and how much the whole walking holiday will cost
- Walking times in both directions and GPS waypoints
- Cafés, pubs, tearooms, takeaways, restaurants and food shops
- Rail, bus & taxi information for all villages and towns on the path
- Historical, cultural and geographical background information

THIS EDITION AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This particular edition of the guide was researched during 2021, a time when the entire country was just emerging from some pretty tight restrictions. Most of the hotels, cafés, pubs, restaurants, and tourist attractions have now reopened, but some are still offering a more limited service than they were pre-pandemic.

Most **accommodation** is back open, albeit with some changes such as later checkins and earlier checkouts to allow for extra cleaning.

The majority of **pubs, restaurants and cafés** are open – though some are still operating reduced opening hours or have a limited menu. You may need to book a table in advance.

Most **train and bus services** were operating to reduced timetables but should now be back to normal. However, it is likely face coverings will still be required on (or in) all forms of public transport.

Museums and galleries may require booking (especially for tours) and also restrict the number of people inside at any one time.

In this book all we can do is record the opening times as they currently stand, or as the owners of the various establishments are predicting they will be by the time this is published. Do forgive us where your experience on the ground contradicts what is written in the book; please email us – info@trailblazer-guides.com – so we can add your information to our updates page on the website.

Hopefully, by the time you read this, Coronavirus, lockdowns and other ubiquitous words from 2020-1 will be nothing but a bad memory of a surreal year. And if that's the case, the operating hours of the establishments en route will be back to 'normal'.

For the latest information visit [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).

INTRODUCTION

The South Downs are a 100-mile (160km) line of chalk hills stretching from the historic city of Winchester, in Hampshire, across Sussex to the Pevensey Levels by Eastbourne. For centuries travellers and traders have used the spine of the Downs as a route from one village to the next.

For centuries travellers and traders have used the spine of the Downs as a route from one village to the next.

Today that route is still used by walkers, outdoor enthusiasts and others who simply need to escape from box-like offices in congested towns and cities. London, Brighton, Southampton and other urban areas are all within an hour or two of the South Downs, making these beautiful windswept hills an important recreational area for the millions who live in the region.

A traverse from one end to the other following the South Downs Way national trail is a great way of experiencing this beautiful landscape with its mixture of rolling hills, steep hanging woodland and windswept fields of corn. Add to this the incredible number of pretty Sussex and Hampshire villages with their friendly old pubs, thatched cottages and gardens bursting with blooms of roses, foxgloves and hollyhocks and one begins to understand the appeal of the Downs as a walking destination.



Above: A typically quaint thatched cottage in the village of Amberley.

Walking the Way can easily be fitted into a week's holiday but you should allow more time to be able to explore the many places of interest such as Arundel, Lewes and Winchester itself ... not to mention the lure of all those enchanting village pubs that are bound to make the trip longer than intended!

History

There has been a long-distance route running along the top of the South Downs for far longer than walking has been considered a leisure activity. The well-drained chalk hilltops high above the densely forested boggy clay below were perfect for human habitation and were certainly in use as far back as the Stone Age.

From this time onwards a complex series of trackways and paths developed across the land and it is believed that by the Bronze Age there was an established trade route along the South Downs. All along the crest of the Downs escarpment there is evidence of Iron Age hill-forts and *tumuli* (ancient burial grounds), many of them very well preserved, particularly the Old Winchester hill-fort site in Hampshire.

In more recent times the land was cleared and enclosed, and the flat hilltops were put under the plough. Although this process erased many of the lesser tracks the most significant remained; the one which ran east–west along the edge of the escarpment.

It was not until 1972, amid rapidly growing public interest in walking, that the then Countryside Commission designated the 80 miles from Eastbourne to the Sussex – Hampshire border the first long-distance bridleway in the UK. Later, the final section through Hampshire was added bringing the length of the South Downs Way to 100 miles and giving it a spectacular start in the



Above, left: Hanging on the wall in the Great Hall in Winchester is the table top said to be from King Arthur's Round Table. As it dates only from the 13th century it's too young to be genuine but still impressive at about 800 years old.

Above, right: A statue of King Alfred the Great (849–99) stands in his capital, Winchester.



© DANIEL MCCORMAN

Arundel Castle rises above Arundel town which is five minutes by train from Houghton Bridge.

rain, mist and strong winds. On the positive side those who enjoy a bit of peace and quiet will find very few fellow walkers out and about at this time of year. Furthermore, it is not all rain and wind. Sometimes the weather can surprise you with a day of frost and cold sunshine that can make a day on the Way a real treat. It's important to remember that some businesses reduce their opening hours at this time of year or even close all together.

Winter

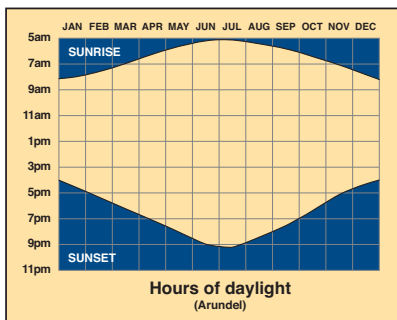
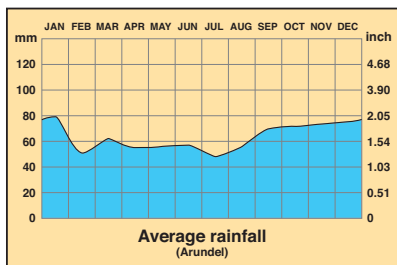
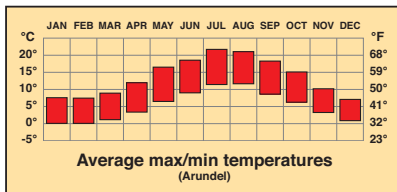
Southern England doesn't experience as many cold snowy winters as it used to some ten to twenty years ago. From December to February these days it's usually relatively mild with wet weather and occasional spells of colder, dry weather. Any snow that does fall is usually during January and February. It is more likely the further east you go since it is the south-east corner that gets caught by the snow showers that roll in from the North Sea, when the wind is from the north or east. Many walkers will appreciate winter walking for the wilder weather it offers and the days of solitary sauntering along the high windswept crest of the Downs. The best days are the cold, frosty ones when the air is clear and the views stretch for miles. Bear in mind that in winter some businesses, particularly in the more remote villages, are closed. It is always wise, for example, to call a pub before turning up expecting dinner.



Above: A peaceful place to rest your legs: St Peter's Church, Southease.

Below: Chalk trail west of Bignor Hill.





TEMPERATURE

Generally, temperatures are comfortable year-round. In winter, warmer clothes will be needed as the temperature drops towards and, on occasion, just below freezing. Summer is usually pleasantly warm with temperatures around 16°C to 23°C but temperatures as high as the low 30s Celsius do occur on at least a few days during July or August which can make walking on exposed sections of the Way uncomfortable.

RAINFALL

The weather in England is affected mostly by the weather systems that come from the south-west. These are usually low-pressure systems that contain a lot of rain. Rain can and does fall in any month of the year but dry weather is usually more likely in the early summer.

DAYLIGHT HOURS

If walking in autumn, winter and early spring, you must take account of how far you can walk

in the available light. Also bear in mind that, depending on the weather, you may get a further 30-45 minutes of usable light before sunrise and after sunset.



PLANNING YOUR WALK

1

Practical information for the walker


ROUTE FINDING

There is very little opportunity to get lost along the Way. It would be an easy route to follow even without the waymark posts, which are usually marked with the National Trail 'acorn' symbol. An acorn on a **yellow** chevron indicates that this route is a footpath, ie exclusively for pedestrians. A **blue** background indicates that the trail is a bridleway and can therefore also be used by horses and cyclists. A **purple** background quaintly adds a pony and trap. A **red** or **white** background warns that the route can also be used by motorbikes. Bear in mind that other footpaths may be indicated on the waymark posts so **follow the acorn**.

Nevertheless, it is hard to go astray and there are usually other walkers around who you can ask for directions.

Using GPS with this book


Particularly given the above, modern Wainwrights will scoff at the idea of using GPS technology for navigation on this trail but, now built into most smartphones, it's an easily accessible if non-essential aid. In no time at all a GPS receiver with a clear view of the sky will establish your position and altitude.

The maps in the route guide include numbered waypoints; these correlate to the list on pp188-92, which gives the latitude/longitude position as well as a description. Where the path is vague, or there are several options, you'll find more waypoints. You can download the complete list of these waypoints free as a GPS-readable file (that doesn't include the text descriptions) from our website:  trailblazer-guides.com (click on **GPS waypoints**).

It's also possible to buy digital mapping (see p40) to import into your phone or GPS unit, assuming that you have sufficient memory capacity, but it's not always the most reliable way of navigating and the small screen will invariably fail to put places into context or give you the 'big picture'.

Bear in mind that the vast majority of people who walk the Way do so perfectly well without GPS.

South Downs Way app

A Trailblazer South Downs Way app is now available. For more information see the Trailblazer website:  trailblazer-guides.com.



- **Macs Adventure** (☎ 0141 530 8886, 🌐 macsadventure.com, Glasgow) The full Way (west to east only) in 6-8 days.
- **Mickledore** (☎ 01768-772335, 🌐 mickledore.co.uk, Cumbria) Have itineraries offering the whole route in 6-10 days, or each half of the Way, and a short break 2-day circular walk.
- **Responsible Travel** (☎ 01273-823700, 🌐 responsibletravel.com, East Sussex) The whole Way in 9 nights/10 days and 10 nights/11 days.

● **EHICs and travel insurance** Until 31st December 2020 the **European Health Insurance Card** (EHIC) entitled EU nationals (on production of an EHIC card) to necessary medical treatment under the UK's National Health Service (NHS) while on a temporary visit here. However, this is not likely to be the case for EU nationals now, especially once their EHIC card has expired; check on 🌐 nhs.uk/nhs-services (click on: 'Visiting-or-moving-to-England') before you come to the UK. However, the EHIC card was never a substitute for proper medical cover on your travel insurance for unforeseen bills and for getting you home should that be necessary. Also consider getting cover for loss or theft of personal belongings, especially if you're staying in hostels, as there may be times when you have to leave your luggage unattended.

● **Weights and measures** In Britain, milk can be sold in pints (1 pint = 568ml), as can beer in pubs, though most other **liquids** including petrol (gasoline) and diesel is sold in litres. Distances on road and path signs is given in miles (1 mile = 1.6km) rather than kilometres, and yards (1yd = 0.9m) rather than metres.

The population remains divided between those who still use inches (1 inch = 2.5cm), feet (1ft = 0.3m) and yards for **distances** and those who are happy with millimetres, centimetres and metres; you'll often be told that 'it's only a hundred yards or so' to somewhere, rather than a hundred metres or so.

Most food is sold in metric weights (g and kg) but the imperial weights of pounds (lb: 1lb = 453g) and ounces (oz: 1oz = 28g) are frequently displayed too. The **weather** – a frequent topic of conversation – is also an issue: while most forecasts predict temperatures in Celsius (C), some older people continue to think in terms of Fahrenheit (F; see the temperature chart on p16 for conversions).

● **Smoking** The ban on smoking in public places relates not only to pubs and restaurants, but also to B&Bs, hostels and hotels. These latter have the right to designate one or more bedrooms where the occupants can smoke, but the ban is in force in all enclosed areas open to the public – even if they are in a private home such as a B&B. Should you be foolhardy enough to light up in a no-smoking area, which includes pretty well any indoor public place, you could be fined £50, but it's the owners of the premises who carry the can if they fail to stop you, with a potential fine of £2500.

● **Time** During the winter, the whole of Britain is on Greenwich Meantime (GMT). The clocks move one hour forward on the last Sunday in March, remaining on British Summer Time (BST) until the last Sunday in October.

● **Telephone** The international country access code for Britain is ☎ 44 followed by the area code minus the first 0, and then the number you require. Within Britain, to call a landline number with the same code as the landline phone you are calling from, the code can be omitted: dial the number only. If you're using a mobile phone that is registered overseas, consider buying a local SIM card to keep costs down.

● **Emergency services** For police, ambulance, fire or coastguard dial ☎ 999 or ☎ 112.

● **South Downs Discovery** (see also p23; ☎ 01925 914182) South Downs Way specialists offering itineraries for 2-10 days.

● **Walkers' Britain** (formerly Sherpa Expeditions; ☎ 0800-008 7741, ☎ 020-8875 5070, 📧 walkersbritain.co.uk, London) A 10-day itinerary in either direction; tailor-made walks west to east only.

Guided holidays

● **HF Holidays** (☎ 0345-470 7558, 📧 hfholidays.co.uk, Herts) A long-established company which covers the whole Way in 10 days' walking/11 nights (in either direction) based at Abingworth Hall, nr Thakeham, West Sussex.

● **Secret Hills Walking Holidays** (☎ 01694-723600, 📧 secrethillswalking.co.uk; Shropshire) Specialise in solo traveller breaks. Offer itinerary with 4½ days' walking/4 nights.

TAKING DOGS ALONG THE WAY

[see also pp192-3]

Dogs are allowed on the South Downs but should be kept on a lead whenever there are sheep around. Considering the Downs is a prime sheep-farming area this is most of the time and it is worth remembering that farmers are perfectly within their rights to shoot any dog they believe to be worrying their sheep.

📌 MOUNTAIN BIKING THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

The South Downs Way is perfect for mountain bikers. As Britain's first long-distance bridleway it was specifically geared to horse-riders, cyclists and walkers. The entire route can be followed on two wheels on wide tracks which are, on the whole, well drained, with only a few very steep sections either side of the major river valleys. There are some sections where walkers and cyclists must follow different routes but these are well marked with blue chevrons indicating byways and yellow chevrons for footpaths.

Walk & Cycle (☎ 0844-870 8648, 📧 www.walkandcycle.co.uk/south-downs-way-cycle, Hampshire) offers 2-, 3- & 4-day **itineraries** incorporating the whole Way.

Tips for cycling the Way

● **Camp rather than stay in B&Bs** Cycling gives you the perfect opportunity to experience the joys of camping without having to carry any of your gear on your back. Strap a tent, sleeping bag and roll mat onto your bike, and off you go! See p18 for a list of campsites that are on the Way itself, rather than in the surrounding countryside far below.

● **Stick to the Way** Most of the downland villages are some distance below the Way itself, and whilst it's a joy to freewheel down to them for a pub lunch, it can be tough pulling your bike back up onto the trail afterwards. Plan accordingly; it's far better to stay on the Way at all times, if at all possible.

● **Be prepared for punctures** It hardly needs saying but don't forget your puncture repair kit (and know how to use it!) as well as your pump. Though famed for its chalk, much of the South Downs Way also contains super-sharp fragments of flint, which can cause havoc for even the sturdiest mountain-bike tyres.

● **Wet-weather gear** Chances are it will rain at some stage, and when it does the Way gets muddy; sometimes very muddy. Come prepared with wet-weather gear, including waterproof panniers, mudguards and a rag to wipe down any dirty gear.

DISABLED ACCESS

In the summer of 2016 the South Downs Way became the first fully inclusive National Trail when it was completed in its entirety by a wheelchair user using a state-of-the-art pony cart, specially developed by PonyAxeS (ponyaxes.com/south-downs-way). Unfortunately, for those without access to such carriages, some parts of the South Downs Way are still quite inaccessible to disabled people, despite many of the councils taking steps to improve access to the Sussex and Hampshire countryside.

Nevertheless, there are stretches of the Way that can be followed quite easily, particularly where roads provide direct access to the top of the hills such as at **Ditchling Beacon** (see p149). Here there are gates designed for wheelchair users and there are also plenty of benches at intervals along the path to the west of Ditchling Beacon. **Devil's Dyke** (see p142) is another good spot where access is relatively easy and the path not too rough. **Seven Sisters Country Park** (see box p175) has good facilities for the disabled both in the park and at the visitor centre and access to the beach at Cuckmere Haven is quite straightforward. Further west the easiest stretches of the Way can be found to the west of **Bignor Hill** (see p114), where there's a car park near the top, and on **Harting Down** (pp101-2) which has a relatively long stretch of gentle, level pathways. **Queen Elizabeth Country Park** (p94) has wide, level tracks and easy access.

For more information see accessiblecountryside.org.uk/southeast.

Budgeting

CAMPING

Campsites generally charge £5-15 per person (pp) so if camping and cooking all your own food expect to need £15-25pp per day. However, it is always best to allow for more than you think necessary, to cover those occasional luxuries such as a warm bed after a day walking in the pouring rain. If you like a pint at the end of the day remember that one costing less than £4 is a rare thing in the south of England. Bearing this in mind it is worth counting on at least £20pp per day.

HOSTELS AND BUNKHOUSES

There are very few hostels and now only one bunkhouse on the Way, so you won't be able to use this type of accommodation exclusively. Combined with camping, or one or two nights in B&Bs, it can still be fairly cost-effective.

The only true **bunkhouse** on the Way, called South Downs Bunkhouse (see p117), will set you back from £26pp per night.

The YHA charges for beds in its hostels following the modern online model with lowest prices during quieter periods and rates increasing with popularity of location and date. Rooms (£29-60 for up to two sharing) are surprisingly good

for such a budget price. When rooms can be used as dormitories again, expect a bed to cost around £14-22pp. All rates are 10% less if you're a YHA member. Hostels usually have a self-catering kitchen (though these were not open at the time of research) allowing you to survive on cheap food from the supermarket or local shop. However, if you want to make use of their meals, expect to pay £4.99-6.75 for breakfast, around the same for a packed lunch and £4.95-13.95 for an evening meal. Note YHAs sometimes have a kids-eat-for-free deal.

To cover the cost of a night in a private room in a hostel and the occasional bar meal and drink, count on at least £30pp per day. If the dorms have reopened, £25pp may be more accurate. If you eat out most nights this figure is likely to be £30/40pp per day (dorm/private room) or more.

B&B-STYLE ACCOMMODATION

Rates for bed and breakfast in a B&B, pub or guesthouse are usually £30-70pp (hotels are likely to be more) for two sharing a room (most places deduct about £10 from the room rate for single occupancy but some charge the full room rate). Breakfast is, of course, almost always included in the rate but you will need to allow about £5-7 for a packed lunch (more if eating in a pub or café) and about £15-20 for an evening meal. If you decide to treat yourself to quite a few meals in pubs or restaurants, drink beer and have other goodies you will probably need around £50-80pp per day.

EXTRAS

Don't forget all those little things that push up your daily bill – laundry, souvenirs, beer, ice-cream, buses here, buses there, more beer and getting to and from the Way. All these will probably add up to between £50 and £100 for the trip.

Itineraries

Part 4 of this book (the Route Guide) has been re-written for this edition so that it can be used by hikers walking the South Downs Way in either an eastward or westward direction, following a colour coding: **E**➔ and **W**↵. For more details see p71. This guidebook is divided into daily stages but these are not rigid. Instead, it's structured to make it easy for you to plan your own itinerary. The South Downs Way can be tackled in any number of ways, the most challenging of which is to do it all in one go; this requires about one week. Others may prefer to walk it over a series of short breaks, coming back year after year to do a bit more. Some choose to walk only the best bits.

To help plan your walk the **colour maps** at the end of the book have **gradient profiles** and there is also a **planning map** (see opposite inside back cover). The **table of town and village facilities** (pp30-1) gives a rundown on

the essential information you will need regarding accommodation possibilities and services. Alternatively, you could follow one of the **suggested itineraries** below. See p18 for details of campsites that are closest to the trail. There is also a list of recommended **day and weekend walks** (see p35) which cover the best of the path, most of which are well served by public transport. The **public transport map** is on p48.

Once you have an idea of your approach turn to **Part 4** for detailed information on accommodation, places to eat, and other services in each place on the route. Also in Part 4 you will find route descriptions to accompany the trail maps.

WHICH DIRECTION?

There are many criteria that will determine in which direction to tackle the Way. It always seems a good idea to finish a walk with something that is worth walking towards. With this in mind, although Winchester is a more attractive town to finish in than Eastbourne, the scenery improves towards the eastern end of the South Downs Way and what finer place to conclude the walk than by the sea and on top of the white cliffs of the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head. Another factor is the prevailing wind which normally comes from the south-west. Having the wind at your back is a great help so this would also suggest starting at Winchester and finishing at Eastbourne.

Although the maps in Part 4 are arranged in a west to east direction, times are given for walking in both directions so that the book can be used back to front, and for this edition we have including east-to-west route descriptions too (see p71 for further details).

SUGGESTED ITINERARIES

The itineraries are based on different accommodation types – B&B-style accommodation (p32), campsites (p33) and hostels/bunkhouses (p34) – with each divided into three categories of walking speed. They really are only suggestions and all of them can be easily adapted by using the more detailed information on accommodation found in Part 4; the distance chart on pp194-5 will also help you plan your itinerary.

Don't forget to add your travelling time from/to your accommodation both before and after the walk.

HIGHLIGHTS

There is nothing quite like taking on a long-distance path in one go but sometimes the time needed is just not available. See box p35 for suggestions of a number of day and weekend walks covering the best of the South Downs Way; these are accessible using public transport (see pp44-8) unless specified, though Sunday services may be limited or non-existent. Fitter walkers will find that the weekend walks suggested can be completed in a day.

What to take

Deciding how much to take with you can be difficult. Experienced walkers know that you really should take only the bare essentials but at the same time you need to ensure you have all the equipment necessary to make the trip safe and comfortable.

KEEP YOUR LUGGAGE LIGHT

Carrying a heavy rucksack really can ruin your enjoyment of a good walk and can also slow you down a great deal, turning an easy 7-mile day into an interminable slog. Be ruthless when you pack and leave behind all those little home comforts that you tell yourself don't weigh that much really. Always pack the essentials, of course, but try to leave behind anything that you think might 'come in handy' but probably won't. This advice is even more pertinent to campers who have the added weight of camping equipment to carry.

HOW TO CARRY IT

The size of the **rucksack** you should take depends on where you are planning to stay and how you are planning to eat. If you are camping and cooking for yourself you will probably need a 65- to 75-litre rucksack which can hold the tent, sleeping bag, cooking equipment and food. All the hostels on the Way provide bedding (though not towels) and have cooking facilities (though due to COVID they may not be open), so if staying in these a 40- to 60-litre rucksack should be sufficient. If you have gone for the B&B option you will probably find a 30- to 40-litre daypack is more than enough to carry your lunch, clothes, camera and guidebook. If you've booked a self-guided holiday, or are using a baggage-transfer service (see p23), you could even just take a suitcase, although a backpack is still probably better for the beginning and end of your trip where you may have to carry your luggage.

Whatever size your rucksack is, ensure it has a stiffened back and can be adjusted to fit you comfortably; this will make carrying the weight much easier. Rucksacks are decorated with seemingly pointless straps but if you adjust them correctly it can make a big difference to your personal comfort while walking. Make sure the hip belt and chest belt (if there is one) are fastened tightly as this helps distribute the weight; most of it should be carried on your hips.

When packing the rucksack make sure you have all the things you are likely to need during the day – this guidebook (of course!), a map, a water bottle, waterproofs, packed lunch – near the top or in the side pockets. A good habit to get into is always to put things in the same place and memorise where they are. There is nothing more annoying than pulling everything out of your pack to find that lost banana when you're starving or that camera when there is a butterfly basking briefly on a nearby rock.

By air

Although there are local airports, such as Brighton City Airport at Shoreham, the easiest way to fly to the South-East from other corners of the UK is to get a flight to Gatwick or Southampton; see box p43. Bear in mind the environmental

USEFUL RAIL SERVICES

[see map p48]

Note: not all stops are listed here, nor are all shown on the map. Check the relevant operator's website for full details.

Also note that timetables may change following completion of the upgrade works (scheduled to be 2023) at Gatwick Airport.

At the time of research some services were still operating on a COVID timetable.

Southern (📄 southernrailway.com, Southern On Track app)

(**Note:** services from London Victoria usually also stop at Clapham Junction, East Croydon and Gatwick Airport)

- London Victoria to Horsham via Three Bridges & Crawley, Mon-Sat 2/hr, Sun 1/hr

At Horsham the trains divide:

to Bognor Regis via Christ's Hospital (1/hr), Billingshurst, Pulborough, Amberley & Arundel, Mon-Sat 2/hr, Sun 1/hr

to Portsmouth & Southsea via Barnham, Chichester & Havant, daily 1/hr

to Southampton Central via Barnham, Chichester & Havant, daily 1/hr

- London Victoria to Brighton via Gatwick Airport & Haywards Heath, daily 2/hr

- London Victoria to Littlehampton via Haywards Heath, Hassocks, Hove, Shoreham-by-Sea & Worthing, daily 1-2/hr

- London Victoria to Eastbourne/Hastings/Ore via Haywards Heath, Wivelsfield, Plumpton (1/hr), Lewes, Glynde (1/hr), Berwick (1/hr), Polegate, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, daily 2/hr (1/hr to Hastings & Ore)

- Hastings to Brighton via Eastbourne, Berwick, Glynde, Lewes & Falmer, daily 1-2/hr

- Portsmouth to Brighton via Havant, Chichester, Barnham & Shoreham, daily 1/hr

- Southampton to Brighton via Havant, Chichester, Barnham & Shoreham, daily 1/hr

- Brighton to Seaford via Moulsecoomb, Falmer, Lewes, Southease (1/hr) & Newhaven Town, daily 1-2/hr

South Western Railway (📄 southwesternrailway.com, SWR app)

- London Waterloo to Weymouth via Clapham Junction, Winchester, Southampton Airport, Southampton & Bournemouth, daily 1/hr

- London Waterloo to Portsmouth Harbour via Guildford, Haslemere & Petersfield, daily 2/hr

- London Waterloo to Southampton Airport & Southampton Central via Woking (1/hr), Basingstoke (1/hr) & Winchester, daily 2/hr

Thameslink (📄 thameslinkrailway.com, On Track app)

- Bedford to Brighton via Luton/Luton Airport, London St Pancras International, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport, Three Bridges & Haywards Heath, daily 1-2/hr

- Cambridge to Brighton via Stevenage, London St Pancras International, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport, Three Bridges & Haywards Heath, daily 1-2/hr

Cross Country Trains (📄 crosscountrytrains.co.uk, CrossCountry app)

- Manchester to Bournemouth via Birmingham, Reading, Winchester & Southampton, COVID timetable daily 2-3/day, normal timetable additional services

cost of flying, details of which can be found here: www.chooseclimate.org.

By coach

Coach travel is generally cheaper but takes longer than the train. **National Express** (www.nationalexpress.com, National Express Coach app) is the principal coach (long-distance bus) operator in Britain and has services to a number of destinations on or near the Way; see box opposite.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex have good local transport networks which make getting to and from the Way and planning linear day and weekend walks fairly easy.

The public transport map on p48 summarises all the useful routes; see the box on pp46-7 for details (though not all stops are listed). Where school bus services may be of use to walkers they are mentioned in the relevant place in the route guide. The tourist information centres along the Downs can provide, free of charge, a comprehensive local transport timetable for their particular region.

Most bus companies permit up to two **dogs** on a bus but it is also up to the discretion of the driver and dogs must be on a lead, well behaved and sitting under the seat or on their owner's lap; definitely not actually on a seat.

USEFUL COACH SERVICES

Note: not all stops are listed – contact **National Express** for full details.

025 London VCS to Brighton via Gatwick Airport North Terminal, 4/day

032 London VCS to Southampton via **Winchester**, 5/day

205 Heathrow Airport to Poole via **Winchester** & Bournemouth, 4/day

727 Norwich to Brighton via Stansted, Heathrow & Gatwick airports, 5/day

GETTING CHEAPER TRAIN TICKETS

You probably already know that the **earlier you buy your train ticket, the cheaper it will be**. But did you also know you could save money by **'splitting your ticket'**? Because of Britain's complex rail system, it can often be cheaper to buy two separate tickets that cover your whole journey rather than pay just one single fare. For example, if you're travelling from A to C, rather than just buying a single ticket for the journey it might be cheaper to buy two separate tickets, one from A to B, which is one of the stops en route, and then from B to C. Note that paying two separate fares in this way doesn't make any difference to the actual journey. Just because you have two tickets for the journey doesn't mean you have to change trains. But the savings can be large. The rail companies say that there are plans afoot to alter the price structure of rail fares to ensure that there is no financial advantage to fare splitting – but at the moment, it's still worthwhile investigating the possibility.

For further information the website www.moneysavingexpert.com has a good article on fare splitting, and there are websites that help you find the cheapest price for your journey – sites such as www.mytrainpal.com and www.traintickets.com. Note that none of these are ideal – the sites don't always find the best fare, or are slow, or charge commission – but they will at least point you in the right direction to help you split the fare yourself.

LOCAL BUS SERVICES

[see map p48]

Note: not all stops are listed for all routes.

No	Operator	Route and frequency details
1	bluestar	Southampton to Winchester, Mon-Sat 4/hr, Sun 2/hr
1	Stagecoach	Midhurst to Worthing via Petworth, Pulborough, Storrington, Washington & Findon, Mon-Sat 1/hr, Sun 6/day
2	B&H	Rottingdean to Steyning via Brighton, Shoreham, Upper Beeding & Bramber, daily 1/hr (3/hr R'dean to Shoreham)
3/3A/4	Stagecoach	Foot of Beachy Head to Eastbourne via Meads, Mon-Sat 2/hr, Sun 1/hr, plus Meads to Eastbourne, Mon-Sat 3/hr
12/12A	B&H	(Coaster) Brighton to Eastbourne via Rottingdean, Newhaven, Seaford, Exceat (Seven Sisters Park Centre), East Dean & YHA Eastbourne (12 only), Mon-Sat 3/hr, Sun 4/hr (Note the No 12 provides a more direct service than the 12A)
12X	B&H	(Coaster) Brighton to Eastbourne as for No 12 but fewer stops at places in between, Mon-Sat 3/hr
13X	B&H	Brighton to Eastbourne via Rottingdean, Newhaven, Seaford, Exceat (Seven Sisters Park Centre), Birling Gap, Beachy Head & YHA Eastbourne, Sun & public holidays only, 2/hr
23	Metrobus	Crawley to Worthing via Horsham, Ashington & Washington, Mon-Sat approx 1/hr, Sun & public hols 5/day
28	B&H	Brighton to Lewes via Falmer station & Housedean Farm (A27), Mon-Sat 4/hr, Sun 1/hr (to Uckfield)
29	B&H	Brighton to Tunbridge Wells via Falmer station, Housedean Farm (A27), Lewes & Uckfield, Mon-Sat 2/hr, Sun 1/hr
37	Stagecoach	Havant to Petersfield via Waterlooville, Clanfield, Queen Elizabeth Country Park (request stop), Mon-Fri 1/hr, Sat 8/day (services connect with No 38)
38	Stagecoach	Alton to Petersfield, Mon-Fri 4/day (connects with No 37)
47	CCB	Cuckmere Valley Rambler: Berwick Station circular route via Alfriston, Seaford, Exceat, Seven Sisters Country Park, Littleington & Lullington, late Mar to late Oct Sat, Sun & public hols 1/hr
54	Stagecoach	Petersfield to Chichester via South Harting & Uppark, Mon-Sat 5/day
60	Stagecoach	Chichester to Midhurst via Cocking, Mon-Sat 2/hr, Sun 1/hr
64	Stagecoach	Alton to Winchester via Alresford & Morn Hill, Mon-Sat 2/hr, Sun & public hols 1/hr
67	Stagecoach	Winchester to Petersfield via Alresford, Cheriton, Bramdean, West Meon & East Meon, Mon-Fri 4-6/day, Sat 4/day
69	Compass	Alford to Worthing via Pulborough, Bury, Houghton & Arundel, Tue & Fri 1/day
70	Stagecoach	Midhurst to Guildford via Haslemere station, Mon-Sat 1/hr
71	Compass	Storrington to Chichester via Pulborough, Bury & Houghton, Wed 1/day
74/74A/74B	Compass	Horsham to Storrington, Mon-Fri 1/day, Tue & Thur 3/day (one afternoon service continues to Amberley railway station and Houghton on school days)
77	B&H	Brighton to Devil's Dyke, mid June to mid Sep daily 1-2/hr; mid Sep to mid June Sat, Sun & public hols only, 7/day
79	B&H	Brighton (station) to Ditchling Beacon, late Apr to mid Sep Sat, Sun & public holidays 1/hr

MINIMUM IMPACT & OUTDOOR SAFETY

2

Minimum impact walking

Walk as if you are kissing the Earth with your feet

Thich Nhat Hanh *Peace is every step*

The popularity of the ‘Great Outdoors’ as an escape route from the chaos of modern living has experienced something of a boom over the last couple of decades or so. It is therefore important to be aware of the pressures that each of us as visitors to the countryside exert upon the land. The South Downs are particularly vulnerable, situated as they are in the most populous corner of the British Isles. Thousands of people explore the network of trails that criss-cross these historic chalk hills.

Minimum impact walking is all about a common-sense approach to exploring the countryside, being mindful and respectful of the wildlife and those who live and work on the land. Those who appreciate the countryside will already be aware of the importance of safeguarding it. Simple measures such as not dropping litter, keeping dogs on leads to avoid scaring sheep and leaving gates as you find them will already be second nature to anyone who regularly visits the countryside. However, there are several other measures that are not quite so well known and are worth repeating here.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Buy local

Rural businesses and communities in Britain have been hit hard in recent years by a seemingly endless series of crises, most recently COVID. In addition, they have to compete with the omnipresence of chain supermarkets that are now so common in towns across Britain.

Faced with such competition local businesses struggle to survive. Visitors to the countryside can help these local businesses by ‘buying locally’. It’s a fact of life that money spent at local level – perhaps in a market, or at the greengrocer, or in an independent pub – has a far greater impact for good on that community than the equivalent spent in a branch of a national chain store or restaurant. It’s perhaps a step too far to advocate that walkers should boycott the larger supermarkets, which after all do provide local employment, but it’s worth remembering that businesses in rural communities rely heavily on visitors for their very existence.



If we want to keep these shops and post offices, we need to use them. The more money that circulates locally and is spent on local labour and materials, the greater the impact on the local economy.

Encourage local cultural traditions and skills

No two parts of the countryside look the same. Buildings, food, skills and language evolve out of the landscape and are moulded over hundreds of years to suit the locality. Discovering these cultural differences is part of the pleasure of walking in new places. Visitors' enthusiasm for local traditions and skills brings awareness and pride, nurturing a sense of place; an increasingly important role in a world where economic globalisation continues to undermine the very things that provide security and a feeling of belonging.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

By choosing a walking holiday you are already minimising your impact on the environment. Your interaction with the countryside and its inhabitants, whether they be plant, animal or human, can bring benefits to all. The following are some ideas on how you can go a few steps further in helping to minimise your impact on the natural environment while walking the South Downs Way.

Use public transport whenever possible

Both Sussex and Hampshire have a good public transport system (see pp44-8). There are plenty of options to get the walker to the Downs, making driving there unnecessary, and also various bus services linking the Way with nearby towns and villages as well as offering convenient start and finish points for day walks.

Never leave litter

Leaving litter shows a total disrespect for the natural world and others coming after you. As well as being unsightly, litter kills wildlife, pollutes the environment and can be dangerous to farm animals. Please take your rubbish with you so you can dispose of it in a bin in the next village. It would be very helpful if you could pick up litter left by other people, too.

● **Is it OK if it's biodegradable?** No. Apple cores, banana skins, orange peel and the like are an eyesore, encourage flies, ants and wasps and ruin a picnic spot for others. They also promote a higher population of scavengers such as carrion crows and magpies, an explosion of which can have a detrimental effect on rarer bird species. Those who use the excuse that orange peel is natural and biodegradable are simply fishing for an excuse to clear their conscience. Biodegradable? Yes, but surprisingly slowly. Natural? The South Downs have never been known for their orange groves.


● **The lasting impact of litter** A piece of orange peel left on the ground takes six months to decompose; silver foil 18 months; a plastic bag 10 years; clothes 15 years; and an aluminium can 85 years.

Erosion

● **Stay on the main trail** The effect of your footsteps may seem minuscule but when they are multiplied by several thousand walkers each year they become

□ HOW THE SOUTH DOWNS BECAME A NATIONAL PARK

The South Downs almost became one of the first designated national parks back in the 1950s but the proposal was rejected on the grounds that the area did not offer sufficient recreational possibilities for the public. This seems rather surprising today when you consider the number of walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and paragliders who use the hills. National Park status is not just about providing an area of fun for outdoor enthusiasts, however. It is about protecting the area from harmful development such as road building, a real problem in the South-East, and preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

In 1999 the Department of the Environment, now Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), proposed that the Countryside Agency, now part of Natural England, designate the South Downs a National Park. A Designation Order was published in late 2002 and in November 2003 a public inquiry began, to hear the views of those likely to be affected by the change. In 2006 a report was passed to the Secretary of State. After several more delays and legal wrangles, in 2009 it finally was announced that the South Downs would receive National Park status, and the newly appointed **South Downs National Park Authority** ( southdowns.gov.uk) officially assumed responsibility for it on 1st April 2011.

Although at 1648 sq km it is not the largest in area (that distinction going to the Lake District National Park at 2292 sq km), being only an hour from London it encompasses several large towns including Petersfield and Lewes, and is by far the most densely populated of all the National Parks.

The highest level of landscape protection is the designation of land as a **National Park** which recognises the national importance of an area in terms of landscape, biodiversity and as a recreational resource. This designation does not signify national ownership and they are not uninhabited wildernesses, making conservation a knife-edged balance between protecting the environment and the rights and livelihoods of those living in the park. In April 2011 the South Downs became England's ninth National Park, and its most densely populated. Some 85% of the land within the South Downs National Park is agricultural, so this balancing act is particularly critical here.

The next level of protection within the National Park includes **National Nature Reserves (NNRs)** and **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)**. The **NNRs** along the course of the South Downs Way (SDW) include: Beacon Hill (see p86), just before the village of Exton; Old Winchester Hill (see p88), just after Exton; and Butser Hill (see p93) several miles further along the path. Though there are no **NNRs** near the Way in West Sussex, in East Sussex Lullington Heath (p180) lies right on the trail, and Castle Hill and Lewes Downs (ie Mount Caburn; see p156) both lie very near to it too.

SSSIs range in size from little pockets protecting wild flower meadows, important nesting sites or special geological features, to vast swathes of upland, moorland and wetland. They are a particularly important designation as they have some legal standing. They are managed in partnership with the owners and occupiers of the land who must give written notice before initiating any operations likely to damage the site and who cannot proceed without consent from

The **grey squirrel** (*Sciurus carolinensis*) was introduced from North America at the end of the 19th century. Its outstanding success in colonising Britain is very much to the detriment of other native species including the red squirrel. Greys are bigger and stockier than reds and to many people the reds, with their tufted ears, bushy tails and small beady eyes, are the far more attractive of the two. Sadly there are no red squirrels anywhere on the Downs.

The **roe deer** (*Capreolus capreolus*) is a small, native species of deer that tends to hide in woodland. They can sometimes be seen, alone or in pairs, on field edges or clearings in the forest but you are more likely to hear the sharp dog-like bark made when they smell you coming.

If the Downs were made for any one species it is probably the **brown hare** (*Lepus europaeus*) which, if you are observant, can be seen racing across the fields on the hilltops. Hares are bigger than rabbits, with longer hind legs and ears, and are far more graceful than their prolific little cousins. Some other small but fairly common species to keep an eye out for include the carnivorous **stoat** (*Mustela erminea*), its smaller cousin the **weasel** (*Mustela nivalis*), the **hedgehog** (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and a number of species of **voles**, **mice** and **shrews**.

At dusk **bats** can be seen hunting for moths and flying insects along hedgerows, over rivers and around street lamps. All 17 species in Britain are protected by law. The commonest, and smallest, species is the **pipistrelle** (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). Although only about 4cm long it can eat up to 3000 insects in one night. You may also be lucky enough to see the slighter larger **Daubenton's bat** (*Myotis daubentonii*) hunting for mosquitoes over rivers and ponds.

REPTILES

The **adder** (*Vipera berus*) is the only poisonous snake in Britain. It is easily recognised by the distinctive zigzag markings down its back and a diamond shape on the back of its head. On summer days adders bask in sunny spots, such as on a warm rock or in the middle of a path so watch your step. Adders tend to move out of the way quickly but should you be unlucky enough to inadvertently step on one and get bitten, sit still and send someone else for help. Their venom is designed to kill small mammals, not humans. A bite is unlikely to be fatal to an adult but is serious enough to warrant immediate medical attention, especially in the case of children. Nevertheless, the likelihood of being bitten is minuscule. Walkers are far more likely to frighten the adder away once it senses your footsteps.

The **grass snake** (*Natrix natrix*), an adept swimmer, is a much longer, slimmer snake with a yellow collar around its neck. It's non-venomous but does emit a foul stench should you attempt to pick one up. It's much better for you and the snake to leave it in peace.

The **common lizard** (*Lacerta/Zootoca vivipara*) is a harmless creature which can often be seen basking in the sun on rocks and stone walls. About 15cm long, it is generally brown with patterns of spots or stripes. However, you are far more likely to hear them scuttling away through the undergrowth as you approach.

A curious beast, looking like a slippery eel or small snake, is the **slow worm** (*Anguis fragilis*) which, despite the name, is neither a worm nor indeed an eel or snake but a legless lizard. Usually a glossy grey or copper colour, they can be seen on woodland floors and in grassland. They are completely harmless and usually slip away into the leaf litter when they hear footsteps.

TREES

Over the last few hundred years the once-extensive forest cover in southern England has been fragmented into a patchwork of copses and coppiced woodland. Trees were felled for fuel and for shipbuilding and, in the case of the South Downs, to clear land for agricultural needs. In more recent times many of the hedgerows that helped create the familiar patchwork landscape have been grubbed up to create much larger fields.

Nevertheless, there are parts of the Downs that have survived the threat from axe and chainsaw. The north-facing scarp slope was, and still is, too steep for clearing and too inaccessible for ploughing. Consequently, this is where most of the trees are found. Although there are still areas of semi-natural or ancient mixed woodland, much of the remaining woodland has been coppiced, an old method of promoting growth of more numerous and narrower trunks by cutting a tree at its base. Coppicing was common in hazel stands and the resulting product used in constructing fences and making furniture. Although coppicing is no longer widespread it is still practised in some parts by enthusiasts of old woodland crafts and also by conservationists who recognise that coppiced woodland can be beneficial to certain species.

Most of the woodland on the Downs is mixed deciduous, made up largely of beech and ash but there are many other species to look out for.

Tree species

The **beech** (*Fagus sylvatica*) with its thick, silvery trunk is one of the most attractive native trees. It can grow to a height of 40 metres with the high canopies blocking out much of the light. As a result the floors of beech woodlands tend to be fairly bare of vegetation. They favour well-drained soil, hence their liking for the steep scarp slope. In autumn the colours of the turning leaves can be quite spectacular. One species that does survive the shady floor of beech woodland is the distinctive **common holly** (*Ilex aquifolium*) with its dark waxy leaves which have sharp points. Holly varies in size, usually growing as a sprawling bush on the woodland floor or in hedgerows but also as a tree when established in more isolated locations.

Famous for its longevity, lasting for well over a thousand years in some cases, the **common yew** (*Taxus baccata*) is abundant in churchyards but there are also natural stands on the scarp slope and among beech woodland. The dark glossy needles are quite distinctive as is the flaky red bark of the often gnarled and twisted old trunks and branches. Do not be tempted to eat the bright red berries; they're poisonous. Another tree with red berries is the **hawthorn** (*Crataegus monogyna*). It has small leaves and is usually found in hedgerows



Common Poppy
Papaver rhoeas



Tormentil
Potentilla erecta



Scarlet Pimpernel
Anagallis arvensis



Rowan (tree)
Sorbus aucuparia

FLOWERS

Many of the flowering meadows that once covered large stretches of downland farmland have been destroyed by modern farming techniques. However, in places, efforts are being made to revive these by encouraging farmers to employ more flower-friendly methods.

Meadows

The dominant grass found in fields all over the Downs is the appropriately named **sheep's fescue** (*Festuca ovina*) which was cultivated specifically for pastureland and is the grass of choice for downland sheep. Of far greater interest are the likes of the **common poppy** (*Papaver rhoeas*) with its spectacular deep red petals. They often colonise arable fields and path edges, preferring well-disturbed soil. Entire fields turn red in the flowering season in late summer.

Earlier in the season walkers are likely to come across the **cowslip** (*Primula veris*) and its head of pale yellow flowers. The flowers flop down in small bunches earning the plant the old nickname 'bunch of keys'.

Perhaps one of the most beautiful of the downland flowers is the **round headed rampion** (*Phyteuma orbiculare*). Its striking dark blue flowers have earned it the local name 'The Pride of Sussex'.

The tiny yellow flower of **tormentil** (*Potentilla tormentilla*) can be seen hugging the ground in short grassland. It gets its name from an age when it was used as a medicinal remedy for diarrhoea and haemorrhoids: the taste is so foul that it tormented whoever took it. Another tiny flower that's found close to the ground is the **scarlet pimpernel** (*Anagallis arvensis*), a member of the primrose family. The flowers are just 5mm in diameter but stand out from their grassy background thanks to their light red colour.

Many people assume orchids to be so rare as to be nearly impossible to find. In truth there are several fairly common species that may readily be seen flowering on the Downs,



Ramsons (Wild Garlic)
Allium ursinum



Common Hawthorn
Crataegus monogyna



Common Centaury
Centaureum erythraea

ROUTE GUIDE & MAPS

4

Using this guide

This route guide has been divided according to logical start and stop points. However, these are not intended to be strict daily stages since people walk at different speeds and have varying interests. The maps can be used to plan how far to walk each day but note that these are walking times only (see box below).


On pp32-4 are tables to help you plan an **itinerary**. To provide further help, **practical information** is presented clearly on the trail maps. This includes walking times for both directions, places to stay, camp and eat, as well as shops where you can buy supplies. Further service **details** are given in the text under the entry for each place. For an overview of this information see the **village and town facilities table** on pp30-1.


See also the **colour maps** (with **profile charts**) and the cumulative **distance chart** at the back of the book.

TRAIL MAPS [see key map p208; symbols key p191]

Direction

(See p29 for a discussion of the pros and cons of walking direction.)

 If you're doing this walk in an **easterly direction** (**E** → ie towards Eastbourne having started in Winchester) follow the maps in an ascending order (from 1 to 42) and the text as below.

 If you're walking in a **westerly direction** (**W** ←, ie towards Winchester having started in Eastbourne), follow the maps in a descending order (from 42 to 1) and the route overviews in shaded text. Turn to p178 (or p182 for inland route) to start your walk in this direction.

Scale and walking times

The trail maps are to a scale of 1:20,000 (1cm = 200m; 3 1/8 inches = one mile). Walking times are given along the side of each map and the

IMPORTANT NOTE – WALKING TIMES

Unless otherwise specified, **all times in this book refer only to the time spent walking**. You should add 20-30% to allow for rests, photos, checking the map, drinking water etc, not to mention time simply to stop and stare. When planning the day's hike count on 5-7 hours' actual walking.



arrow shows the direction to which the time refers. Black triangles indicate the points between which the times have been taken. **See box overleaf for important note on walking times.** The time-bars are a tool and are not there to judge your walking ability. There are so many variables that affect walking speed, from the weather conditions to how many beers you drank the previous evening. After the first hour or two of walking you will see how your speed relates to the timings on the maps.

GPS waypoints

The numbered GPS waypoints refer to the list on pp188-91.

Up or down?

The trail is shown as a **dashed red line**. An arrow across the trail indicates the gradient; two arrows show that it's steep. Note that the *arrow points uphill*, the opposite of what OS maps use on steep roads. A good way to remember our style is: '**front-pointing** on crampons **up** a steep slope' and 'open arms – Julie Andrews-style – **spreading out** to unfold the view **down** below'. If, for example, you are walking from A (at 80m) to B (at 200m) and the trail between the two is short and steep it would be shown thus: A — — — >> — — — B. Reversed arrow heads indicate a downward gradient.

Other features

Features are marked on the map when pertinent to navigation. In order to avoid cluttering the maps and making them unusable not all features have been marked each time they occur.

ACCOMMODATION

Apart from in large towns where some selection of places has been necessary, almost every place to stay that is within easy reach of the trail is marked. Details of each place are given in the accompanying text.

The number of **rooms** of each type is stated, ie **S** = single bed, **T** = twin beds, **D** = double bed, **Tr** = triple room (for up to three people) and **Qd** = quad (for up to four). Note that most of the triple/quad rooms have a double bed and one/two single beds (or bunk beds); thus for a group of three or four, two people may have to share the double bed but it also means the room can be used as a double or twin.

Rates quoted for a double or twin in B&B-style accommodation are **per person (pp) based on two people sharing a room** for a one-night stay; rates are usually discounted for longer stays and also if three or more people are sharing a room. Where a **single room (sgl)** is available the rate for that is quoted if different from the rate per person. The rate for **single occupancy (sgl occ)** of a double/twin room may be higher. Unless specified, rates are for bed and breakfast; at some places the only option is a **room rate** – this will be the same whether one or two people (or more if permissible) use the room.

The accommodation will either have **en suite** (bath or shower) facilities in the room or **private**, or **shared, facilities** (in either case this is a separate room, with a bath and/or shower, often just outside the bedroom); in some places the

facilities may be private if only one room is booked. The text also mentions whether the premises have: **wi-fi** (WI-FI); if a bath (♨) is available in/for at least one room, for those who prefer a relaxed soak at the end of the day; if **packed lunches** (🍱) can be prepared subject to prior arrangement (though this has not been checked for cities or large towns where there are lots of options); and if **dogs** (🐕) are welcome in at least one room, or at campsites, subject to prior arrangement; see pp193.

If arranged in advance some B&B proprietors are happy to collect walkers from the nearest point on the trail and deliver them back again next morning; they may also be happy to transfer your **luggage** to your next accommodation place. Some may charge for this; check the details at the time of booking.

WINCHESTER

MAP 1, p76

Winchester is a city steeped in history. The area was settled as long ago as 450BC when the nearby **St Catherine's Hill** was inhabited by a Celtic tribe. After the Roman occupation came the Dark Ages of AD400-600 during which time it is believed that **King Arthur** reigned from here. Many romantics today believe the city to be the site of legendary Camelot.

Things brightened up after the Dark Ages when in 871 **King Alfred the Great** (849-899) made the city the capital of Saxon England. He has probably had the greatest influence on the city so it is not surprising that a **bronze statue** of him, constructed in 1901, stands on Broadway. **St Swithun** (see box below) is also inextricably linked with Winchester.

In 1066 **William the Conqueror** arrived in Hastings and made his way to Winchester where he duly took charge and ordered the building of the castle. Soon after, in 1079, work began on the cathedral.

Winchester has had a long and sometimes turbulent history but it is well worth

spending an afternoon or the whole day exploring the compact city's many sights.

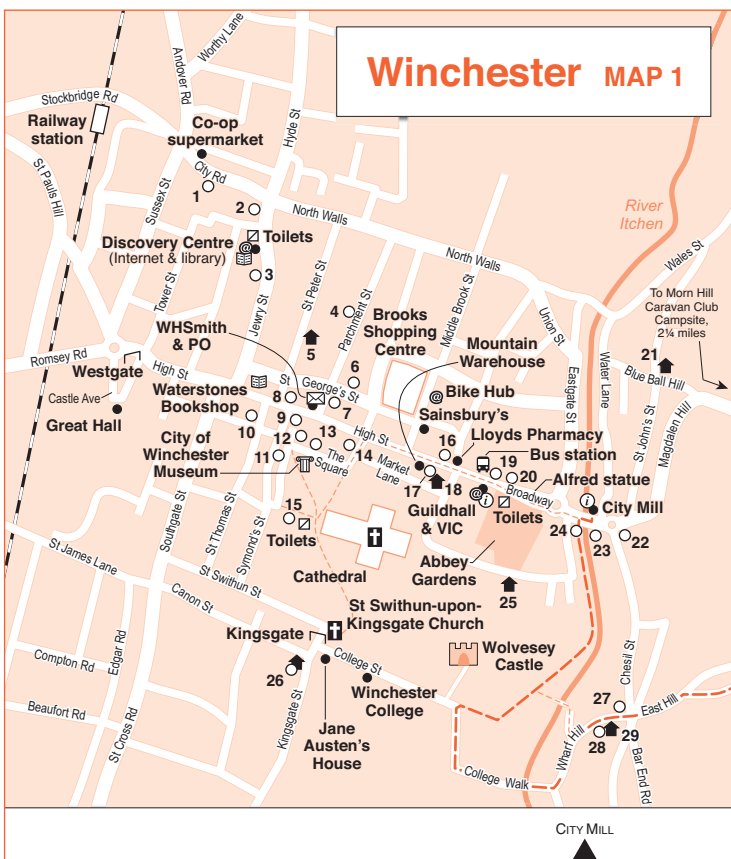
What to see and do

Winchester Cathedral (☎ 01962-857200, 🌐 winchester-cathedral.org.uk; Mon-Sat 9am-5pm, Sun noon-3pm; £9.95) stands elegantly in parkland in the city centre. The spectacular nave is said to be the longest Gothic cathedral nave in the world. The best time to visit the cathedral is during the Sunday morning service when the choir can be heard. The cathedral has witnessed many an historic event: **Henry III** was baptised here in 1207 and it was also the scene of the marriage of **Mary Tudor** to **Philip of Spain** in 1554. In more recent history it became the final resting place in 1817 of **Jane Austen** (see box p74); her grave and memorial are in the north aisle of the cathedral. The ticket price includes a new exhibition, **Kings and Scribes: The Birth of a Nation** (Mon-Sat 11am-4pm, Sun 12.30-2.30pm), which includes a look at the 12th-century Winchester Bible. There's also a

❑ THE LEGEND OF ST SWITHUN

St Swithun, once Bishop of Winchester, died in AD862. Before his death he asked to be buried outside the old Minster and was duly interred in accordance with his wishes. St Swithun, however, had not counted upon the wishes of Bishop Aethelwold who on 15 July 971 decided to extend the Minster. The expansion plans required the temporary opening of St Swithun's grave before he was carefully re-interred within the new Minster's walls. On the day of the re-interment it began to rain and did not stop for 40 days. To this day the legend says that if it rains on St Swithun's Day it will rain for the next 40 days. Some would say this is not unusual for England in July.

Winchester MAP 1

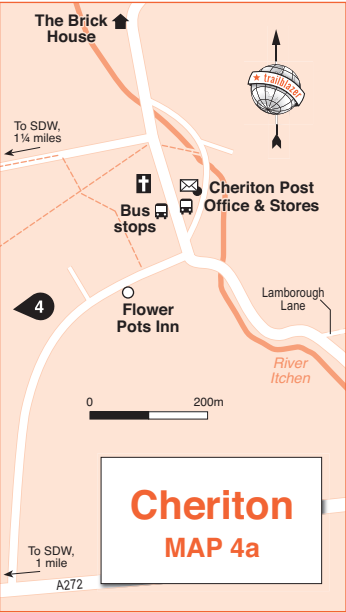


plus some suites, all en suite; ☹; WI-FI) is on St Peter St. This 16th-century town-house was once a bishop's residence then a convent but now offers luxurious hotel accommodation with four-poster beds in two rooms. Rates vary widely but expect to pay from £44.50pp (sgl occ rate) for room only, often less if booking more than a week in advance: check their website for special offers. If not included in the rate breakfast costs from £12pp.

At 75 Kingsgate St is **The Wykeham Arms** (☎ 01962-853834, ☐ wykehamarmswinchester.co.uk; 2S/10D/2T, all en suite;

☹; WI-FI), a cosy inn with quality rooms from £72 to £131.50pp (sgl/sgl occ £84-117); breakfast is not included in the rate. It's named after William of Wykeham who founded Winchester College (see p74).

Sounding as unattractive as its associated restaurant (The Black Rat; see Where to Eat), **The Black Hole** (☎ 01962-807010, ☐ theblackholebb.co.uk; 10D, all en suite; ☹; WI-FI; 🐾) is in fact a quality, if somewhat quirky guesthouse with a small roof terrace overlooking the city. They charge £47.50-60pp (sgl occ room rate).

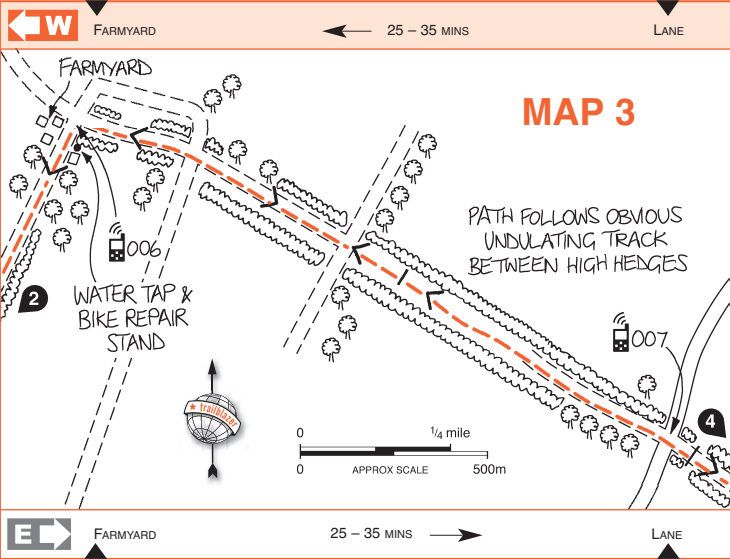


‘Lamborough Lane ran with the blood of the slain’.

In the village centre is the very useful **Cheriton Post Office & Stores** (☎ 01962-771251; Mon & Fri 7am-5.30pm, Tue, Wed & Sat to 2pm, Thur to 4pm, Sun 7.30am-12.30pm), a combined shop, newsagent, office and **post office**. However, the post office opens only on Monday (1.30-4.30pm) and Thursday (9am-noon). Stagecoach’s No 67 **bus** service (Winchester–Petersfield; see p46) stops near the church.

The charming **Flower Pots Inn** (☎ 01962-771735, 🌐 www.theflowerpots.co.uk; **fb**: food Tue noon-2pm, Wed-Fri noon-2pm & 6-8.30pm, Sat noon-3pm & 6-8.30pm, Sun noon-4pm; 🍷) is a great spot for a meal and a pint. It has its own **brewery**; their Flowerpots Bitter is definitely worth a taste. Note the pub is generally closed in the afternoon.

For **B&B**, there’s **The Brick House** (☎ 01962-771334, 🌐 brickhousecheriton.co.uk; 2D both en suite; WI-FI; 🚰), just past the village centre. They charge from £57.50pp (sgl occ £105).



Compass Travel's No 99 **bus service** calls here if booked in advance (see p47).

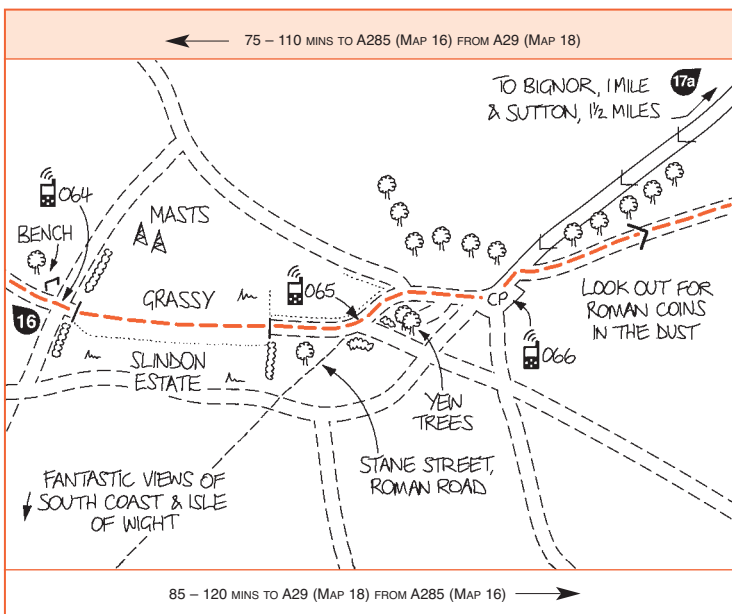
Campers can head up the road for about a mile to the well-run and welcoming **Graffham Camping & Caravanning Club Site** (☎ 01798-867476, 📧 campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk; limited Wi-Fi; 🐾 on lead; end Mar to early Nov), set in a peaceful, forested location. The showers are decent and there are laundry facilities. The site has the usual unnecessarily complicated Camping & Caravanning Club prices, but to give you a quick example the price for one backpacker in early July is around £15 (£26 for two).

Brook Barn (☎ 01798-867356, 📧 brookbarn-graffham.co.uk; 1D/1T shared bathroom but private if only one room

booked; ☹; Wi-Fi; 🐾), on Selham Rd, offers B&B for £35-45/55-65pp shared or private bathroom (sgl occ from £65). The rate includes a continental breakfast, a cooked one costs an extra £10pp (minimum two people).

The White Horse (☎ 01798-867331, 📧 whitehorsegraffham.com; **fb**; **food** Wed-Fri noon-2pm, Sat & Sun to 2.30/3pm, Wed-Sat 6.30-9pm; Wi-Fi; 🐾 bar area only and on lead) itself is now a very upmarket restaurant, boasting a quiet garden and spectacular views onto the hills. The food's definitely a cut above your average trekker's grub, even if the menu itself is admirably straightforward and unpretentious, with mains for £14.50-19.50.

Bignor Hill The Way follows part of the old Roman road over Bignor Hill (Map 17). Look out for the signpost in Latin in the car park (not actually of Roman origin!) and look out, too, for any Roman coins that may be buried among the flint and chalk.



TUMULI

All along the crest of the Downs are numerous **burial mounds** known as tumuli. These are in the region of 4000 to 4500 years old. Some are overgrown or are not particularly distinct but many are surprisingly well preserved. A glance at an Ordnance Survey map of the area will indicate exactly where they are. Next time you stop for lunch on that nice grassy hump just remember you may be sitting on the grave of someone who has been dead for 4500 years.

SUTTON & BIGNOR MAP 17a, p116

The main reason for dropping off the hills to these twin villages is to see the fabulous mosaics at **Bignor Roman Villa** but you can also stay comfortably in Bignor and eat well.

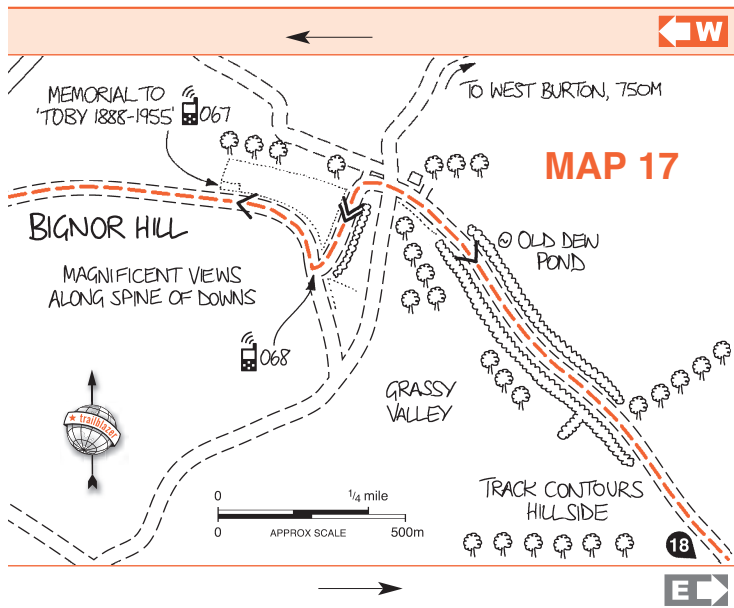
The **church** in Bignor dates from the 11th century; publisher John Murray (1909-95) is buried in the churchyard.

On a quiet corner of the Roman site is **Bignor Farms Camping** (☎ 01798-869259, www.bignorromanvilla.co.uk/bignor-farms-camping; £15pp); it is a pop up

campsite so the opening dates aren't certain and the number of pitches may vary. If it is open the owners can order local produce for you if given 24 hours' notice (order via website).

Very close to the Roman Villa is an excellent B&B, **Stane House** (☎ 01798-869454, stanehouse.co.uk; 1D/1T both en suite, 1D private facilities; ☹; WI-FI; ♿), with rooms from £45pp (£75 sgl occ).

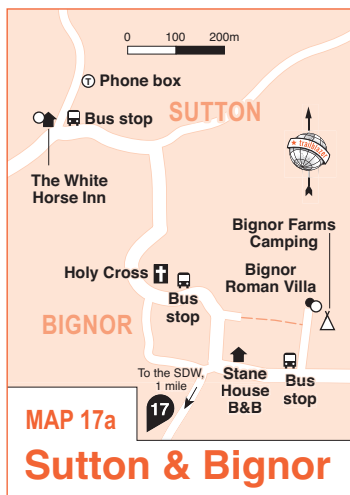
There's a picnic area at Bignor Roman Villa and they've reopened the **teashop**



(Fri-Mon 10.30am-4pm, every day in August), though it serves only tea, coffee and cakes; no sandwiches or hot meals.

A mile further on, in **Sutton**, is *The White Horse Inn* (☎ 01798-869191, 📧 whitehorseinn-sutton.co.uk; 7D/1D or T, all en suite; ☹; Wi-Fi; 🐕), a magnificent isolated country pub with **B&B** for £60-90pp (sgl occ £90-150). In addition to the five rooms in the main building they also have three rooms in 'lodges' in the garden, one of which has a skylight above the bed, so you can fall asleep while gazing at the stars. They also have a large **restaurant** (food Mon-Sat noon-2pm & 6-9pm, Sun noon-4pm) and the food, much of it sourced locally, is exquisite. Non-residents can eat breakfast (daily 8-10am) here but prior booking is essential.

Compass's No 99 **bus service** calls at both Sutton and Bignor if pre-booked (see p47).



❑ BIGNOR ROMAN VILLA Map 17a

Just off the old Roman road of Stane Street are the remains of Bignor Roman Villa (☎ 01798-869259, 📧 bignorromanvilla.co.uk; May, Jun, Jul, Sep & Oct Fri-Mon 10am-5pm, last entry 4pm, Aug open daily; £6.50). It was discovered by a farmer, George Tupper, who was ploughing his field in 1811.

Believed to date from the 3rd century AD, Bignor Villa was one of the biggest in England and probably home to a wealthy farmer considering its enviable position on fertile land close to the main road between Chichester and London. Bignor is most famous for the superb floor mosaics, said to be some of the world's best-preserved examples. Many are in near perfect condition,



including a 24-metre length of the 70-metre corridor. It is the longest mosaic on display in Britain.



© BRYN THOMAS

BURY**MAP 18, p118**

This unassuming village offers accommodation, food and a mobile **post office** (Fri 1.15-3.15pm). Compass's limited No 69 (Alfold-Worthing) and 71 (Storrington-Chichester) **bus** services call here; for details see p47

The Barn at Penfolds (☎ 01798-831496; 2D, both en suite; ☹; Wi-Fi; Ⓛ), on Houghton Lane, offers **B&B** for £42.50-47.50pp (sgl occ from £50); they require a minimum stay of two nights at some times of the year. They also offer B&B in a cosy **shepherd's hut** (heated and insulated; 🐾) with its own shower and toilet and a deck area outside. **Harkaway** (☎ 01798-831843, 📧 harkaway.freeuk.com; 1D en suite,

1S/1T share facilities; Wi-Fi; Ⓛ), also on Houghton Lane, offers B&B for £32.50-35pp (sgl £35-50, sgl occ from £50). Since there is no village shop here requests for a packed lunch must be made at least 24 hours in advance.

The Squire & Horse Inn (☎ 01798-831343, 📧 squireandhorsebury.co.uk; **food** Tue noon-2pm, Wed-Sat noon-2pm & 5.30-9pm, Sun noon-7pm; Wi-Fi; 🐾 bar area and garden), by the main road, is a freehouse with a busy restaurant. Main dishes include homemade steak & kidney pudding with roast potatoes (£13.95), and barbecued calves' liver with smoky bacon & mash (£14.95). Note, the pub is closed on a Monday.

HOUGHTON BRIDGE MAP 18, p119

The village of Houghton Bridge, itself just a short walk from the village of Amberley, can easily be reached from the SDW as the trail almost passes through it.

Southern (see box p44) operates trains to London Victoria and south to Arundel and beyond, from the **railway station** (called Amberley Station). There are, however, no useful **bus** services other than school day services operated by Sussex Bus (📧 thesussexbus.com): their No 619 goes in the early morning to Amberley, Storrington and Steyning; their No 719 does the return route in the mid afternoon. One of Compass's No 74 services continues to Houghton mid afternoon on school days and their 69 (Tue, Fri) and 71 service (Wed) also drop in; see p46.

Right by the station you'll find the entrance to **Amberley Working Museum** (☎ 01798-831370, 📧 amberleymuseum.co.uk; mid Feb to end Oct Wed-Sun & Bank hols, daily during school holidays 10am-4.30pm, last entry 4pm; £14; tickets must be pre-booked online), situated in an old chalk pit. This extensive museum features a blacksmith's and foundry, as well as workshops producing traditional items such as brooms and walking sticks. There's a **café** here too. The quarry tunnel at Amberley was used as a film location in the James Bond film *A View To A Kill* in 1984.

Where to stay and eat

Foxleigh Barn (☎ 01798-839113, 📧 pete@foxleighbarn.co.uk; 🐾 on lead only and all mess must be cleared up; Easter to Oct) is conveniently located right on the SDW by the B2139. They offer **camping** (from £15pp) in a field with use of a camp kitchen, toilet and shower *for campers only*.

Just west of the river, the excellent **South Downs Bunkhouse** (☎ 01798-831100, 📧 southdownsbunkhouse.co.uk; 3 x 4-, 1 x 8-bed dorms, shared facilities; Wi-Fi; Ⓛ; 🐾 in utility room) has bunk-bed dormitories and charges from £26pp if you bring your own sleeping bag, or you can rent a duvet, sheet and towel (from £5pp). Each bunk has its own power socket and USB charging port, and there's also a communal living room, self-catering and laundry facilities, and even a barbecue you can use in the courtyard outside. Continental breakfast (from £6pp) is also available if requested in advance.

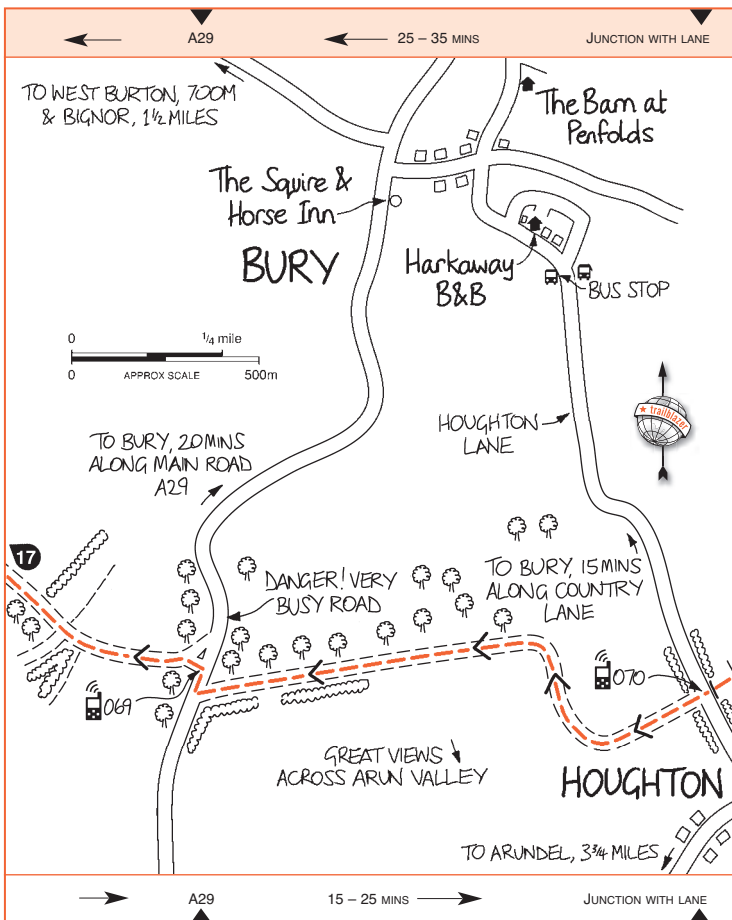
Next door, and run by the same people, **Arun Valley B&B** (phone number as for the bunkhouse; 📧 arunvalleybandb.co.uk; 1D or T private bathroom, 1Tr en suite; ☹; Wi-Fi; Ⓛ; 🐾 but can't sleep in the bedrooms) has very comfortable rooms from £60pp (sgl occ £75), including a full breakfast.

You can get breakfasts till noon but they also serve light lunches (hot food till

3pm) and cakes at **Riverside** (☎ 01798-831066, 🌐 riversidesouthdowns.com; fb; Mon-Fri 10am-4pm, Sat & Sun 9am-4pm; wi-fi; 🐕); it's a café, bar and restaurant that's especially popular when the weather is good as they have a riverside garden.

Just across the road is **Bridge Inn** (☎ 01798-831619, 🌐 bridgeinnamberley.com; fb; food Wed-Fri noon-2.30pm & 6-

8.30pm, Sat noon-2.30pm & 5.30-8.30pm, Sun noon-4pm; wi-fi; 🐕 bar and garden only), a friendly, award-winning pub with real ales and very good food. At the time of research the pub was closed all day on Monday & Tuesday, and closing at 9.30pm (Wed-Sat) and at 5pm on Sunday but they hope the hours will be more normal by/in 2022.



W ← AMBERLEY TO COCKING

MAPS 18-14

This scenic **12-mile (19.5km, 3¼-5¼hrs)** stage is perhaps the trail at its most typical: a wide chalky track leading up and along the escarpment, with distant views to the sea away to the south and cosy little villages skirting the folds of the downs below to the north. So far, so familiar. But later on in the day there are also several patches of woodland, most notably at Graffham Down, that give those who started their adventure in Eastbourne a taste of things to come, with woodland becoming more prevalent as the trail continues west. All of which makes for a lovely day's walking if the sun's out.



Though the walking may be ‘typical’ for the South Downs, there are some unique attractions on this stage. To the north of the trail, the mosaics at **Bignor Roman Villa** (see box p116) are really great and always manage to make you feel that the lengthy and steep trudge down from the top of **Bignor Hill** (Map 17) to it was worth doing. It’s not surprising the villa was built here, with **Stane Street**, the Roman road built around AD50 to connect Noviomagus (Chichester) with Londinium (London), passing nearby.

The Way continues on through a mixture of woodland and grassland. The track here used to be bordered on one side by dense woodland and on the other by a high hedge so the view was somewhat obscured in parts but the former South Downs Joint Committee and Graffham Down Trust created a wildlife corridor in order to link up two rich grassland sites – **Graffham Down** (Map 15) and **Heyshott Down** (Map 14). The path passes a **Bronze Age burial ground** with **tumuli** clearly visible among the tussocks of grass.

There is a **water tap** by Manor Farm’s farm buildings and a track from here leads down to **Cocking** (p106). Just after that you will notice that the window frames on the cottages here are painted yellow; this shows they are part of the Cowdray Estate.

[Next route overview p106]

AMBERLEY

MAP 18, p119

Perched on a sandstone ridge below the chalk Downs with the wild marshland of **Amberley Brooks** stretching to the north, Amberley claims to be the prettiest village on the Downs and it would be hard to argue otherwise. The quiet lane leading to the church and castle is lined with thatched cottages; hollyhocks and foxgloves bloom in the small front gardens in the summer months. Unlike other downland villages, where local flint is prominent in the architecture, many of Amberley’s cottages were built using local sandstone, making the village distinctive. There are records referring to Amberley dating back to AD680.

The pretty **church** was built by Bishop Luffa between 1091 and 1125. Next to the church is the **castle** (now a hotel, see Where to stay) which used to be the bishop’s residence until it was recognised as a castle upon completion of the walls in 1377.

More information on the history of the village and the local area can be found at Amberley Working Museum (see p117). **Amberley Village Pottery** (☎ 01798-831876, 📧 amberleypottery.co.uk; Thur-Tue 11am-3pm), housed in an 1867 former chapel on Church St, is open to visitors.

Amberley Village Store (☎ 01798-831171, 📧 avsshop.co.uk; **fb**; Mon & Wed 9am-2pm, Tue-Thur & Fri to 5pm, Sat to 3pm, Sun 11am-3pm) stocks a good range of groceries and also houses the **post office** (Mon, Thur & Fri 9am-1pm, Tue to noon).

Amberley railway station is about a mile away in Houghton Bridge; see p46 for details of Compass Travel’s 74A bus service that calls in Amberley and continues to the railway station on school days.

Where to stay and eat

If you fancy a splurge, there’s every luxury at **Amberley Castle** (☎ 01798-831992, 📧 amberleycastle.co.uk; 15D/4D or T, all en suite; 🍷; Wi-Fi). Gorgeous rooms cost from £137.50pp (sgl occ room rate), though it is always worth enquiring about special offers; there’s a minimum two-night stay at weekends. There’s a grand **restaurant** (Wed-Sun 12.30-9pm; smart casual) serving a three-course meal for £75pp in the evening. Afternoon tea (12.30-4pm) costs £40pp. Booking is recommended.

The local pub, the very smart **Black Horse** (☎ 01798-831183, 📧 www.amberleyblackhorse.co.uk; **fb**; Wi-Fi; 🍷; Mon-Sat

Eastbourne, about a mile from the town centre. Brighton & Hove Buses No 12/12X & 13X services stop outside the hostel.

As for more upmarket accommodation, well **Citrus Hotel** (☎ 01323-722676, 🌐 www.citrushoteleastbourne.co.uk; 50 rooms; all en suite; ☹; WI-FI; 🐾) describes itself as a 'limited-service' hotel. Rooms range from single, double and triple to 'studios' (with self-catering facilities) sleeping up to six people; their suites have a sea view. Using the business model of the nationwide chains, the hotel is packed with facilities including a recreation area with table tennis, dartboard and pool table; there's also a bar serving snacks. And as with the nationwide chains, the prices can be very reasonable starting at £40pp (sgl/sgl occ from £65/75) including a cooked breakfast. If not requested at the time of booking breakfast costs £7.99.

Near here you'll find three good B&Bs. **Cherry Tree Guesthouse** (☎ 01323-722406, 🌐 cherrytree-eastbourne.co.uk; 3S/2T/5D/1Tr, all en suite; ☹; WI-FI; 🐾) is at 15 Silverdale Rd; it's an Edwardian townhouse with B&B for £45-60pp (sgl/sgl occ from £55). The place is very efficiently run and the breakfasts they provide are varied and delicious. They are also very dog-friendly, and even have towels by the front-door to use on any dogs caught in a downpour. Some of the rooms can sleep up to two children. Nearby, **da Vinci** (☎ 01323-727173, 🌐 davinci.uk.com; 4S/10D/5D or T/ 2Tr, all en suite; ☹; WI-FI), on Howard Sq, has an **art gallery** downstairs and 'art-themed' rooms. It's a friendly, comfortable place and B&B is from around £40-55pp (sgl/sgl occ £40-60). Phone for the best prices. Some rooms sleep up to two children.

One block east, **The Arden B&B** (☎ 01323-639639, 🌐 www.theardenhotel.co.uk; 1S en suite but private toilet, 3T/3D/1Tr, all en suite; WI-FI; 🐾) is a fine family-run establishment on Burlington Place with some parking spaces (and discounts on on-street parking too). Rates are reasonable, starting at just £39.50-44pp (£44-58 sgl/sgl occ).

The chain **Premier Inn** (☎ 0333-321 9323, 🌐 premierinn.com; 65D, all en suite;

☹; WI-FI) has a hotel on Terminus Rd. Book online rather than calling the high-rate phone number. Saver rates can be as low as £58.50 for the room (two people; a sofa-bed is available if you need separate beds) if booked and paid well in advance or more than twice that if booked last minute. The rooms have very comfortable beds and 40" flat-screen TVs. There's a restaurant: a cooked breakfast costs £8.99pp.

Right opposite the pier is the appropriately named **The Pier Hotel** (☎ 01323-728313, 🌐 thepierhotel.co.uk; 12S/11D/8T, all en suite; ☹; WI-FI), a place that's not without its charms and is in a great location. Rooms cost £70-85pp (sgl £85-95, sgl occ rates on request). Also on the seafront, **Cromwell House** (☎ 01323-431066, 🌐 www.cromwell-house.co.uk; 2S/2T/1D/3D or T, all en suite; WI-FI), at 23 Cavendish Place, is a Victorian townhouse with B&B from £45pp (sgl/sgl occ £50).

Sea Beach House (☎ 01323-410458, 🌐 www.seabeachhouse.com; 5D/4T, all en suite; ☹; WI-FI; 🐾) is at 39-40 Marine Parade. B&B costs £44-47pp (sgl occ £50-60); some rooms have sea views. Both Princess (later to become Queen) Victoria and Alfred, Lord Tennyson are said to have stayed here and the building dates from 1790, when Eastbourne was just a village.

Where to eat and drink

You'll find a surprisingly eclectic mix of restaurants and cafés on or around busy **Seaside Rd** and **Terminus Rd**.

Cafés & pubs On Terminus Rd, **Vickery's** (daily 9am-5pm) is a good-value café with all-day breakfasts. Almost opposite, the Greek café and deli **gr/eat** (🌐 www.gr-eat.co.uk; daily noon-3pm & 5.30-9.30pm, closed at times late Oct to early Jan) has a terrible name, but a good selection of Mediterranean fare.

On Seaside Rd, at No 54, **Charlie Brown's Diner** (☎ 01323-726588, 🌐 charliebrownsdiner.co.uk; Tue-Thur 6-10.30pm, Fri & Sat to 11pm; WI-FI) is good for burgers and the like.

For something more refined, and away from the holiday-maker hordes, **The Green**

Almond (☎ 01323-734470, 📧 thegreenalmond.com; **fb**; Wed-Sat 11.30am-4pm), 12 Grand Hotel Buildings, Compton St, is an award-winning vegetarian bistro with a nice line in curries and salads. Booking is recommended.

There are numerous **pubs**, some a lot rougher than others. **Crown & Anchor** (☎ 01323-642500, 📧 crownandanchoreastbourne.co.uk; food daily 10am-9pm; Wi-Fi; 🍺), on the seafront at 15 Marine Parade, often has live music at weekends and is one of the more welcoming places.

As with any British seaside town, **ice-cream** is a big seller in Eastbourne. You can get it pretty much anywhere, but between Marine Parade and Seaside Rd are two particularly popular competing outlets; both very good. The cheaper of the two, **Thayer's Ice Cream**, (☎ 01323-641906; Mar-Oct Mon-Fri 1-9pm, Sat & Sun noon-9pm, generally closed in the winter) is a small family-run business with dozens of different flavours. Bigger, brasher **Fusciardi's** (📧 fuscuardiicecreams.co.uk; daily 9am-6pm), on the seafront, also has a sit-down café area.

Restaurants & takeaways At the seafront end of Terminus Rd, **Gianni's** (📧 gianniseastbourne.co.uk; Wed-Mon 11am-6pm) is a friendly pizzeria that also sells Italian ice-cream, and there are various pizza chains around town. For something a bit classier, **La Locanda Del Duca** (☎ 01323-916011, 📧 la-locanda-del-duca.com; daily noon-2.30pm & 5-11pm, Sun to 10.30pm), 26 Cornfield Terrace, is an authentic Italian place offering set menus

for £21.40/24.50 for two/three courses and traditional favourites à la carte.

Back on Terminus Rd there's **Athens Restaurant & Steak House** (☎ 01323-733278; daily noon-2.30pm & 6-10pm), at No 195. It's efficiently run by three generations of a hospitable Greek-Cypriot family and their moussaka is particularly good.

At 1 Pevensey Rd, **Exquis** (☎ 01323-430885; **fb**; Tue-Sat 6-11pm) is shabby outside but actually a delightful French bistro with a simple menu that's good value. Nearby **Meze** (☎ 01323-731893, 📧 meze-restaurant.co.uk; daily noon-10pm), at 15 Pevensey Rd, is a good Turkish restaurant.

For decent Indian cuisine, head to **Ashoka** (☎ 01323-733344, 📧 ashokaeastbourne.co.uk; daily noon-2pm & 5.30-11.30pm), on Cornfield Rd. It's been in business nearly 30 years. The best Indian in town is probably **Malayalam** (☎ 01323-722227, 📧 malayalamrestaurants.com; Tue-Thur noon-3pm & 5.30-9.30pm, Fri & Sat to 10.30pm, Sun noon-5pm) on Terminus Rd, serving South Indian fare with mains starting at just £6.25.

But for something more traditionally English, it has to be fish & chips. There are plenty of options here, including a branch of the **Harry Ramsden's** chain (☎ 01323-417454, 📧 harryramsdens.co.uk/location/eastbourne; summer Sun-Thur 11.30am-8pm, Fri & Sat to 8.30pm), on the seafront at the end of Terminus Rd. For a more down-to-earth chippy, try **Sea Fare** (☎ 01323-641893; **fb**; daily 11.30am-3.30pm & 4.30-10pm, winter days/hours variable), at 66 Seaside Rd.

☐ AFTERNOON TEA AT THE GRAND

If your walk ends at about tea-time (or if you haven't started) and you wish to celebrate in style there can be no better place for a top-of-the-range cream tea than **The Grand Hotel** (☎ 01323-412345, 📧 grandeastbourne.com). You should phone ahead to book. It's served daily from 2.45pm to 5.30pm when for £26-28.50 you get a full spread including sandwiches, scones and cakes. You can push the boat out even further with the Grand Champagne Tea (£34.50-37).

The hotel is easy to find: you walk right past it on the way into Eastbourne from the end of the South Downs Way. Splash out – you deserve it!

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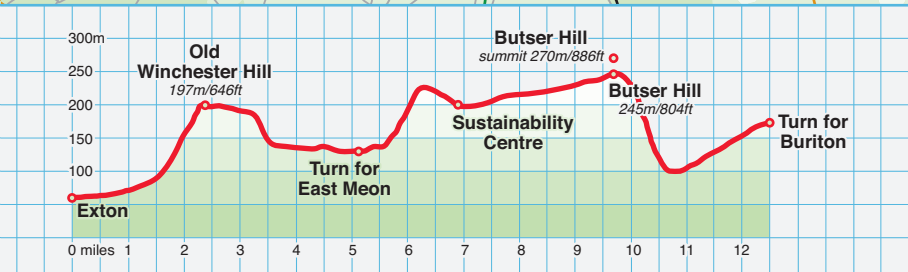
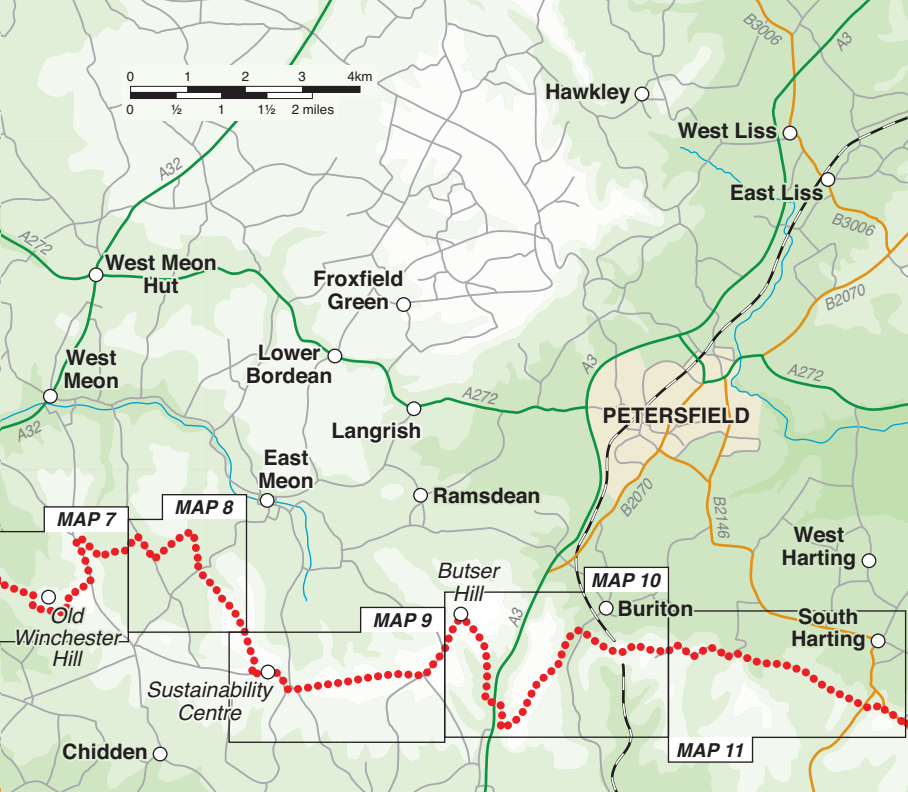
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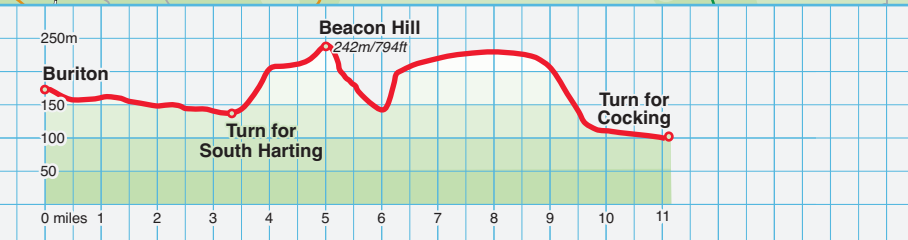
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←TW Maps 10-6, Buriton to Exton
12½ miles/20km – 4¼-6hrs

Maps 6-1, Exton to Winchester
12 miles/19.5km – 4¼-6hrs





Maps 10-14, Buriton to Coking

11 ¼ miles/18km – 3¾-4¾ hrs

Maps 14-18, Coking to Amberley

12 miles/19.5km – 3¾-5¼ hrs

Note: Add 20-30% to these times to allow for stops



MAP KEY

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