


South Downs Way

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
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
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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 (pp13-16) 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.

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Photos – Front cover: On the cliffs above Beachy Head Lighthouse. **This page:** Walking west towards Belle Tout. **Previous page:** Marching up to Chanctonbury Ring. **Overleaf:** Local landmarks, the two windmills above Clayton are known as Jack and Jill. This is Jill.

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About this book

This guidebook contains all the information you need to undertake all or parts of the South Downs Way. 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:

- Reviews of campsites, hostels, B&Bs, guesthouses, pubs and hotels
- Walking companies if you want an organised tour or your luggage carried
- Itineraries for all levels of walkers
- Answers to all your questions: when is the best time to walk, how hard is it, what to pack and the approximate cost of the trip
- Walking times and how to use GPS tracklogs as a back-up to navigation
- Cafés, pubs, tea-shops, restaurants, and shops/supermarkets along the route
- Rail, bus and taxi information for the towns and villages on or near the Way
- Street maps of the main towns and villages
- Historical, cultural and geographical background information

Note that this edition of the guide is liable to more change than usual. Some of the B&Bs, hotels, pubs, restaurants and tourist attractions may not survive the hardships caused by rising fuel prices, inflation and staff shortages. 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 the updates page on the website.

MINIMUM IMPACT FOR MAXIMUM INSIGHT

Nature's peace will flow into you as the sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their freshness into you and storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves. **John Muir** (one of the world's first and most influential environmentalists, born in 1838)

Why is walking in wild and solitary places so satisfying? Partly it is the sheer physical pleasure: sometimes pitting one's strength against the elements and the lie of the land. The beauty and wonder of the natural world and the fresh air restore our sense of proportion and the stresses and strains of everyday life slip away. Whatever the character of the countryside, walking in it benefits us mentally and physically, inducing a sense of well-being, an enrichment of life and an enhanced awareness of what lies around us. All this the countryside gives us and the least we can do is to safeguard it by supporting rural economies, local businesses, and low-impact methods of farming and land-management, and by using environmentally sensitive forms of transport – walking being pre-eminent.

INTRODUCTION

The 100-mile (160km) line of chalk hills known as the South Downs stretches from the historic city of Winchester, in Hampshire, across Sussex to the Pevensy Levels by Eastbourne. 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

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

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 in summer, 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.



The official start (or end) of the South Downs Way is now the City Mill in Winchester, marked by a wooden sign outside it. Until 2017, the trail began from Winchester Cathedral (**above**) – in our opinion a much more appropriate starting point. It's well worth visiting.



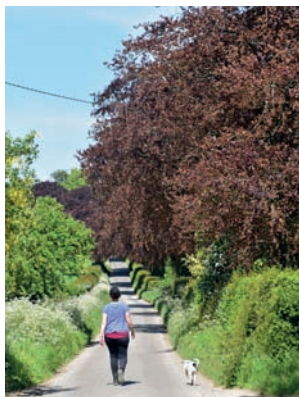
The South Downs Way begins in the cathedral city of Winchester from where it heads across rolling hills and the Meon Valley with its lazy, reed-fringed chalk-bed river and charming villages. At Butser Hill the Way reaches the highest point of the Downs with views as far as the Isle of Wight and, in the other direction, the North Downs. Continuing along the top of the ridge the Way passes through ancient stands of mixed woodland, past the Roman villa at Bignor and on towards the sandstone cottages of Amberley. Close by is the fascinating town of Arundel with its grand cathedral and even grander castle rising above the trees on the banks of the River Arun. Then it is on to Chancetonbury Ring with its fine views across the Weald of Sussex. The next stretch climbs past the deep valley of Devil's Dyke and over Ditchling Beacon to Lewes with its crooked old timber-framed buildings and the famous Harvey's Brewery. Finally, the path reaches the narrow little lanes of Alfriston with more historic pubs than one has any right to expect in such a small village. The walk's grand finale includes the meandering Cuckmere River and the roller-coaster Seven Sisters chalk cliffs – before reaching the final great viewpoint of Beachy Head, overlooking the seaside town of Eastbourne.

The eastern end of the Way is also marked with a wooden sign (**left**), on the outskirts of Eastbourne. Most walkers will want to continue into this seaside town with its impressive Victorian pier (**below**).



nificant 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 historic city of Winchester. Today the route is growing in popularity with walkers, cyclists and horse-riders alike, who tend to mingle with ease.



Easy walking below an impressive row of copper beeches to the east of Buriton.

hills. One thing to note, though, is that because the Way generally follows the high ground along the top of the



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

How difficult is the path?

The South Downs Way is one of the most accessible and easiest of Britain's long-distance paths. Those on foot will find the route usually follows wide, well-drained tracks in keeping with its designation as a long-distance bridleway, catering for cyclists and horse-riders as well as walkers. If anything walkers may, on occasion, crave a few more lightly trodden paths since the route always sticks to the well-beaten track.

This 100-mile walk can be conveniently divided into sections starting and stopping at any of the numerous little villages that sit at the foot of the escarpment or in a fold in the hills. One thing to note, though, is that because the Way generally follows the high ground along the top of the South Downs, to reach the villages offering accommodation, pubs and shops you usually have to descend steeply off the Downs and climb back onto them to continue, which can make pub lunches less attractive! When calculating the day's timings you need to bear in mind this extra walking time involved.

How long do you need?

Walkers will find that **the whole route can be tackled over the course of a week** but it is well worth taking a couple of extra days to enjoy the beautiful downland villages that are

Right: Walking west towards Cocking. The chalk trail runs over the downs far ahead.



Above: On the Way, west of Truleigh Hill. **Below:** Through the woods near Winchester.

When to go

The south-east of England has probably the best climate in a country maligned for its fickle weather. It doesn't suffer from too much rain and enjoys more hours of sunshine than other parts of the United Kingdom; indeed, Eastbourne proudly boasts of being the UK's sunniest place! The route can be followed at any time of year but the chances of enjoying good weather do depend on the season.

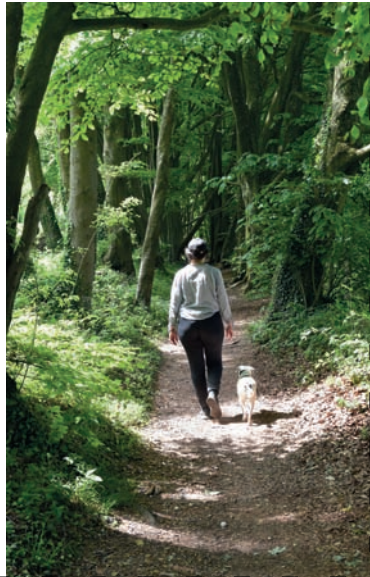
SEASONS

Spring

A typical spring is one of sunshine and showers. From March to May a day walking on the Downs may involve getting drenched in a short sudden shower only to be dried off by warm sunshine a few minutes later. However, the weather can vary enormously from year to year, sometimes with weeks of pleasantly warm sunny weather and in other years days of grey drizzle. In general this is a great time to be on the Downs. Walker numbers are low and the snowdrops, bluebells and primroses decorate the bare woodland floors.

Summer

It can get surprisingly hot and sunny from June to September but again the weather can



vary from one year to the next. Always be prepared for wet weather but also be confident of enjoying some balmy summer days, too. Occasionally it can be a touch too hot for walking. This can be a problem as there is not much water on the Downs so fill up your water bottles whenever you can. Visitor numbers are high at this time of year, as you might expect, so it can be a little difficult to enjoy a solitary day on the Way. The hills are colourful in summer with wild flowers in bloom in the meadows, red poppies among the corn and fields of bright yellow oil-seed rape. Hay-fever sufferers may not agree that this is such a good thing. However, everyone seems to be in a good mood and the pubs are brimming with all sorts of folk, from fellow walkers to country gents. The big advantage of summer walking is that it remains light until well after nine in the evening so there is never any rush to finish a day's walk.

The big advantage of summer walking is that it remains light until well after nine in the evening so there is never any rush to finish a day's walk.

Autumn

Autumn is probably the season when you can reliably expect to be rained on. The weather from September to November tends to be characterised by low-pressure systems rolling in from the Atlantic one after another, bringing with them prolonged spells of 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 once did. 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.



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, so 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.

GPS on your smart phone

These days individuals who don't routinely clutch a **smart phone** every waking hour are regarded as eccentric. But not all devoted users appreciate that a modern mobile can receive a **GPS** signal from space as well as estimate your position often as accurately using **mobile data** signals from hilltop masts. These signals are two different things: GPS comes free from American, Russian or European satellites and is everywhere all the time but works best outdoors. Much stronger 4- or 5G mobile signals beam off towers up to 40 miles away and are what you pay the phone company for.

Accessing an online map with mobile data (internet via your phone signal, not wi-fi), your position can be pinpointed with great accuracy. But with no signal your phone will use GPS to display your position as a dot on the screen. Except that, *unless you import a map into your phone's internal storage* (which may require an app and even a small financial outlay), without a signal the kilobit-sized 'tiles' which make up a **zoomable online map** cannot be downloaded. The internet browser's cache may retain a few tiles until the signal resumes or until you walk off that tile's coverage. Much will depend on your service provider.

The best way to use your mobile as an accurate navigation aid is to **download a mapping app plus maps covering the route** (see box p41). That will work with GPS where there is no phone signal. The online map which shows the South Downs Way most accurately and consistently is the well-known OS 1:25k Explorer series. Pre-



YHA: YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATION

Despite the name, anyone of any age can join the YHA. This can be done at any hostel or by contacting the **Youth Hostels Association of England and Wales** (YHA; ☎ 01629-592700, 🌐 www.yha.org.uk). A year's membership costs £15 if paid by direct debit, £20 by credit card/bank transfer.

YHA hostels are easy to book, either online or by phone, and you can stay even if you aren't a member though members are entitled to a 10% discount (this is valid for a member booking for up to 16 people at the same time and is applicable to the rate and meals) so it is worth joining if you expect to stay in a YHA hostel several times in a year. Note that photo ID must be shown at check-in. They also have showers, communal space, a drying room, a fully equipped kitchen and a café-restaurant offering meals. Bedding is provided but not towels, though they can be rented.

Campsite (p134; Map 22); **YHA Truleigh Hill** (p139; Map 23); **Housedean Farm** (p156; Map 29); and **Alfriston Camping Park** (p168; Map 35).

If you really want to camp in greater isolation where there is no recognised site you may find it worthwhile asking a landowner for permission to do so.

Hostels and budget accommodation

The South Downs Way is poorly served by hostels. There's a great one at Truleigh Hill (YHA Truleigh Hill, p139), and at Southease (YHA South Downs, p158). You don't need to be a member to stay at these (see box above re YHA membership). There is also the **independent** South Downs Eco Lodge (p93), which is part of the Sustainability Centre near East Meon.

Other budget lodgings include: a **bunkhouse** (Houghton Bridge), **yurts** and/or **shepherd's huts** (at the Sustainability Centre, Manor Farm near Cocking, Pyecombe, at Housedean Farm Campsite near Lewes and at Rose Cottage in Alciston) and **log cabins/land pods** and **bell tents** (at YHA South Downs, YHA Truleigh Hill, and also at Housedean Farm). These generally include bedding (though not always, so check in advance), saving you from having to carry your own sleeping bag.

Bed and breakfast

Some B&Bs can be quite luxurious and come at a price, but generally speaking, all the Downs walker really wants is a warm bed and a hot bath. For this reason most of the B&Bs listed in this guide are recommended because of their usefulness to the walker and convenience to the Way, not for how many stars the tourist board has awarded them.

Bed and breakfast owners are often proud to boast that all rooms are **en suite**. This enthusiasm for private facilities has led proprietors to squeeze a cramped shower and loo cubicle into the last spare corner of the bedroom. Not having an en suite room is sometimes preferable as you may get sole use of a bathroom across the corridor and a hot bath is just what you need after a day's walking – and you will also probably save a few pounds each night.

It can be hard to find establishments with **single** rooms. **Twin** rooms and **double** rooms are often confused but a twin room usually comprises two single

WALKING COMPANIES AND BAGGAGE TRANSFER

Several companies provide 'self-guided holidays' which include detailed advice and notes on itineraries, maps, accommodation booking, daily baggage transfer and transport at the start and end of your walk. If the thought of carrying a heavy rucksack doesn't appeal there is a company which will transfer your luggage to your next B&B.

□ INFORMATION FOR FOREIGN VISITORS

● **Currency** The British pound (£) comes in notes of £50, £20, £10 and £5, and coins of £2 and £1. The pound is divided into 100 pence (usually referred to as 'p', pronounced 'pee') which come in silver coins of 50p, 20p, 10p and 5p, and copper coins of 2p and 1p.

● **Money** Up-to-date **rates of exchange** can be found on [xe.com/currencyconverter](https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/), at some post offices, or at any bank or travel agent.

● **Business hours** If we assume that the whole COVID pandemic is behind us by the time you read this, you'll find most **shops and supermarkets** are open Monday to Saturday 7/8am-8pm (sometimes up to 15 hours a day) and on Sunday from about 9am to 5 or 6pm, though main branches of supermarkets generally open on Sunday 10am-4pm or 11am-5pm. Occasionally, especially in rural areas, you'll come across a local shop that closes at lunchtime on one day during the week, usually a Wednesday or Thursday; this is a throwback to the days when all towns and villages had an 'early closing day'.

Main **post offices** are open at least from Monday to Friday 9am-5pm and Saturday 9am-12.30pm; branches in villages stores are often now open the same hours as the store. **Banks** typically open at 9.30am Monday to Friday and close at 3.30pm or 4pm though in some places they may open only two or three days a week and/or in the morning only; **ATMs (cash machines)** though are open all the time as long as they are outside; any inside a shop or pub will only be accessible when that place is open. Note that ATMs that charge (see p22), such as Link machines, may not accept foreign-issued cards.

Pub hours are less predictable; although many open daily 11am-11pm; often in rural areas opening hours are Monday to Saturday 11am-3pm & 5 or 6-11pm, Sunday 11am/noon-3pm & 6 or 7-10.30pm. Last entry to most **museums and galleries** is half an hour, or an hour, before the official closing time.

● **National (bank) holidays** Most businesses are shut on 1 January, Good Friday (March/April), Easter Monday (March/April), first and last Monday in May, last Monday in August, 25 December and 26 December.

● **School holidays** State-school holidays in England are generally as follows: a one-week break late October, two weeks over Christmas and the New Year, a week mid February, two weeks around Easter, one week at the end of May/early June (to coincide with the bank holiday at the end of May) and five to six weeks from late July to early September. Private-school holidays fall at the same time, but tend to be slightly longer.

● **Travel/medical insurance** Although Britain's National Health Service (NHS) is free at the point of use, that is only the case for residents. All visitors to Britain should be properly insured, including comprehensive health coverage. Though Britain has left the EU, the **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)** does still

Baggage transfer

● **South Downs Bag Transfers** ☎ 01962-867728, 📧 southdownsbagtransfers.co.uk, Winchester) Maximum weight per bag 20kg. Currently available April to end Sep only.

For an agreed charge some **B&B owners** may be prepared to take your luggage on to your next accommodation; it's always worth enquiring. Some **taxi companies** are also prepared to transfer luggage on an ad hoc basis.

entitle EU nationals (on production of the EHIC, so ensure you bring it with you) to necessary medical treatment under the NHS while on a temporary visit here. To make sure this is still the case when you visit, however, contact your national social security institution. Also note that the EHIC is not a substitute for proper medical cover on your travel insurance for unforeseen bills and for getting you home should that be necessary. Also consider cover for loss and theft of personal belongings, especially if you are camping or staying in bunkhouses, as there may be times when you'll 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 & vaping** 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 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 suffer most if they fail to stop you, with a potential fine of £2500.

Although the ban does not apply to vaping, premises can and do impose their own restrictions on the use of e-cigarettes indoors.

● **Time** During the winter, the whole of Britain is on Greenwich Mean Time (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.

B&B-style accommodation

Rates for bed and breakfast in a **B&B**, **pub** or **guesthouse** are usually £40-80pp (**hotels** are likely to be more) for two sharing a room. Breakfast is, of course, almost always included in the rate but you will need to buy your lunch and evening meal so you will probably need around £60-100pp per day.

MEALS OUT AND EXTRAS

The cost of eating out obviously depends on what you choose and where, but if you buy a **cooked breakfast** in a café (around £9), a **sandwich** in a pub at lunchtime (£8-12) and a **main meal** in the evening (£14-20) you will need to add at least £40pp per day to your accommodation costs.

If you like a pint or two of beer in the evening, remember that one costing less than £5 is a rare thing in the south of England.

Don't forget all those little things that push up your daily bill – laundry, souvenirs, hot drinks, beer, ice-cream, buses, more beer and travel 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 written 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.

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. See pp19-20 for details of campsites that are closest to the trail. Alternatively, you could follow one of the **suggested itineraries** below. 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 are 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

(cont'd on p36)

(*cont'd from p29*) 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 and route descriptions are given for walking in both directions so they can be easily followed in reverse order.

SUGGESTED ITINERARIES

The itineraries are based on different accommodation types – B&B-style accommodation (p32), campsites (p33) and hostels/budget accommodation (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.

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 pp46-8) unless specified.

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. And remember, in the south of England you are never far from a shop where you can buy it if necessary.

Useful

The quality of the camera on a smartphone these days is impressive, though most serious photographers would still prefer to use an **SLR**. That said, it can be liberating to travel without one once in a while; a **notebook** can be a more accurate way of recording your impressions (but remember to take some **pens**). Other items include a **book** to pass the time on train journeys; a pair of **sunglasses**; **binoculars** for observing wildlife; **walking poles** to take the strain off your knees and a **vacuum flask** for carrying hot drinks. Although the path is easy to follow a 'Silva' type **compass** could be a good idea.

CAMPING GEAR

Campers need a decent **tent** (or bivvy bag if you enjoy travelling light) that's able to withstand wet and windy weather; a two- to three-season **sleeping bag**; a **sleeping mat**; a **stove** and **fuel** (there is special mention in Part 4 of which shops stock fuel); a **mug**; a **spoon**; a wire/plastic **scrubber** for washing up; and a pan or **cooking pot**. One pot is fine for two people; some pots come with a lid that can be used as a plate or frying pan. You can also buy camping pot sets that pack away neatly into one pot.

MONEY

Since the pandemic, accepting payment by **debit/credit card** has become much more widespread, even for small and seasonal businesses. But there's still a place for **cash**, so bring about £200 and replenish from supermarket **ATMs** in towns. You can also get cash at **village post offices** with a debit card. For further details see [postoffice.co.uk](https://www.postoffice.co.uk) (Products & Services; then Branch & banking services).

MAPS

The **hand-drawn maps** in this book cover the trail at a scale of 1:20,000 – plenty of detail and information to keep you on the right track; the **colour maps** at the back of the book are at a smaller scale covering the surrounding area.

To explore even further afield you might be interested in Ordnance Survey maps (OS; [ordnancesurvey.co.uk](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk)). The best maps for walkers are the 1:25,000 OS Explorer Maps (orange cover). The website sells the whole set of relevant maps for the South Downs Way as a bundle for a discounted £72.74 (or £95.14 if weatherproof), a set that includes OL3 (Meon Valley), OL8 (Chichester), OL10 (Arundel & Pulborough), OL11 (Brighton & Hove), OL25 (Eastbourne & Beachy Head) and OL32 (Winchester) and OL 33 (Haslemere & Petersfield). All OS maps listed here are £12.99 for standard paper (£16.99 for weatherproof). OS also offers **digital maps** (see box opposite), which come free with the paper map or you can download them separately for a fee.

The *AZ Adventure Series South Downs Way map* ([collins.co.uk/pages/a-z-maps-atlases](https://www.collins.co.uk/pages/a-z-maps-atlases); £8.95) includes the relevant section of the OS maps at a scale of 1:25,000 and also has an index.

Getting to and from the South Downs Way

It could not be easier to reach the South Downs from London as there are numerous road and rail links not just to Winchester and Eastbourne, at either end of the walk, but to many other points along the Way. Most parts of the South Downs Way are no more than 1½-2 hours from the capital. Access from other parts of Britain often involves going via London but there are rail services to Winchester and Southampton via Reading. The rail line running across the south coast goes from Dover to Ashford International, then to Hastings and along the coast to Eastbourne and Brighton; from Brighton there are services to Portsmouth and Southampton.

See below for routes from continental Europe to the south coast of England.

□ GETTING TO BRITAIN

● **By air** The nearest international airport to Winchester is Southampton Airport (www.southamptonairport.com) on the south coast. The alternative would be to fly to London's Gatwick (gatwickairport.com) or Heathrow airports (heathrow.com), both of which serve destinations worldwide. Further away but with a direct rail connection to Brighton is Luton Airport (www.london-luton.co.uk); Gatwick also has a direct train connection to Eastbourne (via Lewes), see box p44.

Another option is London City Airport (londoncityairport.com); the Docklands Light Railway is connected to the airport terminal; from there take a train to Canning Town and transfer to the Jubilee line (underground) for Waterloo Station.

● **From Europe by train** Eurostar (eurostar.com) operates a high-speed passenger service via the Channel Tunnel between Paris/Brussels and London. The Eurostar terminal in London is at St Pancras International station.


For information about the various rail services to Britain from the continent contact your national rail service provider, or visit railteam.eu.

● **From Europe by coach** Flixbus (flixbus.co.uk) have a huge network of long-distance coach services connecting over 500 cities in 25 European countries to London. This is also a more environmentally sustainable way to travel, although obviously it takes longer than flying and may not work out much cheaper.

Megabus (uk.megabus.com) is part of the Stagecoach group and it operates low-cost coach services from a number of destinations in Europe to London and other cities including Winchester.

● **From Europe by car** Eurotunnel ('Le Shuttle'; www.eurotunnel.com) operates a shuttle train service for vehicles via the Channel Tunnel between Calais and Folkestone, taking an hour between the motorway in France and the motorway in England. There are many ferry routes between France (Caen, Calais, Cherbourg, Dieppe, Dunkerque, Le Havre and St Malo) and the south coast ports of England such as Dover, Newhaven, Poole and Portsmouth. There are also services from Spain (Bilbao and Santander) to Portsmouth. Look at directferries.com for a full list of companies and services.

this, known as SplitSave, as an option where applicable. See their website for an explanation of how it works.

It is also often possible to book train tickets that include (discounted) bus travel to your ultimate destination; enquire when you book your train ticket or look at Plus Bus's website ( plusbus.info).


By car

The south of England is overrun with dual carriageways and bypasses so there is no shortage of major roads to follow down to the Downs. On holiday weekends, however, be prepared for long tailbacks as everyone heads for the coast. There are main roads from London passing through Winchester, Petersfield, Cocking, Amberley, Arundel, Washington, Pyecombe, Lewes, Brighton and Eastbourne.

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 cost of flying.

By coach

Coach travel is generally cheaper but takes longer than the train. **National Express** ( nationalexpress.com, National Express Coach app) is the principal coach (long-distance bus) operator in Britain and currently runs two services that stop in Winchester (but none to Eastbourne):

- **032** London Victoria coach station to/from Southampton via **Winchester**, daily 8/day
- **203** Heathrow Airport to/from Portsmouth via **Winchester**, Southampton & Fareham, daily 9/day.

A second operator, **Megabus** ( uk.megabus.com), operates a cheap coach between **Winchester** and Glasgow via Manchester and Oxford three or four times a week.

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 overleaf 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.

LOCAL BUS SERVICES

[see map p48]

No	Operator	Route and frequency details
1	bluestar	Southampton to Winchester, Mon-Sat 3/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	Stagecoach	Foot of Beachy Head to Eastbourne via Meads, Mon-Sat 4/hr, Sun 1/hr
12/12A/12X	B&H	(Coaster) Brighton to Eastbourne via Rottingdean, Newhaven, Seaford, Exceat (Seven Sisters Park Centre) & East Dean, Mon-Sat 3/hr, Sun 4/hr
13X	B&H	Brighton to Eastbourne via Rottingdean, Newhaven, Seaford, Exceat (Seven Sisters Park Centre), Birling Gap & Beachy Head, Sun & public holidays only, 3/day
23	Metrobus	Crawley to Worthing via Horsham, Ashington & Washington, Mon-Sat approx 1/hr, Sun & public hols 5-6/day
29/29A	B&H	Brighton to Tunbridge Wells/Heathfield via Falmer, Housedean Farm (A27), Lewes & Uckfield, Mon-Sat 3/hr, Sun 2/hr
37	Stagecoach	Havant to Petersfield via Waterloo, Clamfield, Queen Elizabeth Country Park (request stop), Mon-Fri 1/hr, Sat 8/day
38	Stagecoach	Alton to Petersfield, Mon-Fri 4/day
47	CCB	Cuckmere Valley Ramblerbus: Berwick Station circular route via Alfriston, Seaford, Seven Sisters Country Park, Litlington & 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 Coking, Mon-Sat 2/hr, Sun 1/hr
64	Stagecoach	Alton to Winchester via Alresford & Morn Hill campsite, daily 2/hr
67	Stagecoach	Winchester to Petersfield via Alresford, Cheriton, Bramdean, West Meon & East Meon, Mon-Fri 4-6/day, Sat 3/day plus 1/day Winchester to/from West Meon only
70	Stagecoach	Midhurst to Guildford via Haslemere station, Mon-Sat 1/hr
74/74A/74B	Compass	Horsham to Storrington, Mon-Fri 1/day (continues to Amberley station & Houghton on school days), Tue & Thur 4/day
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, 8/day
79	B&H	Brighton (station) to Ditchling Beacon, late Apr to mid Sep Sat, Sun & public holidays 1/hr
85	Compass	Chichester to Arundel, Mon-Fri 3/day
85A	Compass	Chichester to Arundel via Barnham, Mon-Fri 2/day
91	Stagecoach	Midhurst to Petersfield via South Harting, Mon-Sat 1/day
92/93	Stagecoach	Midhurst to Petersfield, Mon-Sat 6/day

Note: not all stops are listed for all routes.

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 a step too far to advocate that walkers should boycott the larger supermarkets, which after all do provide local employment. But if we want to keep these local shops and post offices, we need to use them. The



Those who do exercise their 'right to roam' should remember that this added freedom comes with the responsibility to respect the immediate environment. This is particularly pertinent on the South Downs where most of the land is worked by farmers and is the home to a variety of wildlife. Always keep this in mind and try to avoid disturbing domestic and wild animals.

Outdoor safety and health

AVOIDANCE OF HAZARDS

Walking does not come much more hazard-free than on the South Downs. However, these low southern hills should be given as much respect as their loftier counterparts. Good preparation is just as important here as it is on the northern mountains. The following common-sense advice should ensure that those out for a day trip as well as those embarking on the whole route enjoy a safe walk. Always make sure you have **suitable clothes** to keep you warm and dry, whatever the conditions, as well as a spare change of inner clothes.

Take more **food** than you expect to eat. High-energy snacks such as chocolate, fruit, biscuits and nuts are useful for those last few gruelling miles each day. Make sure you have at least a one-litre **water bottle** or **pouch** that can be refilled when the opportunity arises. You need to drink plenty of water when walking; 3-4 litres per day depending on the weather. There are a few drinking water taps placed conveniently along the path; these are marked on the maps in Part 4. If you start to feel tired, lethargic or get a headache it may be that you are not drinking enough. Thirst is not always a good indicator of when to drink; stop and have a drink every hour or two, even if you're not feeling thirsty, and note the colour of your urine – the lighter the better. If you are not needing to urinate much and your urine is dark yellow, increase your fluid intake.

You should always take a torch, whistle, simple first-aid kit (see p39) and compass, though the latter may not be necessary as the trail is clear. A whistle is also unlikely to be used due to the close proximity of people and villages. The **emergency signal** is six blasts on the whistle or six flashes with a torch.

Try to be aware of where you are throughout the day. **Check your location** on the map or phone regularly. Getting lost on the Downs is unlikely to be a major cause for concern but it can turn a pleasant day's walk into a stressful trudge back in the dark, praying that the pub chef has not gone home.

If you are walking alone you must appreciate and be prepared for the increased risk. Let someone know your route before you set off (which could be a friend or your booked accommodation for that night) and remember to let them know you've arrived safely. Carrying a mobile phone can be useful though you cannot rely on a strong signal, or your phone's battery life.

Be aware that, because much of the South Downs Way is on a chalk ridge high above the surrounding countryside, there may be a steep climb down to, and back up from the adjacent towns and villages.

THE ENVIRONMENT & NATURE

3

Conservation of the South Downs

Ever since the Industrial Revolution and the rapid development over the last 200 years the English countryside has been put under a great deal of strain. The South Downs were once wooded hills, home to wolves, wild boar and other species that have long since departed. The need to feed an increasing population led to much of the countryside being cleared and ploughed. The result of this is the landscape we see today, although the traditional patchwork pattern of fields and hedgerows has been replaced in some parts of the Downs by much larger fields, the hedgerows having been torn out.


The South Downs is, then, a man-made landscape; even the woodland has been coppiced and the meadows ploughed at one time or another. This is not necessarily a bad thing, however. The resulting habitat is a rare one that provides an essential niche for endangered species, most notably the butterflies for which the Downs are famous.

Although the Downs, positioned in a populous corner of England, continue to be put under pressure from road and housing projects, the increasing awareness of the value of our natural (or perhaps semi-natural) heritage has resulted in greater efforts in the conservation. There are several local and national, voluntary and government groups, who help protect the species, habitats and buildings of the Downs. They also help visitors to get the most out of their trip whilst trying to ease the pressure brought by the increase in tourist numbers.


The elevation of the South Downs to National Park status has, on the whole, provided increased environmental protection, but the work of these groups is still absolutely vital to maintaining the health and beauty of the area.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND SCHEMES

Natural England

Natural England ( www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england) is the single government body responsible for identifying, establishing and managing National Parks, National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONBs), National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and Special Areas of Conservation.



The Friends of the South Downs ( friendsofthesouthdowns.org.uk), formerly the South Downs Society, campaigns specifically for the conservation and enhancement of the landscape of the South Downs. It was formed in 1926 and is supported entirely by donations and subscriptions (membership costs £30/40 individual/joint members). Their current projects include replacing stiles with kissing gates throughout the park, to enable those walkers who are unable to climb stiles to still enjoy the Downs, and introducing benches along the route of the South Downs Way. They also arrange a programme of strolls and walks, on and around the Downs, throughout the year.

Fauna and flora

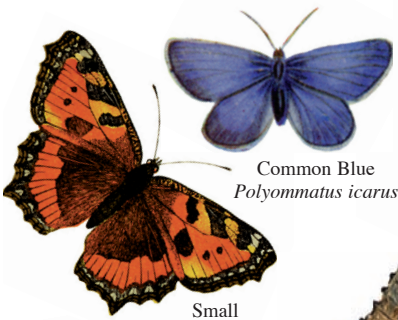
The South Downs region is essentially a man-made landscape. Centuries of farming have shaped these rolling hills and left a unique habitat for a variety of common and not-so-common species. Left alone the South Downs would revert to scrub and woodland. This may not appear to be a great tragedy. However, the habitat that would be lost is a much scarcer one that provides sanctuary to a variety of endangered species which rely on the unique chalk grassland environment. The Downs are not free of trees either. The plough never reached the steep scarp slope that runs along the northern edge of the Downs. Indeed there is a healthy balance between the open grassland of the high ground and the deciduous beech woodland which can claim to be some of the oldest and most undisturbed woodland in Britain.

MAMMALS

The well-drained soil of chalk downland is ideal habitat for the **badger** (*Meles meles*), a sociable animal with a distinctive black-and-white-striped muzzle. Badgers live in family groups in large underground ‘setts’. They are rarely spotted since they tend to emerge after dark to hunt for worms in the fields. Sadly, they are more commonly seen dead on the road: after hedgehogs they are the most inept at crossing roads.

Although the **fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*) prefers to come out at night it is not exclusively nocturnal; particularly in summer it may be out in broad daylight in some of the quieter corners of the hills though the best time to spot a fox is at dusk when you might see one trotting along a field or woodland edge.

Introduced from North America in the 19th century, the outstanding success of the **grey squirrel** (*Sciurus carolinensis*) in colonising Britain is very much to the detriment of other native species, particularly the red squirrel. Greys are bigger and stockier than reds and to many the reds, with their tufted ears and small beady eyes, are the more attractive of the two. Sadly there are no red squirrels 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



Common Blue
Polyommatus icarus



Peacock
Inachis io



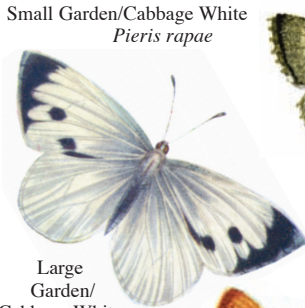
Small
Tortoiseshell
Aglais urticae



Silver-washed
Fritillary
Argynnis paphia



Painted Lady
Cynthia cadia



Small Garden/Cabbage White
Pieris rapae



Chalkhill Blue
Lysandra coridon

Large
Garden/
Cabbage White
Pieris brassicae



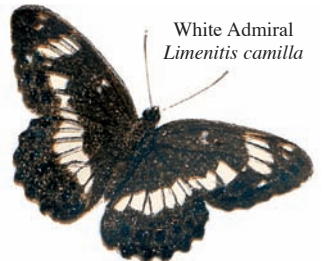
Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*



Small
Copper
Lycaena phlaeas



Small
Heath
Coenonympha pamphilus



White Admiral
Limenitis camilla



Meadow
Brown
Maniola jurtina



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
Centaurium 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 and what3ways references

The numbered GPS waypoints and what3ways references are listed 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 12.30-3pm; £12.50) 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 the *Kings and Scribes: The Birth of a Nation* (Mon-Sat 11am-4pm, Sun 12.30-2.30pm) exhibition, which features a look at the 12th-century Winchester Bible. There's also a large

❑ 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.

comic books. Superhero stories are plastered across the walls. The menu, meanwhile, is dominated by pies (including beef, chicken, lamb & veggie varieties), which go for just £11.95 as part of a pie-and-mash meal. Great value. Great fun.

On nearby Jewry St, at No 24, is **Porterhouse Steakhouse** (☎ 01962-810532, 📧 www.porterhouserestaurant.co.uk, fb; Sun-Thur noon-10pm, Fri & Sat to 10.30pm) with high-quality steaks (from £27.95) but a cheaper daytime menu (eg 8oz rump £15).

On the High St, **Rick Stein Fish and Shellfish** (☎ 01962-587348, 📧 rickstein.com; Mon-Sat noon-10pm, Sun to 9pm) was Stein's first restaurant outside Cornwall. Mains cost from £15.95; the two/three-course set lunches (£21.95/26.95) are a good deal.

For healthy breakfasts and brasserie-type lunches, the upmarket **Forte Küchen** (📧 fortekitchen.co.uk; daily 9am-4pm), at 78 Parchment St, is very popular so booking is recommended. Lunch mains include the likes of roast duck salad (£15.50).

At 1 Chesil St, is **Chesil Rectory** (☎

01962-851555, 📧 chesilrectory.co.uk; food Mon-Thur noon-2.30pm & 5.30-9pm, Fri & Sat to 9.30pm, Sun noon-3pm & 6-8.30pm), housed in one of Winchester's best-preserved medieval buildings, which dates from around 1425, and was once owned by Henry VIII. Lunchtime set menus cost £23.95 for two courses or £28.95 for three.

For something more down to earth, grab some pizza or pasta at the Italian food chain, **ASK Italian** (☎ 01962-808986, 📧 askitalian.co.uk; Mon-Fri 11.30am-10pm, Sat to 11pm, Sun to 9pm), 101 High St, or go for a curry at **Gandhi Restaurant** (☎ 01962-863940, 📧 gandhirestaurant.com; daily noon-2pm & 5.30-10pm,) at 163 High St. For subcontinental fare with a Himalayan twist there's **Gurkha's Inn** (☎ 01962-842843, 📧 gurkhasinnwinchester.com; daily noon-2pm, Mon-Sat 5.30-11pm, Sun to 10pm), a popular Nepalese restaurant and takeaway at 17 City Rd.

Alternatively, **Catch – Fish & Chips** (☎ 01962-809602; Mon-Sat 11.30am-9pm) is a good chippy on St George's St.

The route guide

E ➔ WINCHESTER TO EXTON

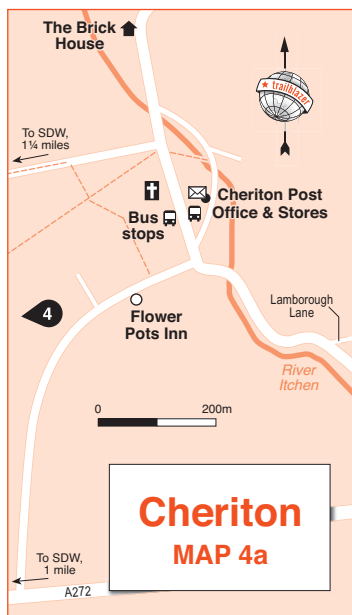
MAPS 1-6

These **12 miles (19.5km, 4¼-5¼hrs)** begin at the City Mill in the centre of Winchester and follow the River Itchen south before crossing it to leave the city and enter the rolling East Hampshire countryside.

Until May 2017 the route began at the cathedral in the centre of Winchester and went from the cathedral grounds, along the main shopping street, past the statue of King Alfred then down beside the River Itchen; it's a start that we think is superior. You may prefer to start the route this way.

On crossing the bridge spanning the noisy motorway (M3) spare a thought for the remains of Twyford Down. This once beautiful hill a few miles to the south was, despite vociferous demonstrations, ruthlessly sliced in two as part of a highly controversial road improvement scheme in the early 1990s.

Once away from the noise of the road the path crosses a field before arriving at **Chilcomb** (see p80). The church aside, there's little in the way of shops or services to keep you in Chilcomb so once you have admired the thatched cottages head on up the lane for the gradual but steady ascent to **Cheesefoot Head**

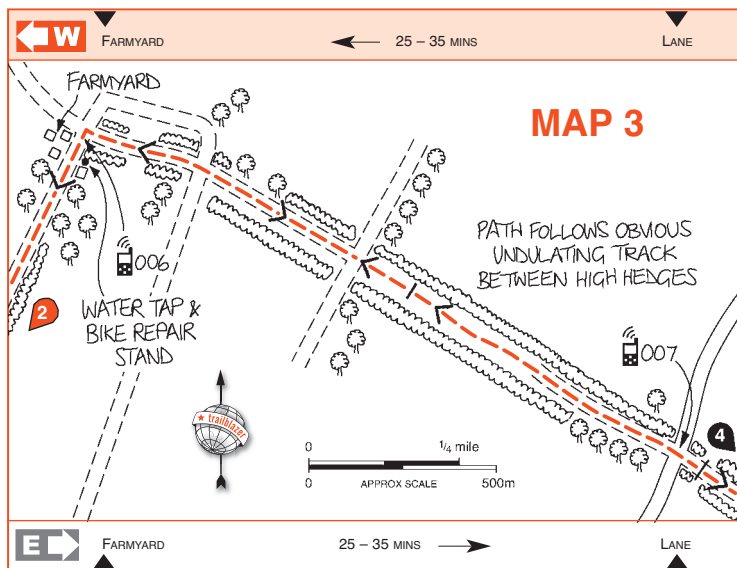


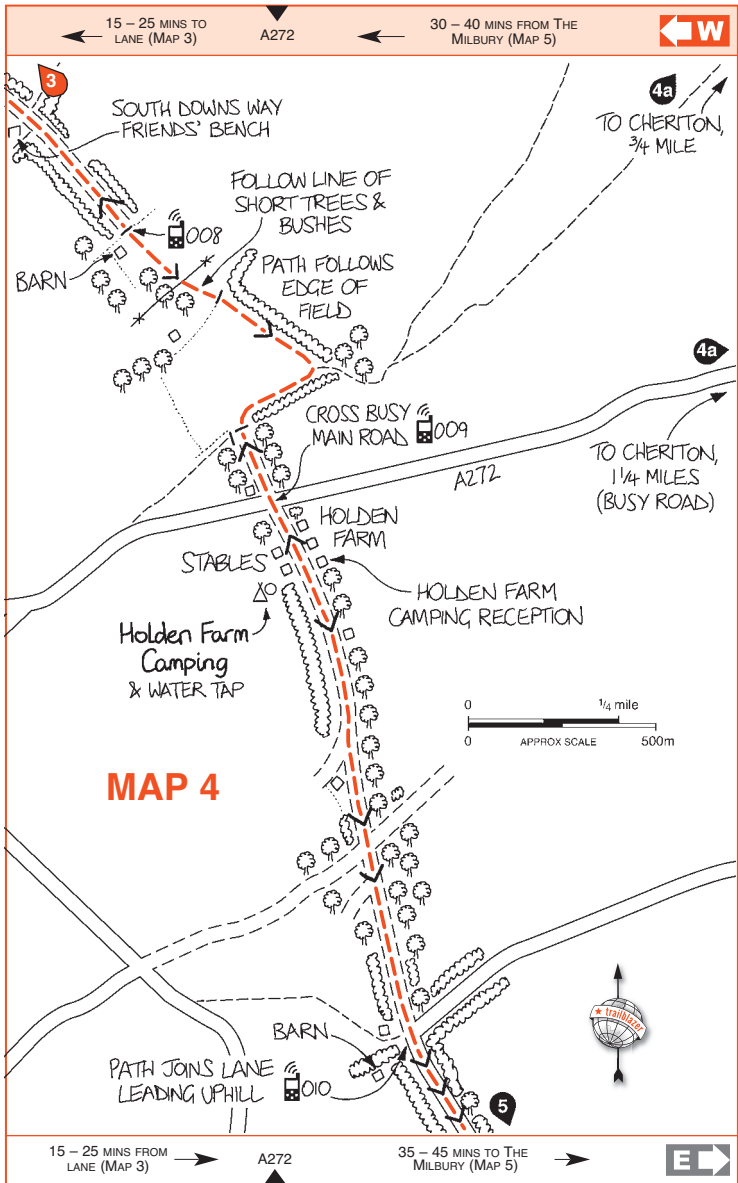
771251; Mon-Fri 7am-4.30pm, Sat to 2pm, Sun 7.30am-noon), a combined shop, newsagent, off-licence and part-time **post office** (Mon 1-4pm & Thur 9am-noon).

The charming **Flower Pots Inn** (☎ 01962-771318, theflowerpots.co.uk; **fb**; **food** Mon-Thur noon-2.30pm, Fri-Sun noon-4pm & Wed-Sat 6-9pm; 🍷) is a great spot for a meal and a pint. Freshly baked filled ciabattas start from £7, or choose the likes of thyme roasted pork loin steak (£16) or mushroom & ricotta porcini bake with salad and garlic bread (12). The pub has its own **brewery**; their Flowerpots Bitter is definitely worth sampling.

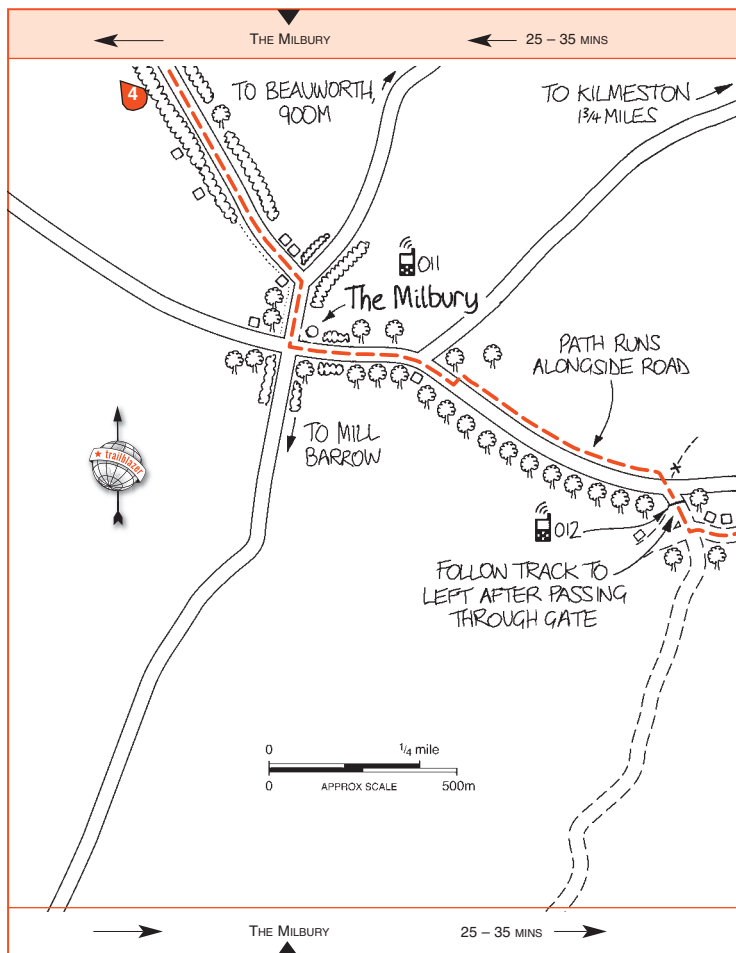
For **B&B**, there's **The Brick House** (☎ 01962-771334, brickhousecheriton.co.uk; 2D both en suite; 🍷), just past the village centre, which doubles as a bakery school, so hopefully the smell of fresh bread pervades every room 24 hours a day. They charge from £62.50pp (sgl occ £115).

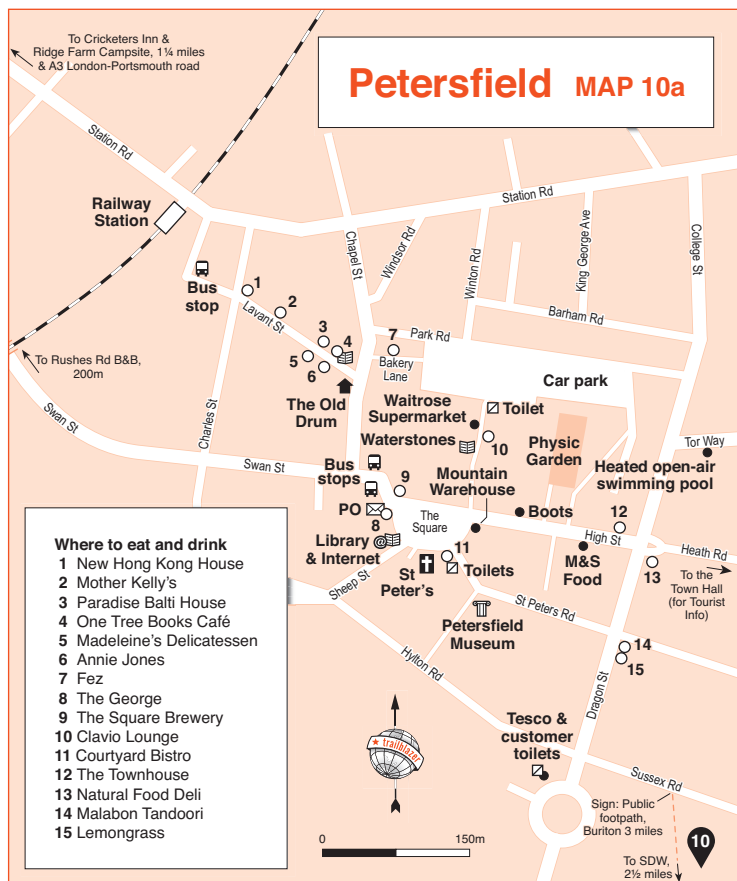
Stagecoach's No 67 **bus** service (Winchester-Petersfield) stops near the church. See p46 for details.





Holden Farm Right on the Way you'll find **Holden Farm Camping** (Map 4; ☎ 07599-553740, 🌐 holdenfarm.co.uk; 🐾 on lead; Easter to end Sep) with tent pitches (from £20pp, walk-in rate usually around the £15 mark) in a large field opposite the farmhouse. There are showers, toilets and washing-up facilities. They prefer to know people are coming but will always make space for SDW walkers. They also have a **café** now that's open to everyone (Mon-Thur 9am-3pm, Fri to 4pm, Sat & Sun 8am-4pm) operating out of a converted shipping container. It's a lovely spot on a sunny day.





5pm, food until 2.30pm) at the back of the shop. Beside St Peter's Church, **Courtyard Bistro** (daily 8am-5pm) is tiny but has extra seating outdoors, overlooking The Square. There's a good choice of breakfasts here.

Pubs **The Square Brewery** (☎ 01730-264291, ☐ squarebrewery.co.uk; food Mon-Sat 11am-3pm & 6-9pm, Tue-Sat 11am-3pm, Sun noon-3pm; 🍺) is a welcoming, locals-favourite, Fuller's-owned pub, and a popular venue for live music.

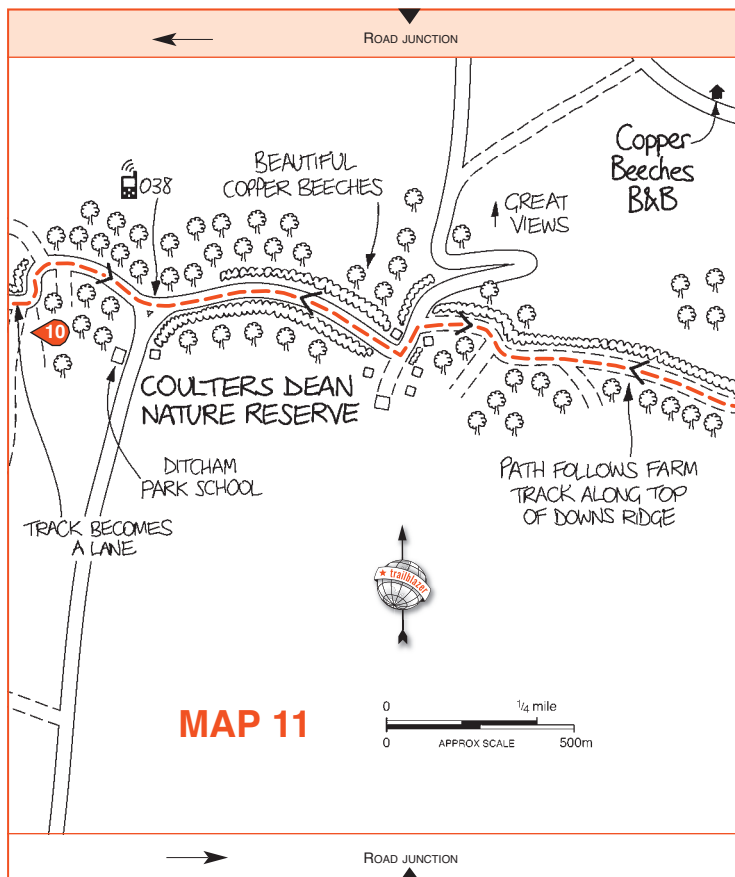
Also on The Square, **The George** (☎ 01730-265551, **fb**; food Sun-Thur 10am-8.30pm, Fri & Sat to 8pm; 🍺) is a pub and restaurant which feels more like a city bar than a market-town pub, but is popular nonetheless. Back on High St you'll find award-winning **The Townhouse** (☎ 01730-265630, ☐ townhousepetersfield.co.uk; **fb**; 🍺; food Mon-Tue noon-3pm, Wed-Thur noon-3pm & 5-9pm, Fri & Sat to 9.30pm, Sun noon-4pm) which bills itself these days as a 'Bar & Restaurant' rather than a pub.

The menu is quite pricey though there's no doubting the quality of the food.

Restaurants & takeaways One of the coolest places to eat is tucked away down narrow Bakery Lane: **Fez** (☎ 01730-231266, ☐ fezpetersfield.com; daily noon-9.30pm) is a Turkish restaurant, meze bar and café rolled into one and is a great place for lunch, an evening meal, or even just a coffee. Mains start at £15.95 for the Turkish equivalent of a pizza, *lahmacun*.

Nearby, on Lavant St, newly refurbished **Annie Jones** (☎ 01730-923110, ☐ anniejones.co.uk; fb) is now a French restaurant and cocktail bar (Tue-Thur 5-9pm, Fri & Sat noon-3pm & 5-9.30pm, Sun noon-3pm) with good food (such as *moules frites* for £18) and a pleasant atmosphere.

Clavio Lounge (☎ 01730-763177, ☐ thelounges.co.uk/clavio; Sun-Thur 9am-11pm, Fri & Sat to midnight) is in the Rams Walk arcade, off the High St. A typically large, loud and flamboyantly decorated



branch of the Lounge chain, there's an extensive menu of tasty, exotic and inexpensive fare (mains from £10.95).

At 16-18 Dragon St, **Lemongrass** (☎ 01730-267077, 📧 lemongrassrestaurants.co.uk/petersfield; daily noon-2.30pm & 5.30-10.30pm) is a good quality Thai restaurant with dishes such as green curry from £12.95. Next door **Malabon Tandoori** (☎ 01730-268352, 📧 malabon.co.uk; Sat-Thur noon-2.30pm & 5-10pm, Fri 5-11pm only) serves Indian & Bangladeshi meals to eat-

in or takeaway. For a smarter Indian-food option, try **The Paradise Balti House** (☎ 01730-265162, 📧 paradisebaltipetersfield.co.uk; Wed, Thur, Sat & Sun noon-2.30pm, daily 5-11pm) at 23 Lavant St. The best Chinese takeaway is **New Hong Kong House** (☎ 01730-265256; Tue-Sun 5-11pm), at 37 Lavant St, while at No 29 there's **Mother Kelly's Famous Fish & Chips** (☎ 01730-265702, 📧 motherkellys.fishandchips.co.uk; Mon 5-9pm, Tue-Sat 11.30am-2pm & 5-9pm).



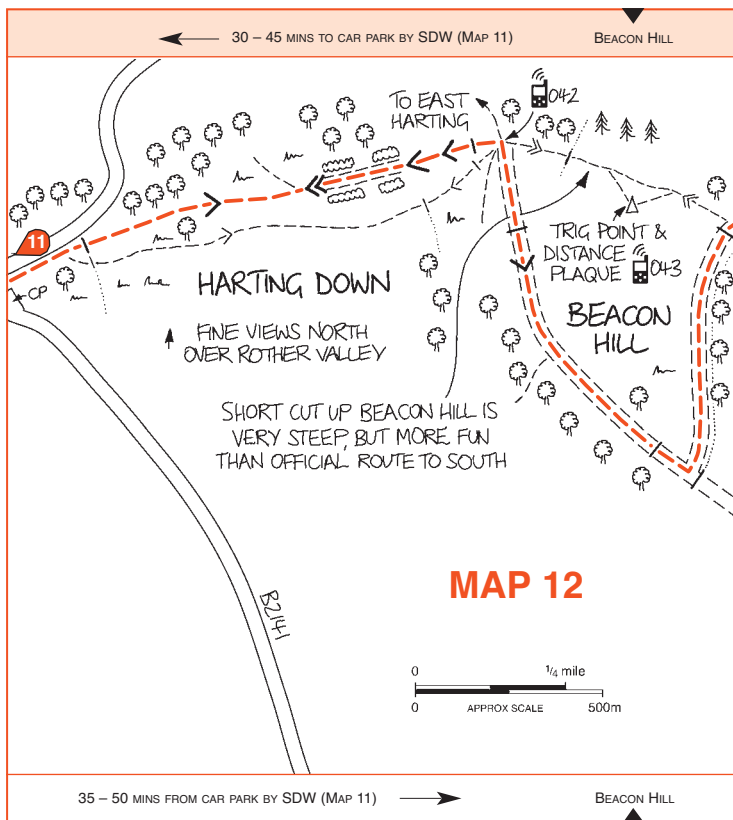
UPPARK HOUSE

(off Map 11, p101)

Uppark House ☎ 01730-825415, 🌐 nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/uppark-house-and-garden; house Thur-Sun, garden & café daily; £11 house & garden, £8 garden only; café open to ticket holders only) is a magnificent 17th-century country home (though the interior is largely Georgian, ie 18th century) perched high on a hill with extensive views across the Downs and beyond. One of the most remarkable things about Uppark is the near-perfect restoration of the building after it was all but gutted by a rampant fire in 1989.

Note that at the time of going to press **both the house and gardens were closed whilst a major maintenance project is carried out**, so check the website for opening times. The project aims to restore access to previously closed areas of the property.

Stagecoach's No 54 **bus service** calls here (see p46).

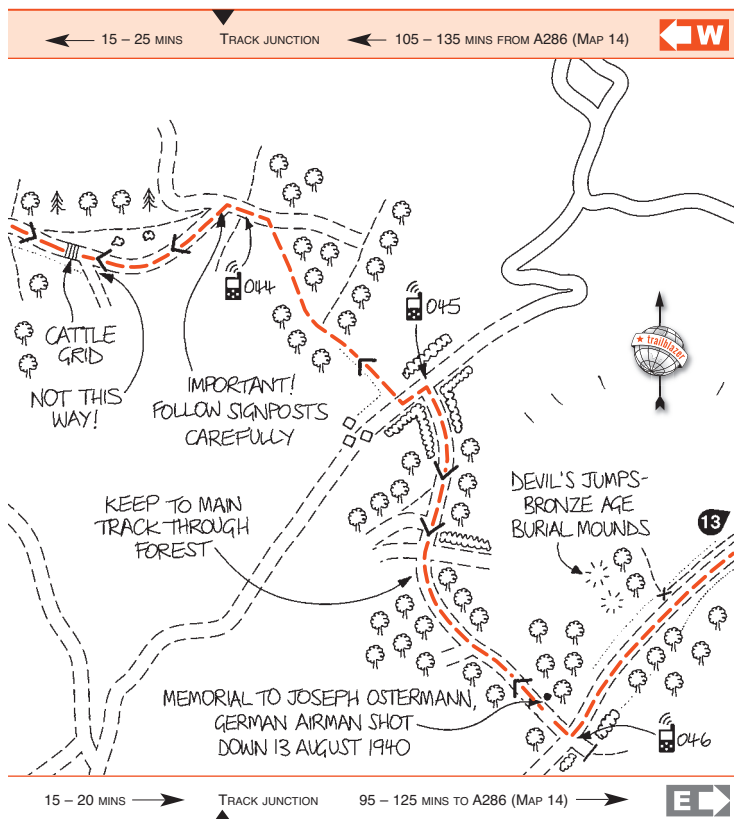


MAP 12

E → BURITON TO COCKING**MAPS 10-14**

The route from Buriton follows tracks and lanes along the top of the South Downs escarpment for **11¼ miles (18km, 3¾-4¾hrs)**. It is very wooded before reaching **South Harting** (Map 11) so although the views are limited there is plenty of beautiful shady woodland to enjoy. About 10 minutes south of the Way where it crosses the B2146 is **Uppark House** (see box opposite).

After South Harting the trees begin to thin out as the Way passes over **Harting Down** (Map 12). The views open up over the patchwork fields below and the path climbs even higher onto **Beacon Hill**, one of two Beacon Hills on the Way. There then follows another wooded section, the **Monkton Estate** (Map 13), where it's worth listening out for peacocks, before the path continues through the pastureland of **Cocking Down**.



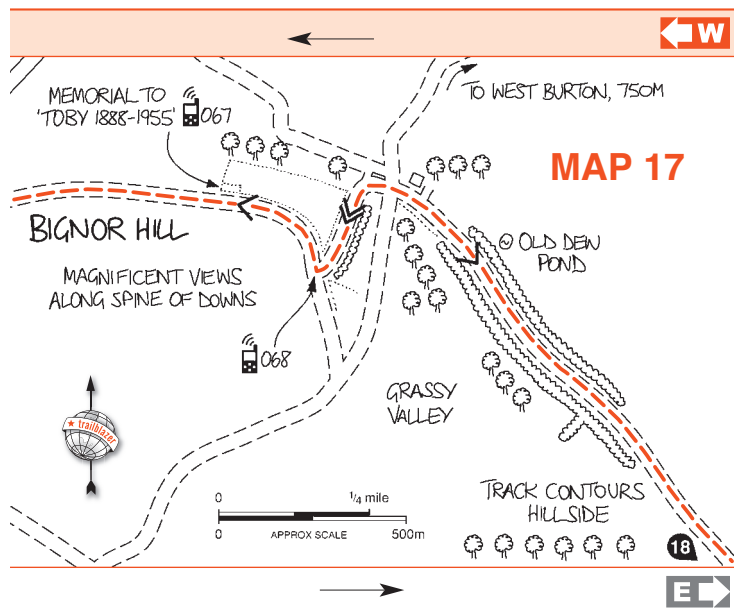
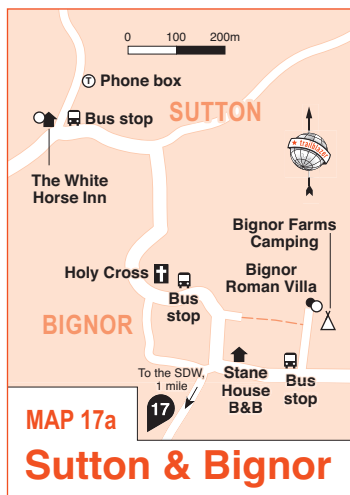
Bignor Hill The Way follows part of the old Roman road over Bignor Hill (Map 17). Look out for the signpost in Latin in the car park (not actually of Roman origin!) and look out, too, for any Roman coins that may be buried among the flint and chalk.

SUTTON & BIGNOR MAP 17a

The main reason for dropping off the hills to these twin villages is to see the fabulous mosaics at **Bignor Roman Villa** (see box p116) but you can also stay and eat here.

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, bignorromanvilla.co.uk/bignor-farms-camping; 🐕; £15pp); it is a tents only pop-up campsite so the opening dates and the



number of pitches may vary, but it does have 'shower shacks'.

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; ☹; Ⓛ), with rooms from £55pp (£90 sgl occ). They may be willing to drive walkers to a local pub or back up to the trail after a stay.

There's a picnic area at Bignor Roman Villa and the *teashop* (see box below) which is open to the public without an entry ticket.

A mile further on, in **Sutton**, is *The White Horse Inn* (☎ 01798-869191, whitehorseinn-sutton.co.uk; 7D/1D or T, all en suite; ☹; 🐎), 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 Wed-Sat noon-2.30pm & 6-9pm, Sun noon-4pm) and the food, much of it sourced locally, is exquisite, with treats such as pan-roasted fillet of sea bass and new potatoes with basil, chorizo and olives (£28).

Compass's No 99 **bus service** calls at both Sutton and Bignor if pre-booked. See p47 for details.

❏ BIGNOR ROMAN VILLA

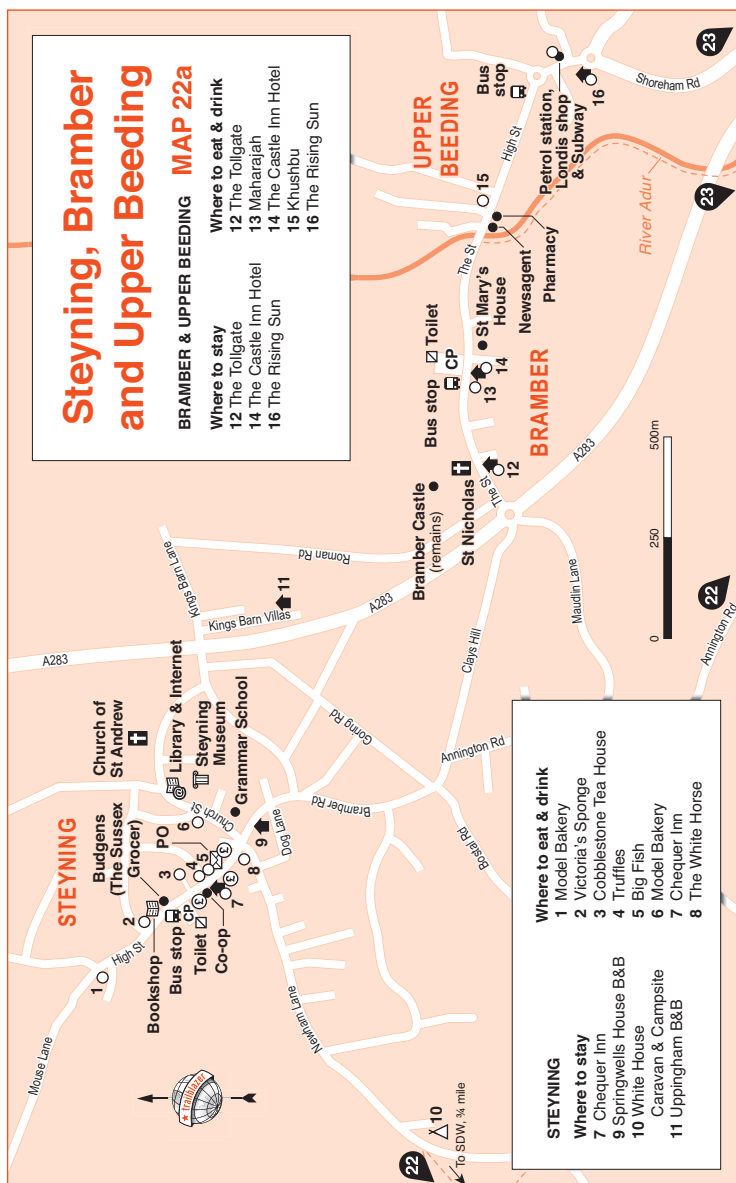
Map 17a, p115

Just off the old Roman road of Stane Street are the remains of Bignor Roman Villa (☎ 01798-869259, bignorromanvilla.co.uk; *usually* Aug daily 10am-4.30pm, May-Jun & Sep Wed-Fri 10am-2pm, Sat & Sun 10am-4.30pm, Oct weekends only, check website for details; £10). The *teashop* (same hours as Villa) here serves only tea, coffee and cakes; no sandwiches or hot meals.

The villa was discovered by a farmer, George Tupper, while 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.



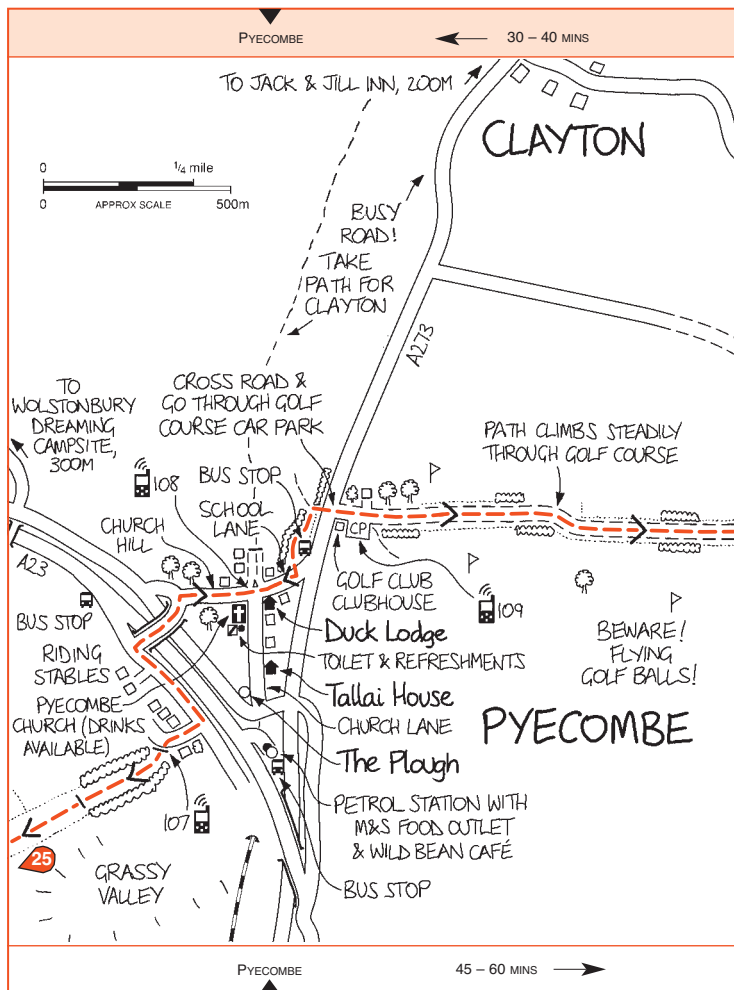
© BRYN THOMAS

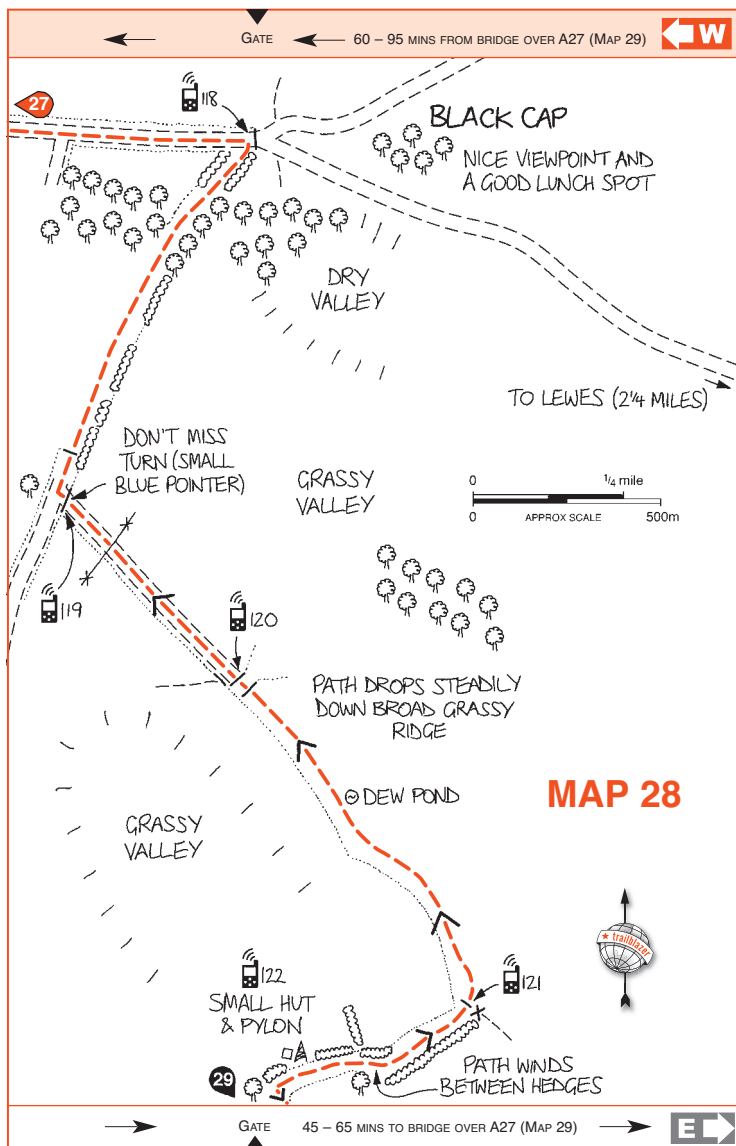


Camping is available at **Wolstonbury**

Dreaming (☎ 07540-350384, wolstonburydreaming.com; 🐾 but on leads at certain times of the year) on Chantry Farm. Named after the local hill that's home to several Bronze Age monuments, it's a small eco-friendly place (hot-water tap-and-

bucket 'showers'; compost toilets; no mains electricity) with space for half a dozen or so tents (around £20pp) and a couple of cosy **shepherd's huts** (from £120 per night). Conscious of their location next to the Way, they offer both dinner packs (£8) and 'brekkie packs' (£4).







Jan closed; free) where Thomas Paine, the founder of American Independence, lived between 1768 and 1774 and now open to the public. During his time in Lewes he acted as the local tobacconist and exciseman.



Lewes still has some excellent bookshops, the oldest of which, **The Fifteenth Century Bookshop** (Sat 11am-5pm, Sun noon-5pm), can be found at the top of the High St near the castle entrance. The timber-framed building that houses the shop is worth a visit in itself.

Priory Park and the ruins of the 11th-century **Priory of St Pancras** are worth visiting and the ruins are well labelled with interesting panels. There's also a little garden of medicinal herbs once grown by the monks. The park and the ruins are always open and there's no entry charge. Between here and the castle are the flower-filled **Southover Grange Gardens**, with a scattering of art sculptures, a 350-year-old mulberry tree and a tulip tree planted in 1951 by Princess Elizabeth before she became Queen Elizabeth II.

Real-ale drinkers cannot go to Lewes without visiting **Harvey's Brewery** (


harveys.org.uk) though with a waiting list of more than a year for guided tours most fans will get no further than the shop. Harvey's is the oldest brewery in Sussex and has been producing real ales (see box p23) for well over 200 years using hops from Sussex and Kent and water from their own spring. The company is still run by the same family that founded it seven generations ago. The **shop** ( 01273-480217; Tue-Sat 10am-5pm, Mon & Sun 11am-4pm) sells a vast array of Harvey's products and paraphernalia.

Services

The **tourist information centre** ( 01273-483448,  visitlewes.co.uk; all year Mon-Fri 9.30am-4.30pm, Sat 10am-3pm, to 2pm in winter) is at No 187 High St, on the corner with Fisher St. They can help find local accommodation (although they can't book it for you) and also sell maps, books and guides.

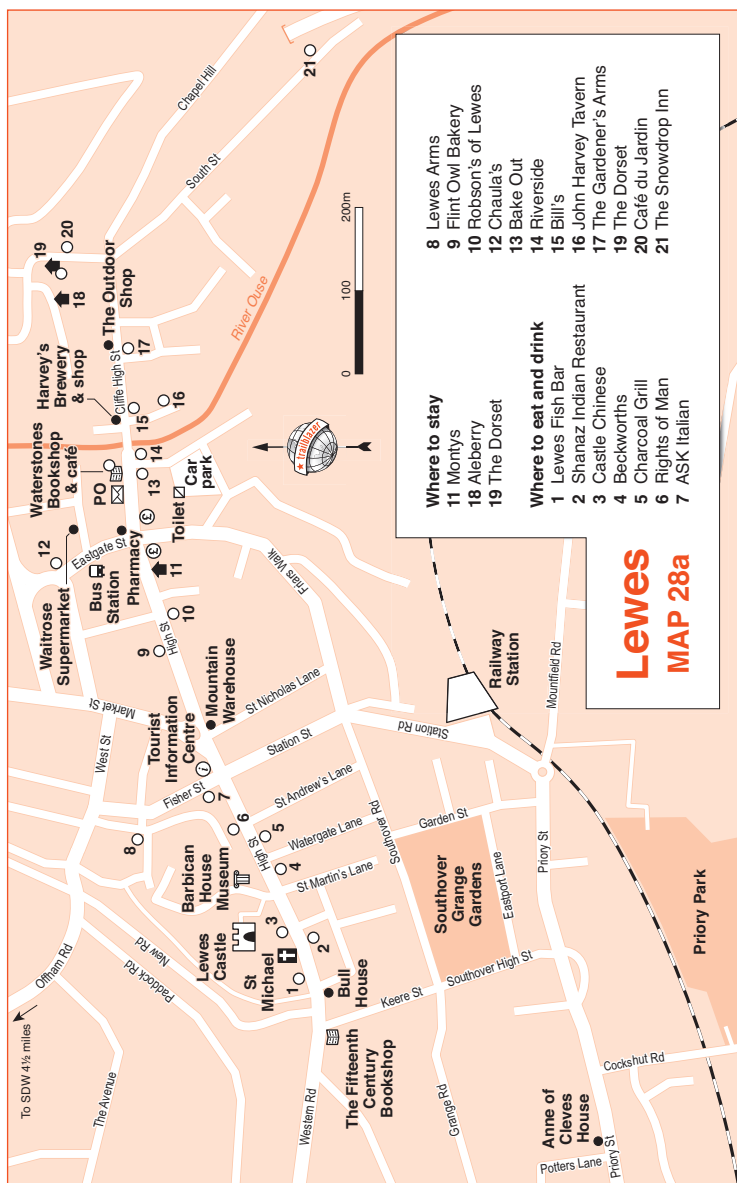
The **post office** (Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm) is at the lower end of the High St. There is also a **Boots pharmacy** (Mon-Fri 9am-1.30pm & 2.30-5.30pm, Sat & Sun

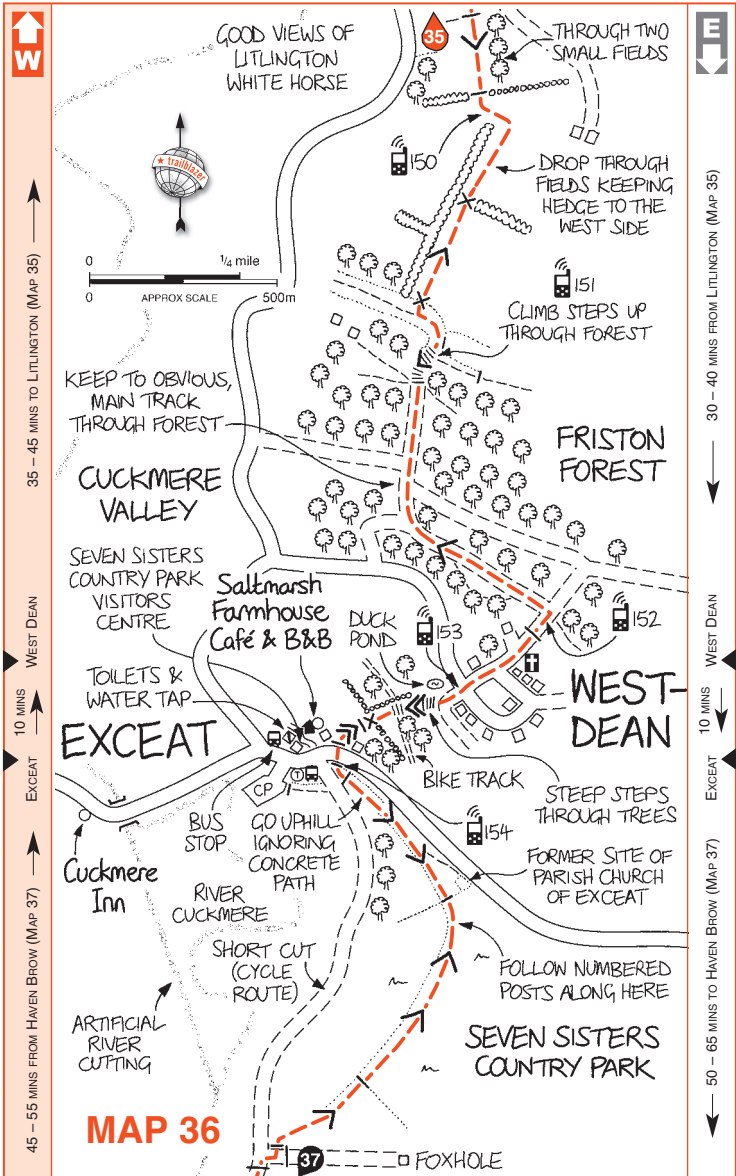
THE LEWES POUND

In 2008, Lewes town took the unusual step of issuing its own currency, to be used alongside sterling. The idea behind the 'Lewes Pound' ( thelewespond.org) is to encourage demand for local goods and services, and the logic behind it is simple: money spent in shops in the town that are merely another branch of a national chain does not stay in the local economy; but money spent in shops owned by locals or on local services does. So while the Lewes Pound would not be accepted in, for example, the local outlet of a nationwide superstore, of which there are several in Lewes, it would be accepted by a local trader – who would then spend it locally with another local trader, and so on. Thus, by ensuring that money is spent locally and so stays within the community, the wealth of the locals is safeguarded.

Lewes Pounds can be bought (with sterling) at one of the issuing points listed on the website, then spent with participating traders.

Whilst the establishing of a new currency may seem like a highly bizarre step to take, it isn't without precedent; indeed, Lewes itself had its own currency for over a century between 1789 and 1895. The issuers of the latest Lewes Pound, however, admit that their currency is not actually legal tender, in that there is no obligation on the part of retailers to accept the pound. Some residents, though, see the Lewes Pound as an unnecessary complication. They argue that they can support local traders by buying from them using good old-fashioned sterling. And it's true that the Lewes Pound doesn't seem to be quite as much in evidence as it was in the past.





MEADS VILLAGE


MAP 39

Meads Village is actually the most westerly suburb of Eastbourne. It is a quiet, well-to-do part of town with a genuine village feel and a couple of options to stay the night. More importantly for South Downs Way walkers, it is positioned right at the official end (or start) of the walk, making a stop here a more appealing prospect than the half-hour walk into the more hectic centre of Eastbourne. The village lies on Holywell Rd, to the north of the start/end of the trail.

Everything you might need is centred along one short stretch of Meads St. There is a **Co-op** (daily 7am-10pm) on the corner of Matlock Rd which also incorporates the **post office** (daily 8am-7pm). There's also a **Tesco Express** (daily 7am-11pm) and a **pharmacy** (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm, Sat to noon).

To the south of the village, the *Cadence café* chain have yet another hub (daily 9am-4pm), this time in the thatched

pavilion in Helen Garden, at the foot of the Downs.

If it's **B&B** you're after, *Beachy Rise* (☎ 01323-639171; book online via  booking.com; 2D/1T/1Tr, all en suite; ♫; ♿), on Meads Rd, has rooms from £45pp.

The Pilot Inn (☎ 01323-723440,  pilot-inn.co.uk; ♫; 4D, all en suite; ♫; ♿ bar only), on a bend on Meads St, is the first pub reached after leaving the end of the South Downs Way. The bar is open all day (Mon-Sat 11am-11pm, Sun to 8pm), which makes it convenient for a celebration drink. And the **food** (Mon-Sat noon-9pm, Sun to 6pm) is well-priced (toasted ciabatta rolls £9, mains £15-28). **Room only** costs around £45-55pp (sgl occ room rate); a cooked breakfast (£12pp) is available.

Stagecoach's No 3/3A **bus** services go to central Eastbourne from here as well as from the foot of the hill at the end of the South Downs Way. See p46 for details.

W ← EASTBOURNE TO ALFRISTON (COASTAL ROUTE VIA CUCKMERE)

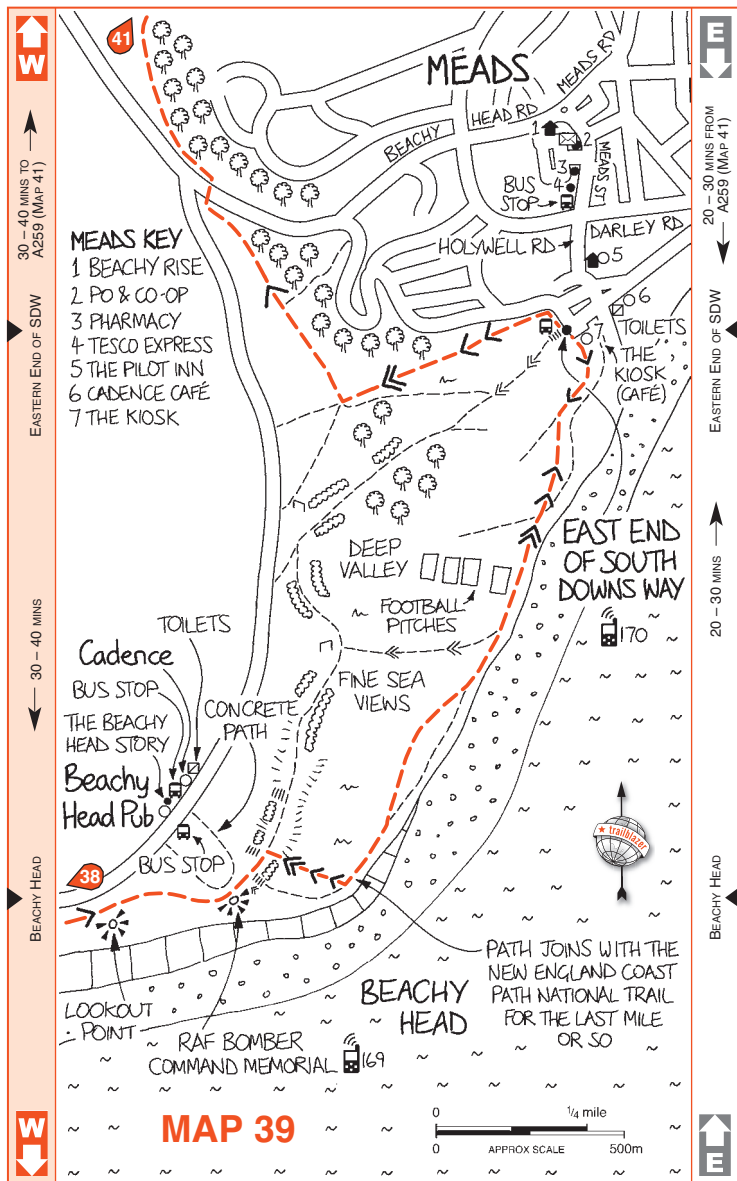
[MAPS 39-35]

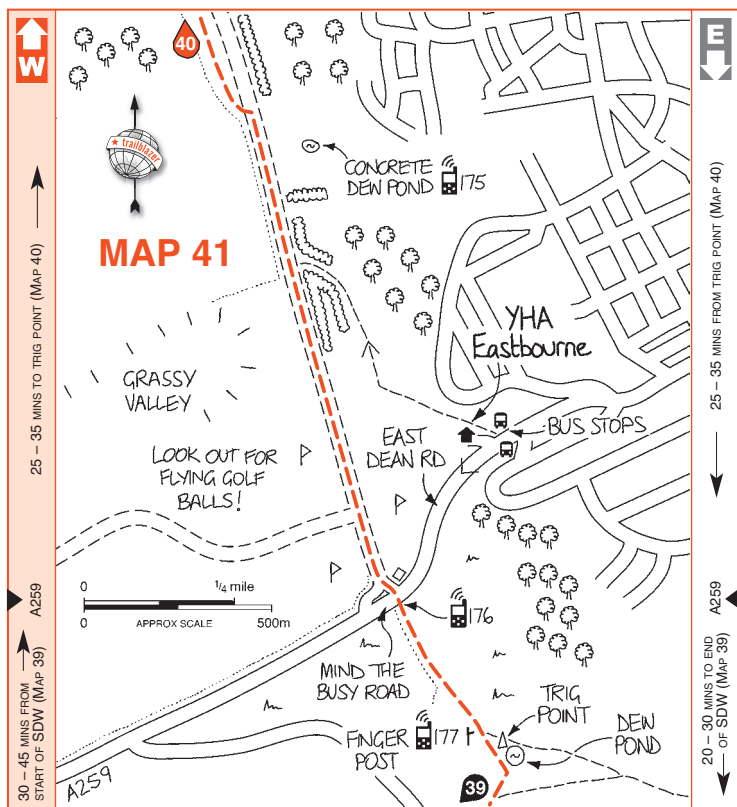
It is this initial **10¾-mile stage (17.5km, 4½-6hrs)** – plus another **1½ miles (2.4km)** from Eastbourne station to the official start; see Map 42, p185) on the South Downs Way that perhaps provides the main reason why most people choose to walk the trail from west to east. For while they have left the best – and toughest – section to the end, having used the rest of the path to toughen up their feet and improve their fitness, those who begin at Eastbourne are instead plunged straight into the deep end, and have to tackle the hardest and most scenic stage first. It's true, too, that the best views are reserved for those who are looking east – so those walking from Eastbourne will often find themselves looking over their shoulder to glimpse the best of the panoramas.

Still, if you are walking the South Downs Way in this direction, at least you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that, once you've tackled **Beachy Head** (don't forget to look behind you for views of the lighthouse) and the ever-undulating chalk cliffs of the **Seven Sisters Country Park**, you've got the toughest section of the trail out of the way, and will find the rest of the hiking, by comparison, a mere walk in the (National) park.

What's more, the lovely villages of **Westdean** (Map 36) and **Litlington** (Map 35), and the views over beguiling Cuckmere Valley towards **Birling Gap** (Map 33), are all certainly easier on the eye than parts of Eastbourne.

[Next route overview p168]





EASTBOURNE MAP 42, p185

Eastbourne is a typical English seaside resort, complete with a grand Victorian pier, though it does have something of a reputation as a retirement town.

Having received a lot of criticism over the years as being one of the least adventurous resorts, particularly when compared to its upbeat neighbour Brighton, Eastbourne has undergone something of a revival. The signs on the edge of town shout out 'Welcome to the Sunshine Coast' and certainly this is one of the sunnier corners of the UK. However, parts of the centre, particularly the area around the railway

station, are far from appealing, and not the sort of places to linger. It certainly doesn't have the history and charm of Winchester at the other end of the South Downs Way, although nearby Beachy Head, at least, makes for a fitting end to a long walk.

You can walk along the long, stony beach on either side of the 300m-long pier which was built between 1866 and 1872 on stilts sitting in cups on the sea-bed allowing it to shift a little in stormy weather. It's a good spot for arcades, fish & chips, coffee and ice-cream.

On College Rd is an interesting gallery

of contemporary art, **Towner** (☎ 01323-434670, towner.eastbourne.org.uk; Tue-Sun & Bank Hol Mons 10am-5pm; free).

Right on the seafront, the **Wish Tower** (wishtower.org.uk), officially Martello Tower 73, is maintained by volunteers who occasionally open it to the public in summer; see the Events page on their website for more details.

Services

Terminus Rd is both the commercial and tourist centre, with most of the shops up at the railway station end of the road, and the restaurants, cafés and souvenir shops at the beach end. It's about 30 minutes' walk from the foot of the South Downs and the end of the Way. The smart, purpose-built **Visitor Centre** (☎ 01323-415415, visiteastbourne.com; Mon-Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm) is in The Welcome Building on Compton St. There is plenty of free information here, not only for Eastbourne but also for south-east England and London.

The **post office** (Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm) is inside WH Smith on Terminus Rd, where you'll also find several **banks**. Also on Terminus Rd is a **pharmacy**, Boots (Mon-Sat 8.30am-6pm & Sun 10.30am-4.30pm), and inside the vast Beacon Shopping Centre there's big Sainsbury's **supermarket**. There's also a Tesco Express on Seaside Rd. Most open daily from around 7am to 11pm.

You'll also find branches of the **outdoor shops** Millets (Mon 10am-5pm, Tue-Sat 9am-6pm, Sun 10am-4pm) and Trespass (Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm, Sun 10am-4pm) on Terminus Rd, plus a Waterstones **bookshop** (Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm, Sun 10am-4pm).

Back near the Visitor Centre on Compton St is Hudson's (**fb**; Mon-Sat 7.30am-5pm), a quality **deli** with great-value made-to-order sandwiches.

For sticks of rock, jars of humbug mints, boxes of Eastbourne fudge and other traditional teeth-rotting souvenirs, head to **Ye Olde Fashioned Humbugge Shoppe** (Mon-Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm, but stays open until 9pm in summer), a family-run business that's been here for more than 70 years.

Public transport

Eastbourne is connected by Southern Railway's **train** (see box p44) services to places along the south coast as well as to Gatwick Airport and London Victoria.

There are several local **bus** services. The No 3/3A runs to Meads Village at the end of the South Downs Way; the Nos 12/12A/12X & 13X call at Birling Gap and Beachy Head; the No 125 goes to Lewes on weekdays while the CCB No 25 covers the same route on Saturday. CCB also run several **limited frequency** services including No 26 to Seaford and Nos 43 & 44 which call here on certain days of the week. See pp46-8 for details.

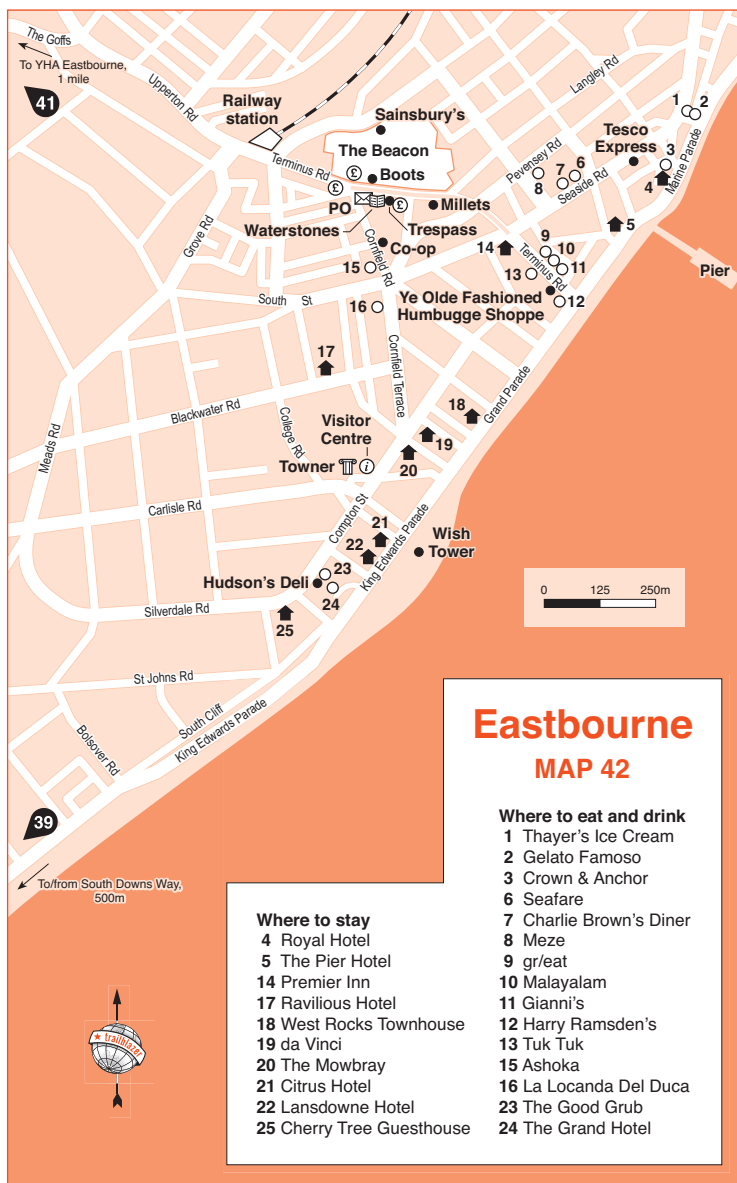
For a **taxi** try Eastbourne 720 Taxis (☎ 01323-720720, 720taxis.com).

Where to stay

As a major seaside resort Eastbourne is overflowing with accommodation. That said, much of it is rather similar – impersonal seafront high rises catering mainly to coach parties and with a certain sort of faded charm. The following, therefore, is not in any way a complete list of accommodation options in the town, but a brief guide to some of the smaller and more personal independent B&Bs and guest houses. Note that for most seafront hotels, rates are higher for rooms with a sea view.

At the time of research, **YHA Eastbourne** (Map 41, p183; ☎ 0345-371 9316, yha.org.uk/hostel/eastbourne; sleeps 30) was available only to groups hiring the entire hostel. As such, it's probably not an option for most hikers.

For a similar style of accommodation, **Citrus Hotel** (☎ 01323-722676, citrushoteleastbourne.co.uk; 50 rooms, all en suite; ☞; ♿), on King Edward's Parade, is a cross between a hostel and a hotel. Rooms range from single, double and triple to self-catering 'studios' (the only option with wi-fi) sleeping up to six people; their suites have a sea view. The hotel is packed with facilities including a recreation area with table tennis, dartboard and pool table; there's also a bar serving snacks. 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 Citrus Hotel you'll find a couple of good **B&Bs**. At 15 Silverdale Rd, **Cherry Tree Guesthouse** (☎ 01323-722406, 📧 cherrytree-eastbourne.co.uk; 3S/2T/5D/1Tr, all en suite; ☹; 🐾) is an Edwardian townhouse with B&B for £45-60pp (sgl/sgl occ from £55). Very efficiently run with varied and delicious breakfasts, they are also very dog-friendly and even have towels by the front-door to use for any dogs caught in a downpour.

Nearby, **da Vinci** (☎ 01323-727173, 📧 davinci.uk.com; 4S/10D/5D or T/ 2Tr, all en suite; ☹), on Howard Sq, has an **art gallery** downstairs and 'art-themed' rooms. It's a friendly, comfortable place and B&B is from around £40-62.50pp (sgl/sgl occ from £50). Phone for the best prices.

Right opposite the pier and appropriately named, **The Pier Hotel** (☎ 01323-728313, 📧 thepierhotel.co.uk; 12S/11D/8T, all en suite; ☹) is not without its charms and is in a great location. Rooms cost from £39pp (sgl from £48, sgl occ rates on request) though can easily be double that in high season.

At 8-9 Marine Parade, the **Royal Hotel** (☎ 01323 649222; 📧 eastbourneroyal.co.uk, 3D/1D or T/1T/3S all en suite/1S private facilities; 🐾; no under 12s) describes itself as 'the only certified eco-friendly guest accommodation in Eastbourne'. They provide fresh homemade breakfasts, homemade muesli, bread & preserves, from their vegetarian kitchen and can cater for vegans. The good value rooms (from £50pp, sgl from £49) are available in a range of sizes, some with sea views.

Moving along to King Edward's Parade, although somewhat larger **The Lansdowne Hotel** (☎ 01323 725174; 📧 lansdowne-hotel.co.uk, 98 rooms inc D, T, Tr & Qd, all en suite) has been family owned since 1912. Rates are highly variable depending on whether you choose a courtyard or sea view, but start from around £52.50pp inc breakfast.

There are several options on (or just off) Grand Parade, such as the dog-friendly **West Rocks Townhouse** (☎ 01323 920800;

📧 westrockshotel.com; 44 rooms inc S, D, T & family rooms, all ensuite; 🐾) at Nos 44-46. Rates start from £43pp for room only (note there is no restaurant or bar here).

Set back a little from Grand Parade is contemporary guest house **The Mowbray** (☎ 01323 720012; 📧 themowbray.com; 1S/12 D or T) at 2 Lascelles Terrace. They operate a flexible self-check in (noon-midnight) so the reception is unmanned overnight but this could be a good option if you expect to arrive late.

Moving further inland, at 16 Blackwater Rd, **Ravilious Hotel** (☎ 01323 733142; 📧 ravilioushotel.com; FB; 1S/7D all en suite; ☹) is a smart, family-run boutique hotel in a beautifully refurbished Victorian house. Rates are from £60pp although note they usually require a minimum booking of two nights.

Finally, the chain **Premier Inn** (☎ 0333-321 9323, 📧 premierinn.com; 65D, all en suite; ☹) has a hotel on Terminus Rd. Book online rather than calling the high-rate phone number. Saver rates can be as low as £35 per room if booked and paid well in advance or more than twice for late bookings. The rooms have very comfortable beds and there's a restaurant: a cooked breakfast costs £9.99pp.

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, the Greek café and deli **.gr/eat** (📧 gr-eat.co.uk; Jan-Oct Tue-Sat noon-3pm & 5.30-9pm, Nov & Dec hrs vary) has 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) is good for burgers and the like, and the portions are, as they describe, American-sized (ie huge!).

For something more refined, and away from the holiday-maker hordes, **The Good Grub** (📧 thegoodgrub.co.uk; fb; Thur 5-10pm, Fri-Sat 10am-10pm, Sun 10am-

4pm), 12 Compton St, is an award-winning vegan restaurant with a nice line in vegan takes on classic dishes such as (seitan) steak and fries (£15.95) or plant-based salmon fillet (£15.95). Booking is recommended.

There are many **pubs**, some friendlier than others. **Crown & Anchor** (☎ 01323-642500, ☐ crownandanchoreastbourne.co.uk; food daily 10am-9pm; 🍷), 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. 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, winter closed) is a small family-run business with dozens of different flavours. Bigger, brasher **Gelato Famoso** (☎ 01323-722138, ☐ gelatofamoso.co.uk **fb**; Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat & Sun to 6pm), nearby, also has a sit-down café selling hot drinks, sandwiches and cakes.

Restaurants & takeaways At the seafront end of Terminus Rd, friendly pizzeria **Gianni's** (☐ gianniseastbourne.co.uk; Mon-Fri 11am-9pm, Sat & Sun to 10pm) also sells Italian ice-cream. There are various pizza chains around town, but for something a bit classier, **La Locanda Del Duca** (☎ 01323-916011, ☐ la-locanda-del-duca.com; Sun-Thur noon-2.30pm & 5.30-10pm, Fri & Sat to 11pm), 26 Cornfield Terrace, is an authentic Italian

place offering set menus for £25.90/28.90 for two/three courses and traditional favourites à la carte.

Staying by the Mediterranean, **Meze** (☎ 01323-731893, ☐ meze-restaurant.co.uk; daily noon-midnight), at 15 Pevensey Rd, is a good Turkish restaurant.

For decent Indian cuisine, head to **Ashoka** (☎ 01323-733344, ☐ ashokaeastbourne.com; daily noon-2pm & 5.30-11.30pm), at 28-30 Cornfield Rd. It's been in business since the 1980s. But the best Indian in town is probably **Malayalam** (☎ 01323-722227, ☐ malayalamrestaurants.com; Mon-Thur noon-2.30pm & 5.30-9pm, Fri & Sat to 10pm, Sun noon-4.30pm) at 229 Terminus Rd, serving South Indian fare with mains starting at just £8.25. A third subcontinental restaurant, **Tuk Tuk** (☎ 01323-430210; ☐ tuktukrestaurant.co.uk; Tue-Sun 5.30-10pm), across the road at No 240, serves what it describes as Indian street food with mains £12-14. To be honest, the menu isn't vastly different from your average Indian restaurant, but the food is undeniably good.

But for something more traditionally English, it has to be **fish and chips**. There are plenty of options here, including a branch of the **Harry Ramsden's** chain (☎ 01323-417454, ☐ harryramsdens.co.uk/locations/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 **Seafare** (☎ 01323-641893; **fb**; Tue-Sun noon-9pm, winter days/hours variable), at 66 Seaside Rd.

☐ AFTERNOON TEA AT THE GRAND

If your walk ends at about tea-time (or if you're starting tomorrow) 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 every day (Mon-Thur 2-5.30pm, Fri-Sun 2.30-5.30pm; booking essential) and for £30-34.50 you get a full spread including sandwiches, scones and cakes. You could push the boat out even further with the Grand Champagne Tea (£38.50-43).

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!




















APPENDIX A: GPS & WHAT3WORDS WAYPOINT REFERENCES























Each waypoint (WPT) below was taken on the route at the reference number marked on the maps in the route guide. **GPS coordinates** and **what3words references** that correspond to these waypoints are listed here and may be particularly useful in an emergency (see p56). Gpx files for waypoints can be downloaded from [trailblazer-guides.com](https://www.trailblazer-guides.com).

WPT	COORDINATES	DESCRIPTION	///WHAT3WORDS
001	N51° 03.228' W01° 16.749'	Road junction	///unfilled.marathon.excuse
002	N51° 02.862' W01° 16.146'	Tarred road ends/starts	///card.loans.cocoons
003	N51° 03.006' W01° 15.865'	Path/track junction	///adding.surreal.majoring
004	N51° 02.813' W01° 14.842'	Road crossing (A272)	///equipping.mute.airbrush
005	N51° 02.997' W01° 14.437'	Gate (Cheesefoot Head)	///refrained.splints.convinced
006	N51° 03.433' W01° 14.089'	Track junction at farmyard	///loafer.firebird.feasting
007	N51° 02.955' W01° 12.769'	Cross road	///parading.handover.increment
008	N51° 02.727' W01° 12.399'	Gate to field	///deals.objecting.fussed
009	N51° 02.346' W01° 12.081'	Cross A272 road	///node.dispenser.fruits
010	N51° 01.586' W01° 11.793'	Path junction	///replaying.leopard.reassured
011	N51° 01.041' W01° 11.358'	The Milbury	///soldiers.quote.gaps
012	N51° 00.821' W01° 10.521'	Gate	///smokers.examine.banquets
013	N51° 00.580' W01° 09.631'	Track passes houses	///heavy.aspect.candidate
014	N51° 00.059' W01° 08.913'	Beacon Hill car park	///foal.nicely.windows
015	N50° 59.555' W01° 08.413'	Kissing gates to cross fields	///blunt.vacancies.icicles
016	N50° 59.342' W01° 08.227'	Track between stiles	///airports.elbowing.delay
017	N50° 59.040' W01° 07.728'	The Shoe Inn, Exton	///organ.additives.ankle
018	N50° 59.252' W01° 07.208'	Bridge over River Meon	///leathers.glove.dawn
019	N50° 59.186' W01° 06.720'	Go through tunnel	///shops.half.tortoises
020	N50° 58.854' W01° 05.328'	Hill fort, Old Winchester Hill	///slant.audibly.positions
021	N50° 59.009' W01° 04.712'	Turn off/onto track	///twit.butterfly.emulated
022	N50° 59.279' W01° 04.827'	Car park	///pigtails.badly.conveys
023	N50° 59.443' W01° 04.934'	Gate at fork in road	///bigger.universal.froth
024	N50° 59.238' W01° 04.546'	Join/leave track	///pints.mills.gold
025	N50° 59.296' W01° 04.200'	Farmyard	///excellent.hotspot.incurs
026	N50° 59.446' W01° 03.153'	Tree-lined avenue	///decays.tensions.sandpaper
027	N50° 59.066' W01° 03.085'	Road crosses track	///thrilled.cracker.giraffes
028	N50° 58.079' W01° 02.373'	South Downs Eco Lodge	///wiggles.comical.headlines
029	N50° 57.939' W01° 01.698'	Road junction	///backtrack.playfully.balanced
030	N50° 58.051' W01° 00.110'	Homelands Farm	///cosmic.bump.sprayer
031	N50° 58.026' W00° 59.794'	Jctn with Hogs Lodge Lane	///lasts.books.stance
032	N50° 58.465' W00° 59.274'	Butser Hill car park	///streamers.stays.rush
033	N50° 57.891' W00° 58.866'	Gate by A3 road crossing	///fussed.essays.massaging
034	N50° 57.450' W00° 58.658'	Track into/out of woods	///clotting.positions.tablets
035	N50° 58.095' W00° 57.775'	Track junction	///unfocused.marathons.equal
036	N50° 58.372' W00° 57.375'	Road crossing	///fidelity.dined.angel
037	N50° 58.206' W00° 56.456'	Track junction	///stub.proper.cape
038	N50° 58.153' W00° 55.787'	Road junction	///generals.episodes.ghost
039	N50° 57.980' W00° 54.137'	Road crossing	///register.curvy.truckload
040	N50° 57.611' W00° 53.213'	Car park, B2146 road crossing	///thrashing.farm.violinist
041	N50° 57.435' W00° 52.672'	Car park, B2141 road crossing	///spouse.bandaged.react
042	N50° 57.659' W00° 51.469'	Turn-off to East Harting	///legal.campfires.flashback
043	N50° 57.547' W00° 51.119'	Trig point, Beacon Hill	///healers.banquets.informer

WPT	COORDINATES	DESCRIPTION	///WHAT3WORDS
148	N50° 48.405' E00° 09.581'	Church, Alfriston (coast route)	///asked.kingpin.wades
149	N50° 48.689' E00° 09.581'	Plough & Harrow, Litlington	///surfacing.laying.treatment
150	N50° 47.440' E00° 09.628'	Path goes round the hedge	///clattered.distracts.boring
151	N50° 47.098' E00° 09.471'	Steps through forest	///studs.fled.obeyed
152	N50° 46.707' E00° 09.699'	Track junction	///topples.rezoning.uptown
153	N50° 46.605' E00° 09.566'	Crossroads, Westdean	///inspects.fired.installs
154	N50° 46.499' E00° 09.244'	Road crossing, Exceat	///tastier.luring.denoting
155	N50° 45.905' E00° 09.085'	Track end	///pebble.informer.across
156	N50° 45.909' E00° 09.508'	Gate on path	///segmented.expecting.detriment
157	N50° 45.376' E00° 09.578'	Haven Brow	///brands.jungle.signed
158	N50° 45.310' E00° 09.793'	Short Brow	///snails.seemingly.playfully
159	N50° 45.198' E00° 10.139'	Rough Brow	///known.behaving.resettle
160	N50° 45.143' E00° 10.376'	Brass Point	///promise.overture.husbands
161	N50° 44.995' E00° 10.792'	Sarsen stone	///guests.couriers.fancied
162	N50° 44.957' E00° 11.020'	The 'Eighth' Sister	///diner.widgets.opposites
163	N50° 44.910' E00° 11.284'	Baily's Hill	///shared.upwardly.denote
164	N50° 44.570' E00° 11.462'	Memorial pillar	///clenching.wiser.overjoyed
165	N50° 44.766' E00° 11.667'	Went Hill	///glossed.fails.remember
166	N50° 44.585' E00° 12.075'	Car park, Birling Gap	///imprints.confronts.familiar
167	N50° 44.302' E00° 12.901'	Belle Tout Lighthouse	///remainder.reinstate.twists
168	N50° 44.112' E00° 13.870'	Path near Shooters Bottom	///winds.contacts.tonsils

Map key

 Where to stay	 Library/bookstore	 Other
 Where to eat and drink	 Internet	 Car park
 Campsite	 Museum/gallery	 Bus station/stop
 Post Office	 Church/cathedral	 Rail line & station
 Bank/ATM	 Phone box	 Park
 Tourist Information	 Public toilet	 082 GPS waypoint
	 Building	

 South Downs Way	 Stile	 Water
 Other Path	 Gate	 Stream/river
 4 x 4 track	 Cliffs	 Trees/woodland
 Tarmac road	 Bridge	 Beach
 Steps	 Fence	 Lighthouse/beacon
 Slope	 Wall	 Golf course
 Steep slope	 Hedge	 Map continuation
		 14 (black = to Eastbourne red = to Winchester)

WPT	COORDINATES	DESCRIPTION	///WHAT3WORDS
169	N50° 44.335' E00° 15.220'	RAF Bomber Command Memorial	///airliners.camera.wiggly
170	N50° 45.113' E00° 16.027'	Eastern end of SDW	///moved.famed.healers
Inland route from Alfriston to Eastbourne via Jevington			
172	N50° 47.518' E00° 12.825'	Crossroads, Jevington	///trains.human.purple
173	N50° 47.222' E00° 14.083'	Turn-off to Willington	///wasp.tent.every
174	N50° 47.196' E00° 14.162'	Trig point	///tricks.pines.pays
175	N50° 46.658' E00° 14.575'	Concrete dew pond	///famed.risks.meals
176	N50° 45.901' E00° 14.776'	Road crossing (A259)	///feast.paused.baking
177	N50° 45.729' E00° 15.000'	Finger post	///claim.jets.kick
170	N50° 45.113' E00° 16.027'	Eastern end of SDW	///moved.famed.healers

APPENDIX B: WALKING WITH A DOG

WALKING THE WAY WITH A DOG

Many are the rewards that await those prepared to make the extra effort required to bring their best friend along the trail. However, because the South Downs is a prime sheep-farming area your dog may have to be on a lead for much of the walk.

And you shouldn't underestimate the amount of work involved. Indeed, just about every decision you make will be influenced by the fact that you've got a dog: how you plan to travel to the start of the trail, where you're going to stay, how far you're going to walk each day, where you're going to rest and where you're going to eat in the evening etc.

If you're sure your dog can cope with (and, just as importantly, *enjoy*) walking 10 miles or more a day for several days in a row, you need to start preparing accordingly. Extra thought needs to go into your itinerary. Study the town & village facilities table on pp30-1 (and the advice below), and plan where to stop and where to buy food.

Looking after your dog

To begin with, you need to make sure that your dog is fully **inoculated** against the usual doggy illnesses, and also up to date with regard to **worm pills** (eg Drontal) and **flea preventatives** such as Frontline – they are, after all, following in the pawprints of many a dog before them, some of whom may well have left fleas or other parasites on the trail that now lie in wait for their next meal to arrive. **Pet insurance** is also a very good idea; if you've already got insurance, do check that it will cover a trip such as this. On the subject of your dog's health, perhaps the most important implement you can bring is a **plastic tick remover**, available from vets. These removers, while fiddly, help you to remove the tick safely (ie without leaving its head behind buried under the dog's skin). Being in unfamiliar territory also makes it more likely that you and your dog could become separated. All dogs now have to be **microchipped** but make sure your dog also has a **tag with your contact details on it** (a mobile phone number would be best if you are carrying one with you).

When to keep your dog on a lead

- **On cliff tops** It's a sad fact that, every year, a few dogs lose their lives falling over the edge of the cliffs. It usually occurs when they are chasing rabbits (which know where the cliff-edge is and are able, unlike your poor pooch, to stop in time).

- **When crossing farmland**, particularly in the lambing season (March to May) when your dog can scare the sheep, causing them to lose their young. Farmers are allowed by law to shoot at and kill any dogs that they consider are worrying their sheep. During lambing, most farmers would prefer it if you didn't bring your dog at all. The exception is if your dog is

Note: Where a place name is shown in (brackets) on this chart the distance to the turnoff to this place is shown. Add the (+) number in the brackets to calculate the total distance to that place.
Most villages lie below the South Downs.

[via inland route*] Jevington												
[via inland route*] End (Eastbourne + 1½)												
Litlington												
Exceat/Seven Sisters												
Birling Gap												
Beachy Head												
END (Eastbourne + 1½)												

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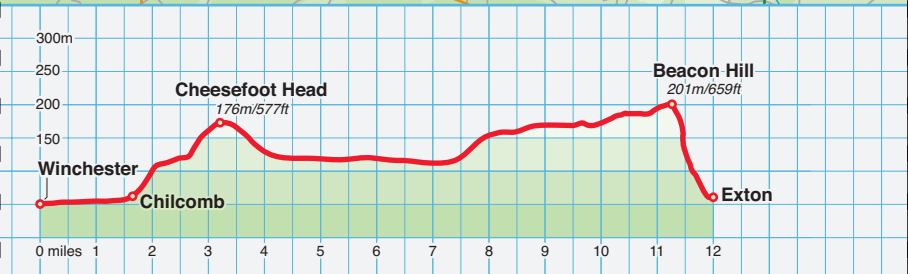
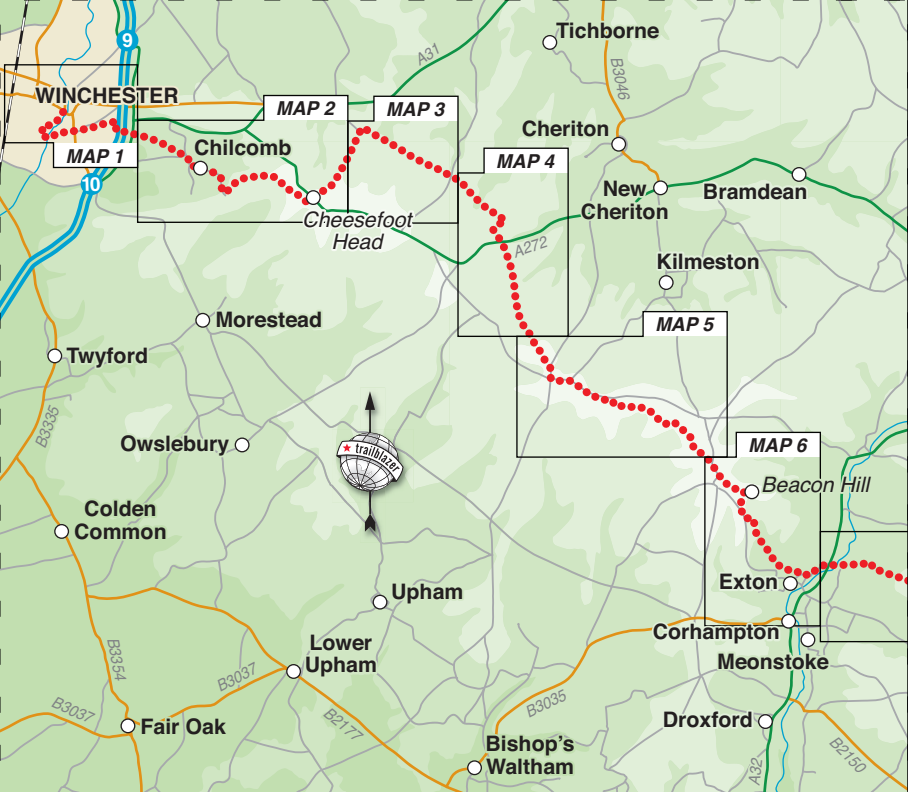
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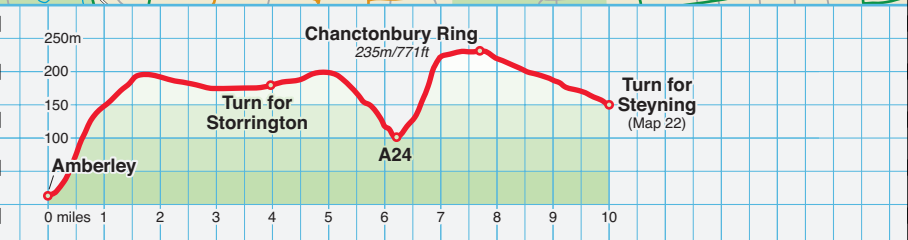
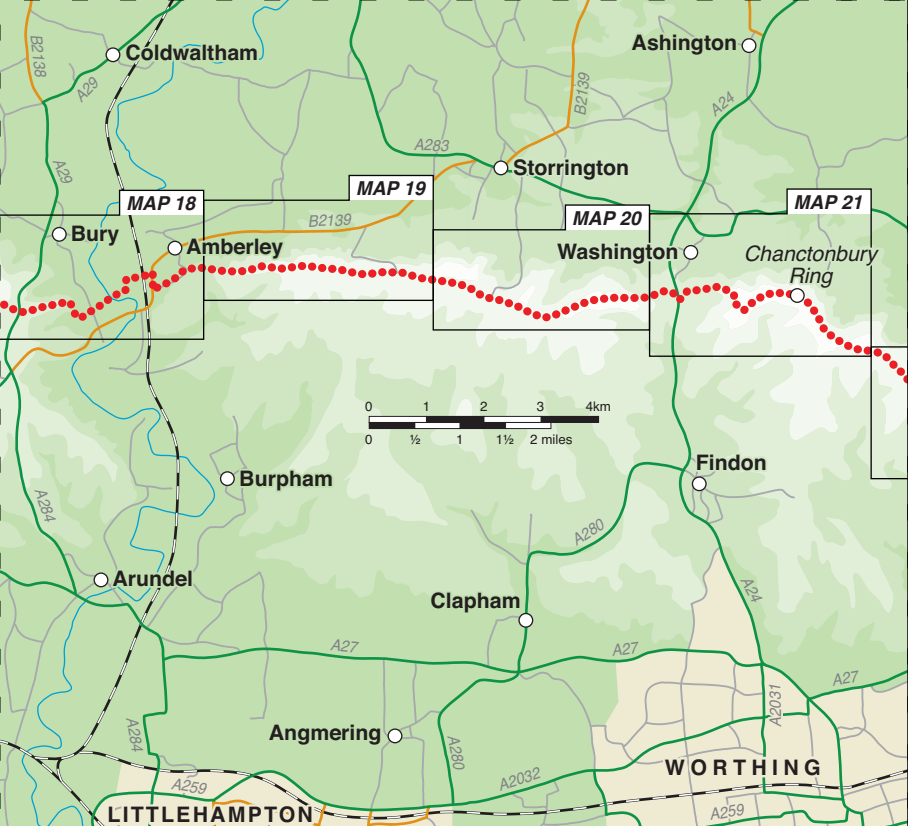
12 miles/19.5km – 4¼-5¾hrs

Maps 6-10, Exton to Buriton

12½ miles/20km – 4½-6hrs

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

Winchester
Buriton
Exton



Maps 18-22, Amberley to Steyning
10 miles/16km – 3¼-4¾hrs

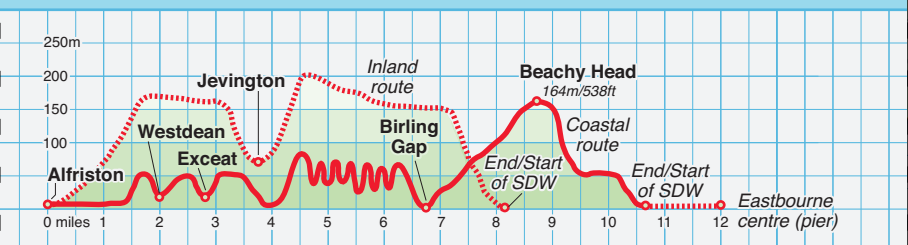
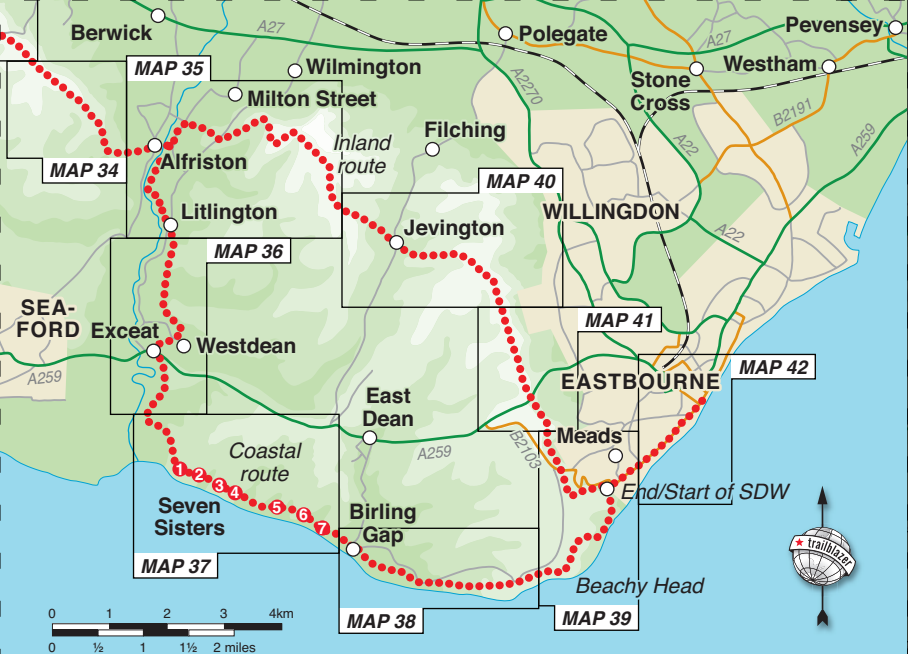
Maps 22-26, Steyning to Pyecombe
10¼ miles/16.5km – 4-5½hrs

Plus 20-30mins from Steyning to South Downs Way

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

Winchester





Maps 35-39, Alfriston to End of SDW

Coastal route: 10¾ miles/17.5km – 4¼-5¾hrs

Inland route: 8¼ miles/13.5km – 2¾-3¾hrs

Plus 30-40mins to the centre of Eastbourne



Maps 39-35, Start of SDW to Alfriston

Coastal route: 10¾ miles/17.5km – 4½-6hrs

Inland route: 8¼miles/13.5km – 2¾-3¾hrs

Plus 30-40mins from the centre of Eastbourne

Winchester

Alfriston Eastbourne

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

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South Downs Way

WINCHESTER – EASTBOURNE





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