



CYCLE THE VIKING COASTAL TRAIL

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



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

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

The route is also known as the Regional Cycle Network 115 and well signed throughout with the trail logo and the National Cycle Network.

1 THE SIX CHURCHES RIDE

Location: St Nicholas-at-Wade (CT7 0NG) – Ramsgate

Distance: 9.5 mile (15.25 km)

Time: Allow 1.5 hours

OS Explorer Map: 150

Terrain: Mainly on-road

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

Parking: Ramsgate

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

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

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

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

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

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

Along the sweeping clifftops at Pegwell Bay, you'll see the architectural splendour of **St Augustine's Abbey Church**, designed by the great Gothic revivalist architect Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin.

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



2 HISTORY, ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Location: Ramsgate (CT12 5HY)

Distance: 4.5 mile (7km)

Time: 45 minutes

OS Explorer Map: 150

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

Refreshments & facilities: Pubs and restaurants in Ramsgate and public toilets at Pegwell, Ramsgate and King George VI Memorial Park.

Parking: Car park at the Viking Ship 'Hugin'

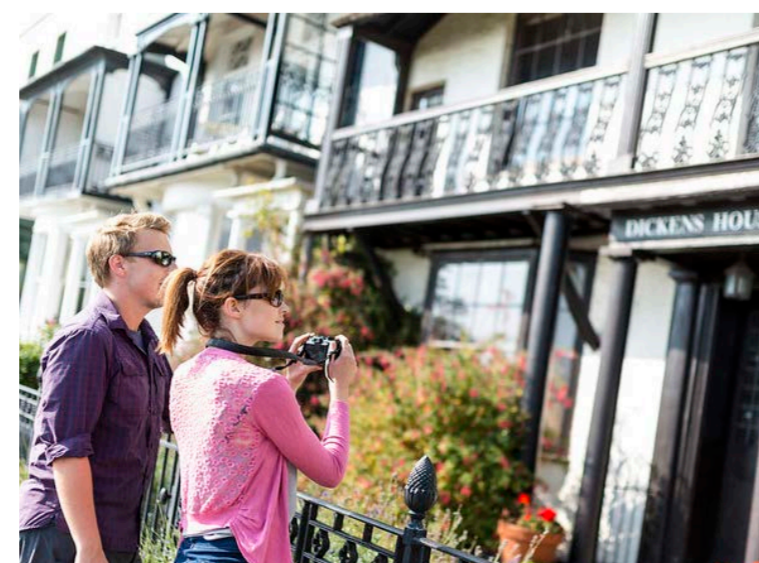
Viking ships and nostalgic villages pepper this section of the trail, not to mention the obligatory backdrop of fantastic coastal views along the entire ride.

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

The grand **St Augustine's Abbey Church** was designed by the Victorian architect **Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin**, designer of the interiors of the Houses of Parliament. The Grange, the grade I listed house next to the church was designed by Pugin for his family. A self-guided walking tour from East Cliff to West Cliff will highlight Pugin's influence in Ramsgate.

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

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



3 HISTORIC BROADSTAIRS

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

Distance: 3.25 miles (9km)

Time: Allow 30 minutes

OS Explorer Map: 150

Terrain: On-road

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

Parking: At Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Joss Bay



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

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

This striking coastline has attracted many creatives, including Charles Dickens. Broadstairs was a favourite holiday spot for Dickens and the Dickens House Museum on the seafront boasts a fascinating collection of his belongings. **Bleak House**, Dickens' holiday home was famously where he began to write David Copperfield.

Seven glorious bays make up the Broadstairs seafront. The most notable bay, the **Viking Bay**

was named after the landing of the anniversary Viking ship Hugin at Broadstairs.

The curved **York Gate** on Harbour Street stands as testament to George Culmer's shipyard of the 16th Century. York Gate stood to protect Culmer's prosperous business.

The **North Foreland Lighthouse** is the final stop on your tour. This great tower marks the southern entrance to the Thames and was the last manned lighthouse in the country until its conversion in 1998. External viewing only.

4 THE PATH OF ST AUGUSTINE

Location: St Augustine's Cross (CT12 5JN) - Monkton

Distance: 4.5 miles (7 km)

Time: Allow 45 minutes

OS Explorer Map: 150

Terrain: On-road

Refreshments & facilities: Pubs and restaurants in Minster and Cliffsend

Parking: At Minster and Monkton Nature Reserve

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

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

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

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

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

6 BEACHES AND BAYS

Location: Margate (CT9 1JD) – Minnis Bay

Distance: 33.75 miles (6.25 km)

Time: 30 minutes

OS Explorer Map: 150

Terrain: Mainly off-road

Refreshments & facilities: Pubs and restaurants at Margate, Westgate-on-Sea and Minnis Bay. Public toilets at Margate, Westgate-on-Sea and Minnis Bay

Parking: At Margate, Westgate-on-Sea and Minnis Bay

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

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

At **Westbrook Bay** take in a deep breath of sea air, visit the café along the promenade, or have a go at a game of adventure golf.

St Mildred's Bay at Westgate-on-Sea offers plenty of distractions. Take in stunning views from the chalk cliff tops and former WWI seaplane lookout, or wander the sandy beach, complete with chalk reef, tennis courts and café.

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

You'll find tranquil bays at **Beresford Gap and Grenham**, each with an extensive chalk reef habitat and wildlife. Finish your trail with a stroll along **Minnis Bay**, but if you're feeling a little more adventurous kite boarding, sailing and windsurfing are all popular here.

From here, you can continue the route along the sea wall and on to the **Reculver Towers**.

Places to visit

1. Sandwich & Pegwell Bay National Reserve
2. St Augustine's Cross
3. Ramsgate Maritime Museum
4. Ramsgate Tunnels
5. King George VI Memorial Park
6. Italianate Greenhouse
7. Ramsgate Leisure Centre Gym & Pool
8. Revolution Skatepark and Climbing Centre
9. Granville Theatre
10. Sea Searcher Boat Trips
11. The Grange
12. The Boating Pool
13. Bleak House
14. Dickens House Museum
15. Lillyputt Mini Golf
16. The Palace Cinema
17. Tom Thumb Theatre
18. Crampton Tower Museum
19. Turner Contemporary
20. Dreamland
21. Margate Museum
22. Shell Grotto
23. Strokes Adventure Golf
24. Hartsdown Leisure Centre
25. The WonderWorks by Hornby Hobbies
26. The Pinball Parlour
27. Quex Park
28. RAF Manston History Museum
29. Spitfire & Hurricane Memorial Museum
30. Drapers Windmill
31. Minster Abbey
32. Monkton Nature Reserve
33. Viking Ship Hugin
34. Vue Cinema Thanet - Westwood Cross
35. Jubilee Play Park



5 SMUGGLERS' HAUNTS RIDE

Location: Joss Bay (CT10 3PG) – Margate

Distance: 3.5 miles (6km)

Time: Allow 30 minutes

OS Explorer Map: 150

Terrain: Mainly off-road

Refreshments & facilities: Restaurants and pubs at Margate. Public toilets in Margate

Parking: Joss Bay and Margate

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

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

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

Riding into Margate, the **museum** and harbour offer a perfect end to your smuggling trail. The museum tells the town's tale, from the town's smugglers to its important role in the evacuation of Dunkirk. A departure from the history and heritage of the area, the visually dynamic **Turner Contemporary** is set in the 19th century harbour, offering a refreshing end to your ride.

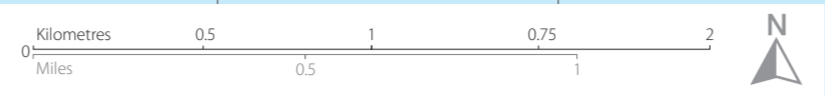
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	Viking Coastal Trail on-road		Advisory cycle route		Cycle parking
	Viking Coastal Trail traffic-free		Footpath walkers only		Bike hire / shop
	Signed on-road cycle route / one way		Place of interest (List of places on reverse)		Bus stop
	Traffic-free cycle route Includes Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic. Not all routes are surfaced and may only be suitable for mountain bikes.		Hospital		Railway station / Level crossing
	National Cycle Network route number		Museum		Car parking
			Library		Toilet
			Toucan crossing		Tourist information
			Pelican crossing		



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No cycling beyond this point
between 10am and 6pm
from 1 May to 30 September

