

The Coast with the Most: What's Happening Across England's Coast in 2026



L-R: The Jurassic Coast, Dorset (Credit: Harbour Media); Poole Museum, reopened after a £10m investment and 7-year closure; The Edge, new hotel and venue on the Cumbrian Coast (Credit: Lucy Barden); Scarborough, celebrating its 400th anniversary in 2026 (Credit: Tom Arber).

26 November 2025

England's Coast, the coastal booking and inspiration tool, is gearing up for an exciting 2026 across the coastline. From stylish new and refurbished hotels and vibrant arts and cultural reopenings, to scenic walking trails and ambitious coastal rewilding projects, explore a multitude of ideas for an adventurous coastal short break or day trip on the coast, no matter the season:

“2026 is set to be a landmark year for visitors to England’s Coast,” says Samantha Richardson MBE, Academy Director of the National Coastal Tourism Academy which delivers England’s Coast.

“Scarborough will celebrate 400 years since being designated a spa resort, triggering a host of celebrations on the Yorkshire coast, 98% of the King Charles III England Coast Path will be complete, opening up new walking routes and coastal views to the public for the first time. From Dark Skies Festivals to new museums, hotel launches to Restaurant Weeks and food and drink events, 2026 promises a packed coastal calendar and every reason to plan a break to the beach in the coming year.”

New Accommodation Openings and Refurbishments

Across the coastline, exciting new openings and refurbishments will be taking place:

- On the [North West coast](#), Longridge House in the heart of the Ribble Valley, Lancashire - once the country retreat of the Earl of Derby - opens its doors as a family-run, boutique countryside hotel with a relaxed restaurant. The former Royal Carlton Hotel in [Blackpool](#) is undergoing a multi-million pound refurbishment to transform the 38-bedroom Art Deco hotel, near the South Shore's Pleasure Beach Resort and Sandcastle Waterpark, opening in spring 2026. The Cumbrian coast has recently seen the opening of brand new coastal activities venue The Edge, at [Whitehaven](#)'s historic harbour. Welcoming everyone from walkers and cyclists to local groups and visiting families, the venue offers a front-row seat to the Cumbrian coast with activities, training sessions, cafe, bar and two floors of en-suite hotel accommodation.
- On the North East coast, Grade II listed Eshott Hall in [Northumberland](#) - set near the Northumberland Coast Path and an ideal spot for exploring the nearby Farne Islands - has come under new ownership with major improvement plans including timber accommodation cabins, wellness space and a night sky application cabin, reopening in spring 2026.
- The [East coast](#) has recently seen the September opening of Norfolk's £4m FFOLKEPSA at Ffolkes Hotel near King's Lynn, a vibrant spa and wellness addition to the popular boutique hotel, boasting an Ibiza-inspired party zone and five different thermal experiences.
- On the [South East coast](#), Brighton's [Grand Hotel](#) has recently undergone a £17m transformation, with all 205 bedrooms and bathrooms receiving luxury renovations and a brand new L. Raphael Spa which opened its doors in September. Meanwhile, in [Sandbanks](#), Dorset, construction is underway on a new Rockwater, a premium coastal two-floor venue with an outdoor terrace, upstairs fine-dining experience, wellness and entertainment and panoramic views across the Jurassic Coast, set to open some time in 2026.

- Looking further ahead to 2027, [North Yorkshire](#) will see a new luxury hotel in Runswick Bay, on the cliff-top site of the former Cliffemount Hotel. It will feature 20 sea view rooms and a pub and restaurant, and it aims to be the UK's first Passivhaus hotel, meaning very high energy-efficiency standards.

Arts & Culture

A calendar of exciting arts and culture events and openings across the coast make a coastal getaway a must in 2026:

- In Dorset, [Poole Museum](#) reopened in November following a £10m, seven-year redevelopment project, restoring all three of its listed buildings - Oakley's Mill, Scaplen's Court, and the medieval Town Cellars, and transforming the venue into a major cultural destination. Visitors can enjoy three new maritime galleries - Harbour Life, Setting Sail, and Shipwreck; The Poole Iron Age Logboat - nearly 10 metres long and the largest ever found in Southern Britain - now on open display for the first time; displays of the museum's maritime archaeological collection including timbers, finds and cargo from three protected shipwrecks; two flexible galleries supporting a dynamic programme of touring and temporary exhibitions, launching with Sound of the Sea, an immersive digital exhibition bringing the ocean to life, and Un/Common People, celebrating the history and mythology of folk culture; and a vibrant programme of events, workshops and activities throughout the year. Also in the county, Wimborne Minster has been named Dorset's Town of Culture 2026, with a theme of 'Bridging the Past and Future,' celebrating heritage and innovation and with a year-long programme of cultural events, community workshops, exhibitions and more.
- On the [North East coast](#), [Hull](#) Maritime Museum will reopen in 2026 after an ambitious restoration project on the iconic building which tells stories of 800 years of maritime history and which will be host to an exciting array of new exhibits from ship models and maritime art to a 40-foot whale skeleton. There are also exciting plans for an £11m regeneration of [Scarborough Harbour](#)'s West Pier, to feature restored harbour buildings, and new and improved food and drink offerings and public event space, to be completed in 2027. Meanwhile, [Redcar](#) will welcome a £25m major new cultural and family entertainment venue on the High Street / Esplanade which will host an exciting programme of events.
- The [North West coast](#) will welcome a brand new ride to [Blackpool's Pleasure Beach](#): Avikta, the 138-foot gyro ride costing £8.72m is currently under development and will be the first gyro swing of its kind - as well as the tallest - in the UK.
- In Thanet, [Ramsgate](#)'s Clock House (formerly the Maritime Museum), a historic Grade II* building, is undergoing a £1.5m refurbishment into a heritage hub and café with a new hospitality space, with work expected to be complete by spring 2026. In [Margate](#), the historic seafront venue Winter Gardens, which has been closed since 2022, is undergoing an £8m refurbishment and has been taken on by Westwood One Theatre which will transform it into a vibrant hub for leisure, entertainment and education featuring four bars, a rooftop restaurant and a drama school, with work expected to be completed by spring 2027.

Milestones by the Sea

- [Scarborough](#) will mark the 400th anniversary of its designation as a spa town and Britain's first seaside resort in 2026. The town's journey as a seaside spa resort began in 1626 with the accidental discovery of mineral spring waters by Mrs Thomasin Farrer, who stumbled upon natural springs bubbling beneath the cliff south of the town which were found to cure minor ailments. There will be a wide range of celebrations planned throughout the year including heritage installations at the site of the original spa, events, art installations and a 10 day festival in mid-July.
- In Lancashire, [Morecambe](#) will celebrate comic legend Eric Morecambe's 100th birthday (14 May 2026) and the seaside town he was born in and named himself after will celebrate with a series of events and commemorative activities.
- The [Jurassic Coast](#) will mark its 25th anniversary as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2026. 95 miles long and running between Old Harry Rocks in Dorset and Exmouth in East Devon, it showcases 185 million years of geological history from the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous periods. Highlights along the route

include fossil hunting favourite Lyme Regis, the iconic Durdle Door and Lulworth Cove, and the 18-mile long Chesil Beach.

- Looking ahead to 2027, [Hastings](#) and 1066 Country begin the countdown to 2027's 'Year of the Norman', marking the millennium anniversary of William the Conqueror's birth with a series of events and celebrations building up throughout 2026 across the region's historically connected buildings and coastal landmarks.

A Stomp Along the Coast: Walking Routes & Events

- The final stretches of the [King Charles III England Coast Path](#) will be completed in 2026 with 98% of the Path walkable; it will create the world's longest continuous coastal trail at 2,795 miles. Its newest 42-mile section now links the Scottish border all the way down to Lincolnshire. A celebratory event is planned for summer 2026, further details to follow.
- Coastal walking festivals will celebrate our picturesque coastline throughout 2026, offering guided routes that showcase local history, wildlife and incredible scenery. Highlights include the [White Cliffs Ramblers Festival](#) (dates TBA) exploring the dramatic Kent coastline, [Dorset's WALX Festival](#) (17-20 September) with Jurassic Coast hikes and workshops, and the [Isle of Wight's Spring and Autumn Walking Festivals](#) (9-17 May & 4-14 October), featuring routes through the island's varied landscape, thriving wildlife and rich heritage.

Seaside Festivals & Events

- [Dark Skies Festivals](#) across the North York Moors, Yorkshire Dales and Cumbria will let visitors stargaze under some of Britain's clearest night skies, with guided sessions and astrophotography workshops.
- Music lovers can dance by the sea at events like [Soultsasia](#) in Maldon (6 June), Thanet's [Margate Soul Festival](#) 25th anniversary edition (13 July-2 August) and the [Brancaster Staithe Sea Shanty Festival](#) (11-13 September).
- Lancashire will debut the CineWyre Film Festival in Fleetwood (26 Feb-1 March), celebrating global filmmaking.
- For quirky festivals with a difference, Dorchester will hold the brand new [Dorchester Kite Festival: Let's Go Fly](#) on 6 June, Portsmouth will host [Country on the Coast Festival](#) in Southsea on 17-19 April, combining country music with the charm of the British coastline, Swanage's annual [Carnival](#) will take place on 25 July-1 August featuring processions, special performances, sand sculpture competitions and more, and the much-loved [Isle of Wight Garlic Festival](#) (15-16 August) will play host to fantastic food and games themed by the island's favourite pungent bulb, as well as live music and entertainment.
- Marvel at Olympic-level hydrofoil competitors as they 'fly' across the water at the World E-Foiling 'iQFOiL' Championships taking place at [Weymouth](#) and [Portland](#) from 21 to 26 September.

Culinary Coastline

- [Northumberland](#) will welcome Freyja, a new Scandi-inspired restaurant on the Close House Estate near Wylam. Led by acclaimed chef Alex Nietosvuori (formerly of Michelin-starred Hjem), Freyja will champion farm-to-fork dining with produce from its own walled kitchen garden, alongside 12 stylish guest rooms.
- Food lovers can also look forward to a vibrant calendar of food festivals across the coast in 2026. [Whitby Restaurant Week](#) (2-8 March) will offer great-value set menus across the seaside town, while the [Filey Food Festival](#) (4-5 April) brings 65+ stalls of Yorkshire food and drink. Portsmouth's [Southsea Food Festival](#) returns on 4-5 July with street food, live demos and family entertainment, and in Essex the [Maldon Food & Drink Festival](#) (29-30 August) will showcase world street food, craft drinks, artisan producers and live music.

Coastal Conservation

- In Kent, a two-year rewilding project around [Dover Castle](#) continues to restore almost 200 acres of chalk grassland creating vital habitat for key species such as early spider orchid, lesser calamint and adonis blue

butterfly. This sits alongside a major conservation success: the return of the Red-billed Chough. Reintroduced in 2023, the once-extinct cliff-dweller has now bred independently for the first time in more than two centuries and can regularly be seen soaring over the White Cliffs. Kent's wider Chalk to Coast initiative also enters its third year in 2026, expanding community engagement and ecotourism as part of its mission to build a nature corridor from the chalk hills down to the coast.

- On 11 June 2026 WWT Steart Marshes in Somerset will host World Saltmarsh Day celebrations, using a £200,000 National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to help people connect with coastal nature through new educational materials, audio trails, community art and new viewing platforms.
- In [Portsmouth](#), the Southsea Coastal Scheme continues to transform the shoreline, with the beach between the Pyramids and Eastney set to double in size. One million tonnes of shingle will be brought in over winter 2025-26, alongside wider promenade improvements including new seating, planting, lighting and wider paths to enhance visitor experience and climate resilience.

Learn more about what's happening across the English coastline and plan your perfect 2026 coastal itinerary at [englandscost.com/en](#).

Press information: For more information, high-res images or to discuss interview opportunities, please contact: Lizzie Cooper (lcoopertravelpr@gmail.com).

For more information on England's Coast visit [www.englandscost.com/en](#) or contact Sheron Crossman, National Coastal Tourism Academy Marketing & Communications: Sheron.crossman@coastaltourismacademy.co.uk.

Notes to editors: The England's Coast project is delivered by the National Coastal Tourism Academy whose partners include: Visit Dorset, Visit White Cliffs Country, Visit Redcar & Cleveland, Visit Essex, Visit East Yorkshire, Visit Portsmouth, Tees Valley, Visit Plymouth, Southampton Forward, Visit Isle of Wight, Visit North Yorkshire, Visit Thanet, North York Moors National Park, Visit Durham, Visit Lancashire, Visit Lincolnshire, Visit Brighton, Hornsea Village, East Yorkshire, The Millstream Hotel, West Sussex, Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole: The Marsham Court Hotel, Coastal Cruises Poole, Adventure Attractions, Poole Museum, Russell Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Highcliffe Castle.

The NCTA was established in 2013 to help job creation and economic growth in the tourism economy of coastal towns. It is a not-for-profit organisation, working with industry, coastal destination partners, government, academia and national coastal organisations. It is the recognised voice of coastal tourism.