

## Visit the east coast in 2021 and explore the extraordinary outdoors



L-R: Leigh-on-Sea harbour, Essex; Maggi Hambling's *The Scallop* sculpture, Aldeburgh, Suffolk; the Norfolk Broads.

For travel inspiration across the east coast, visit [Englandsc coast.com/en](https://englandsc coast.com/en), the browse-and-book tool that guides you along the coast and everything it has to offer, from walking routes and heritage sites to places to stay and family attractions. You can plan a trip, build an itinerary and book directly with hundreds of restaurants, cafés, pubs and accommodation including hotels, B&Bs and campsites.

"With its wealth of nature reserves such as Donna Nook and Gibraltar Point, vast, open beaches and huge skies, the east coast is an ideal get-away-from-it-all retreat for walkers, cyclists and nature-lovers," says Samantha Richardson, Director, National Coastal Tourism Academy, which delivers the Discover England-funded England's Coast project.

"Essex alone offers 350 miles of coastline - head to art galleries at the Naze Tower or Southend-on-Sea, escape the urban hustle at Thorpe Bay, with its water sports to enjoy, and tuck into fantastic seafood on Mersea Island. If you don't know the east coast, this is the year to explore and discover!"

Whether the wonderful east coast is on your doorstep, or you're planning a trip later in 2021, here are some highlights coming to the region this year, and ways to plan your trip with [Englandsc coast.com/en](https://englandsc coast.com/en).

### Fascinating Mayflower heritage in Harwich, Essex

2020 marked the [400<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#) of the Pilgrims setting sail from Plymouth to cross the Atlantic to reach the New World – America. The celebrations were of course cancelled last year, but in 2021 you can visit the port town of [Harwich](#), Essex, where the Mayflower's captain, Christopher Jones, lived and was twice wed, to discover the town's links to this historic voyage. Visitors can explore the recently-restored Christopher Jones's House on Kings Head Street where the captain once lived (don't forget to stop in for a pint at the historic Alma Pub opposite, once the home of Jones's wife, Sarah Twitt), Esplanade Hall – a former school, now the Mayflower Visitor Centre, and the fascinating Mayflower Trail – a 1 km tour of the town's Mayflower links created in 2020, all of which bring the Harwich Mayflower story to life.

### Visit Sutton Hoo – site of the new Netflix period drama, *The Dig*

New Netflix drama *The Dig* – starring Carey Mulligan and Ralph Fiennes – tells the story of [Sutton Hoo](#), the beautiful 245-acre estate near Woodbridge, in Suffolk, that was home to one of England's most important archaeological sites – where circa 18 burial sites dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD were found. It was here, in 1939, that landowner Edith Pretty instigated the dig that would uncover an Anglo-Saxon king's ship burial and its wealth of artefacts – the richest burial site ever to have been found in Northern Europe. Today, visitors can marvel at the full-size sculpture of the 27-metre long burial ship and explore the burial grounds, along with a new exhibition uncovering the people and stories behind the Sutton Hoo discovery. Make it a long weekend, staying at [The Crown at Woodbridge](#) – a cosy and luxurious 16<sup>th</sup> century historic hotel and restaurant - enjoying a drink at [The Angel](#), one of Suffolk's oldest pubs, which has been welcoming travellers since 1153, and sampling fantastic local seasonal dining at [The Galley](#) restaurant.

## The east coast seafood trail

England's east coast offers some of the world's finest seafood. On idyllic [Mersea Island](#), Essex, which is attached by a causeway to the mainland and offers views across the estuary, fresh native oysters have been bred since Roman times. [Leigh-on-Sea](#), also on the Essex coast, is full of character and charm, home to the famous cockle sheds as well as plentiful pubs in which to enjoy this local delicacy. The nutrient-rich and chalky waters of the north Norfolk coast are famous for producing the flavoursome brown Cromer Crab, which can be enjoyed at [Tides Restaurant on Cromer Pier](#) while admiring the outstanding coastal views from its deck. The charming town of [Aldeburgh](#), on the Suffolk coast, is lined with pastel-coloured 19<sup>th</sup> century holiday villas along its traditional promenade, plus rustic fishermen's huts along its pebble beach – buy fresh from the daily catch including lobster, sole, bass, skate and eels. **Plan a trip to the seafood coast with England's Coast:** <https://www.englishcoast.com/en/seafood-coast>.

## Discover outdoor art along the coast

Who says you need to go inside a gallery or a museum to get your culture fix? Stay outside in the fresh coastal air and take in fascinating public artworks in stunning seaside settings at various points along the east coast. [England's Creative Coast](#) launches on 1 May in Margate, one of a series of seven new artworks across Essex, Kent and East Sussex. On 22 May, artist Katrina Palmer's *Hello and Retreat* installation in partnership with Metal will be launched in Southend-on-Sea. On Aldeburgh Beach, Suffolk, local artist Maggi Hambling created the iconic [Scallop sculpture](#) in 2003, commemorating Benjamin Britten. In the same town, the [Aldeburgh Beach Lookout](#) is a tiny art temple by the sea which has become an international art destination, welcoming regular new artists in residence – from painters and poets to musicians and thinkers. The [Structures on the Edge](#) project, in Lincolnshire, is a series of small-scale coastal art and architecture installations along the 10-mile stretch of coast between Chapel St. Leonards and Mablethorpe, including various platforms, havens, shelters and look-out points which encourage walkers to appreciate and enjoy the coastal environment.

## With the recent news that the white-tailed eagle may be reintroduced to Norfolk, celebrate the region's abundant birdlife...

A consultation has been launched to reintroduce Britain's biggest bird of prey, the white-tailed eagle, to the Norfolk coast, following its successful reintroduction in Scotland and the Isle of Wight. The impressive eagle was hunted to extinction in England 240 years ago. While the project awaits approval from Natural England, why not head to one of Norfolk or Lincolnshire's fantastic birding areas for a spot of twitching? [Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve](#), in Skegness, enjoys a huge variety of birdlife, including whirling flocks of waders at high tide in autumn, little terns and skylarks appearing in summer, and winter visitors such as brent geese, snow bunting and whooper swans. The vast waterways of the [Norfolk Broads](#) boast opportunities for spotting common cranes, grey herons, coots, spoonbills, bitterns, and much more. At the [Holkham](#) National Nature Reserve, on the Norfolk coast, witness species such as pink-footed geese, barn owls and grey plovers.

## 3 February 2021

**England's Coast advises visitors to adhere to the national lockdown and plan their travels for post-lockdown, when it is safe to do so. Details can be found on the Gov UK website:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

**Press:** For further information, high-res images or to **discuss a commissioned press trip**, please contact Lizzie Cooper or Jackie Franklin at [Travel PR](#) on 020 8891 4440 or [l.cooper@travelpr.co.uk](mailto:l.cooper@travelpr.co.uk) / [j.franklin@travelpr.co.uk](mailto:j.franklin@travelpr.co.uk).

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

**Notes to editors:** The England's Coast project is delivered by the National Coastal Tourism Academy, whose partners include: The Yorkshire Coast, Visit Scarborough, The North York Moors National Park Authority, Visit East Yorkshire, Visit Lancashire, Visit Cumbria, This is Durham, Visit Northumberland, Visit Essex, Visit Thanet, Dover/White Cliffs Country, Creative Coast Kent, Visit Brighton, Experience West Sussex, Visit Portsmouth, Discover Gosport, Visit Isle of Wight, Coast with the Most -Bournemouth/Christchurch/Poole, Somerset and Exmoor National Park – The Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership, P&O Ferries, Hornblower City Cruises Poole.

**About the Discover England Fund:**

- In November 2015, the Government announced a £40 million Discover England Fund; an unprecedented opportunity for English tourism. The Fund aims to deliver world-class bookable tourism products joined up across geographies and/or themes, including integrated transport solutions to provide an end-to-end customer experience.
  - The Fund supports the growth of one of England's most successful export industries, inbound tourism. Tourism is an industry that delivers jobs and economic growth across the English regions – contributing some £106bn each year to the economy and supporting 2.6 million jobs.
  - The Fund supported a number of pilot projects in year one (2016/17) that tested product development approaches. In years two and three, 2017-19, the fund supported:
    - o A number of large-scale collaborative projects to be delivered over the two-year period 2017-2019 that will create a step-change in bookable English tourism product for international consumers,
    - o A smaller funding pot for new one-year pilot projects (in year two), and
    - o Continuation funding for existing year one projects that demonstrated early learnings (in year two).
- In Year four (2019/20) an extended period was granted for delivery of the large-scale projects to ensure delivery and/or amplification.
- In year five (2020/21) additional funding allocated by HM Treasury includes grant funding to existing projects, marketing and distribution activity led by VisitBritain/VisitEngland and evaluation and research.