

DAY TRIPS FROM LONDON

The Kent day guide

One page for each of the five stops on Kent day trips: what it is, what to see, what fits in the time you have, and where to find toilets and food.

How to use this guide

1. Check how long your tour gives you at each stop. Your tour's page lists the stops and the time at each one.
2. On the stop's page, tap how long your tour stops there: the route shows what fits.

3 Set a phone alarm 10 minutes before you need to be back at the bus.

Inside

Before you arrive
Kent in two minutes →

White Cliffs of Dover
Sea air and open space →

Dover Castle
Towers, defences and wartime stories →

Canterbury
Old streets and the river →

Canterbury Cathedral
A medieval cathedral up close →

Thomas Becket: the murder and the pilgrims
Read on the bus · A murder in 1170, a saint, and centuries of pilgrims →

The Canterbury Tales: why Canterbury?
Read on the bus · A famous poem about pilgrims on the road to Becket →

Leeds Castle

A castle on the water

→

Times are typical visit lengths, not a timetable. Opening hours and prices change: check the full guide online before you go.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Kent in two minutes

Why the White Cliffs are white



The cliffs are made of chalk, a soft white limestone. The National Trust says it formed from tiny green algae that lived in the sea. When they died, their remains sank to the seabed. Over millions of years the seabed rose above the sea.

Look for: The pale chalk face, and green patches where the cliff is not allowed to wear away.

Flint, brick and tile in the villages



Under much of east Kent lies chalk, and in places the soil on top is clay full of flints. The Kent Downs landscape assessment says villages here were traditionally built of local flint, brick and tile. Many are little more than a church, a manor and some farm cottages.

Look for: Church and cottage walls with dark, knobbly flint stones set in lime mortar or framed by brick.

Oast houses and hop gardens



The Kent Downs assessment says east Kent was once a place of widespread hop growing. Oast houses, the buildings used for drying hops, still dot the countryside, although almost no hop gardens are in production there now.

Look for: Oast houses in the fields you pass, the buildings where hops were dried.

A little history

A VERY OLD STORY

The white horse

No one knows for sure where Kent's white horse comes from. A famous story links it to Hengist and Horsa, but that is legend. The horse is still the county's emblem today.

597

Augustine and Canterbury

St Augustine arrived in Kent in 597, sent by Pope Gregory the Great. He set up the first cathedral at Canterbury, and the Archbishop of Canterbury still has his seat there.

1066 (A LEGEND)

Invicta, unconquered

Kent's motto is Invicta, Latin for unconquered. A local legend says it began when the men of Kent made a deal with William the Conqueror. It is a story, not proven history.

TODAY

The Garden of England

Kent is called the Garden of England because of its fruit orchards. The orchard fruit and juice are good things to taste while you are here.

First stop: White Cliffs of Dover →

White Cliffs of Dover

Sea air and open space

Your route ↓ | Toilets and food ↓



WHY STOP HERE

The White Cliffs are cliffs of chalk (a soft white rock) beside the sea, with grass above them. This is the part of the day for looking at the view, walking outside and feeling far from London's streets. With a longer stop you can

walk above the coast and watch the sea (the English Channel) change in the light. With a short stop you still get the view.



DON'T MISS

Britain's front door

The French coast on the horizon (only on a clear day), the ferries in Dover Harbour, and Dover Castle on the hill behind it.

Your route

Walk it in this order. The orange number is your time so far: stop when it reaches your tour's time here.

15 min

First viewpoint

15 min here · free **DON'T MISS**



Dover Harbour and its ferries below you, Dover Castle on the hill behind, and the French coast on a clear day.

45 min

Along the clifftop path

30 min here · free



Open chalk grassland, grazing ponies and cattle, and in summer wild flowers and blue butterflies.

65 min

The Visitor Centre

20 min here · free

A shop with gifts and local products, a second-hand bookshop, and a café with a view of the docks and the sea.

ALSO HERE, WITH MORE TIME

Fan Bay and the Deep Shelter tunnels

120 min · **own ticket**



The site of a Second World War gun battery, with tunnels hidden in the chalk. A guided visit takes you down into the Deep Shelter.

South Foreland Lighthouse

120 min · **own ticket**

A Victorian lighthouse built to warn ships away from the Goodwin Sands.



Ticket

There is no entry charge to walk on the cliffs. Parking is charged unless you are a National Trust member or Blue Badge holder, and the lighthouse tower tour and Fan Bay are charged separately. Fan Bay and the lighthouse open on set days in season, so check before you plan to visit them.

Toilets and food

The National Trust says the visitor centre is 150 metres from the bus parking. Toilets are at the back of the building. The cafeteria and the shop are at the front. The National Trust page was checked on 30 October 2026.

Next stop: Dover Castle →

Compare the tours that stop in White Cliffs of Dover

Full guide: seebeyondthecity.com/london/places/white-cliffs-of-dover/
Facts checked 20 October 2026

Dover Castle

Towers, defences and wartime stories

Your route ↓ | Toilets and food ↓



WHY STOP HERE

Dover Castle is a fortress on a hill above the town of Dover. It has a huge Great Tower and a long history of defending the coast. Choose it when you want the castle itself to be part of your day, with Canterbury or the cliffs. Allow

time to go inside. With a pass-by (the tour goes past), you see the castle from outside but you do not visit it.



DON'T MISS

A Roman lighthouse and a Saxon church

Lines of thin red Roman tiles in the lighthouse walls, and more Roman tiles around the church windows. The top part of the lighthouse was rebuilt in the Middle Ages.

Your route

Walk it in this order. The orange number is your time so far: stop when it reaches your tour's time here.

45 min

The Great Tower

45 min here · in the entry ticket



Henry II's royal palace, with furnished medieval rooms, and views over the castle and the English Channel from the top.

65 min

Roman lighthouse and St Mary in Castro

20 min here · in the entry ticket

DON'T MISS



Britain's oldest standing lighthouse, built by the Romans, beside the Anglo-Saxon church on its grassy mound.

85 min

Fire Command Post and Ramsay statue

20 min here · in the entry ticket



A First World War lookout above the cliffs, with wide views of the Channel and the White Cliffs, and the statue of Admiral Ramsay nearby.

115 min

Underground Hospital, Secret Wartime Tunnels

30 min here · in the entry ticket



A guided tour of the Second World War hospital in the chalk, with its operating theatre, wards and corridors.

145 min

Under Siege and the Spur

30 min here · in the entry ticket



An exhibition about the siege of 1216, the medieval tunnels under the north defences, and the Spur viewpoint where the attackers camped.

Toilets and food

English Heritage says the castle has male, female and disabled toilets in five places. The main restaurant is the NAAFI, with hot food, sandwiches and soup. A small Tunnels Tea Room sells sandwiches, cakes and ice cream. You can also eat a picnic in the grounds. The page was checked on 30 October 2026.

Next stop: Canterbury →

Compare the tours that stop in Dover Castle

Full guide: seebeyondthecity.com/london/places/dover-castle/
Facts checked 20 October 2026

Canterbury

Old streets and the river

Your route ↓ | Toilets ↓ | Food ↓



WHY STOP HERE

Canterbury is a historic city you can walk around. You can see old streets, the Westgate Towers and a river with gardens and punts (flat boats pushed with a long pole). Time here is for wandering and finding a place to take a

break. This stop is time in the city itself. If you want to go inside the cathedral, choose a tour with a planned cathedral visit.



DON'T MISS

A city gate built against invasion

The small openings for guns in the round towers, and the stone bridge over the river in front of the gate. Inside, the only way up is a narrow staircase of five flights.

Your route

Walk it in this order. The orange number is your time so far: stop when it reaches your tour's time here.

20 min

Westgate Gardens

20 min here · free



Lawns and flower beds beside the River Stour, and a plane tree more than 200 years old. Punt trips run on the river from mid-March to the end of October.

50 min

Westgate Towers

30 min here · **own ticket** DON'T MISS



The largest medieval city gate still standing in England, built from 1379, with a small museum inside and a climb to the battlements for a view over the city roofs.

80 min

The Old Weavers' House, Eastbridge Hospital and Greyfriars

30 min here · **own ticket**



The timber-framed Old Weavers' House by the river, and close by on the main street Eastbridge Hospital, which has welcomed pilgrims since 1190. Next door, the Franciscan Gardens hold Greyfriars Chapel.

110 min

The Beaney

30 min here · free

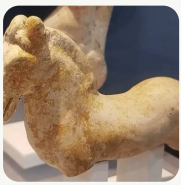


Canterbury's museum, art gallery and library, in a grand building of 1897 to 1899 on the High Street.

155 min

Canterbury Roman Museum

45 min here · **own ticket**



The mosaic floor of a Roman town house, found after the bombing of 1942, with Roman objects from the city around it.

215 min

St Augustine's Abbey

60 min here · **own ticket**



The ruins of the abbey that Augustine founded after 597. There is a small museum, a free audio tour and a virtual reality view of the abbey in the early 1500s.

HAS A PAGE OF ITS OWN



Canterbury Cathedral · 60 min · page 6
The cathedral where Thomas Becket was murdered in 1170. You reach it through Christ Church Gate, on the small square called the Buttermarket.

Toilets

Visit Canterbury says the West End, by Westgate Gardens, has cafes, restaurants and bars. A mobile cafe runs at Tower House in summer. It says the Toddler's Cove playground, further along the river path, has toilets and a refreshment van.

Food

The Goods Shed, next to Canterbury West station, calls itself a farmers market, food hall and restaurant. Lunch is served Tuesday to Sunday, 12 pm to 3 pm. It is closed on Mondays.

Next stop: Canterbury Cathedral →

Compare the tours that stop in Canterbury

Full guide:
seebeyondthecity.com/london/places/canterbury/
Facts checked 20 October 2026

Canterbury Cathedral

A medieval cathedral up close

Your route ↓ | Toilets and food ↓



WHY STOP HERE

Go inside the cathedral in the middle of Canterbury. You can see the nave (the long main hall) and the crypt (a room under the church), which is the oldest part of the building. There is also stained glass from the

Middle Ages. It is a planned visit with its own entry ticket, so check what your tour includes and how long it gives you inside.



DON'T MISS

Look up into the central tower

From the top of the Pulpitum Steps, the fan-shaped stone ceiling high inside the tower. Watch your step while you look up. Outside, the same tower rises above the middle of the roof.

Your route

Walk it in this order. The orange number is your time so far: stop when it reaches your tour's time here.

15 min

The nave

15 min here · in the entry ticket



The main visitor door leads into the nave, the long main hall rebuilt between 1377 and 1405. Just inside, look for the Canterbury Cross carved in stone.

25 min

The Martyrdom

10 min here · in the entry ticket



The place where Thomas Becket was killed in 1170, with his name in the floor, an altar and the sculpture of swords above it.

40 min

The crypt

15 min here · in the entry ticket



The oldest part of the cathedral, with round Norman arches, carved columns and the place of Becket's first tomb.

50 min

Pulpitum Steps and Bell Harry Tower

10 min here · in the entry ticket

DON'T MISS



Climb to the top of the steps and look straight up into the fan vaulting of the central tower. The stone screen here is carved with Lancastrian kings.

65 min

Trinity Chapel

15 min here · in the entry ticket



The candle that marks where Becket's shrine stood. The Miracle Windows are all around it, and the tomb of the Black Prince is close to the shrine site.

85 min

Great Cloister and Chapter House

20 min here · in the entry ticket



The covered walk of the monks' monastery, with over 800 carved shields, green men, rabbits and a mermaid. Beside it is the Chapter House, where the monks met every day.

Ticket

Sightseeing needs a ticket, bought online or at the Visitor Centre. Going to a service or into a chapel to pray is always free. On Sundays the grounds and shop open before the cathedral church does, so check the day's hours.

Toilets and food

Canterbury Cathedral says its public toilets are open 9.00 am to 6.30 pm daily. Its café, The Lounge at Cathedral Lodge, is open 10.00 am to 4.00 pm for coffee, lunch and snacks. In summer you can eat outside in the Campanile Garden. The cathedral page was checked on 30 October 2026.

Read on the bus: Thomas Becket: the murder and the pilgrims →

Compare the tours that stop in Canterbury Cathedral

Full guide:
seebeyondthecity.com/london/places/canterbury-cathedral/
Facts checked 20 October 2026

READ ON THE BUS

Thomas Becket: the murder and the pilgrims

A murder in 1170, a saint, and centuries of pilgrims



Thomas Becket was Archbishop of Canterbury. On 29 December 1170, four knights killed him inside his own cathedral.

This page tells the story, and why pilgrims came here for hundreds of years.

The murder, 1170

Becket and King Henry II argued for many years. The story says the king cried, “Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?” Four knights rode to Canterbury and killed Becket in the north-west transept. One sword blow was so hard that the tip of the blade broke on the stone floor.

A saint

Soon people said that sick pilgrims were healed through Becket. The Pope made him a saint in 1173. A stone in the floor with the name THOMAS marks the place where he died.

The shrine and the windows

A Canterbury monk, Benedict of Peterborough, wrote the miracle stories down. Between 1180 and 1220, glass makers turned dozens of them into pictures for twelve windows around the Trinity Chapel. In 1220 Becket’s body was moved into a new shrine there, and pilgrims came from across Europe

to pray. Henry VIII had the shrine destroyed in 1538.

Chaucer's pilgrims

Geoffrey Chaucer's poem, The Canterbury Tales, follows pilgrims who ride from London to Becket's shrine, telling stories on the way. The next page is about them.

Read on the bus: The Canterbury Tales: why Canterbury? →

Compare the tours that stop here

Full guide:
seebeyondthecity.com/london/places/canterbury-cathedral/
Facts checked 20 October 2026

READ ON THE BUS

The Canterbury Tales: why Canterbury?

A famous poem about pilgrims on the road to Becket



The Canterbury Tales is a poem by Geoffrey Chaucer. A pilgrim is a person who travels to a holy place. Chaucer's pilgrims ride from

London to Canterbury, telling stories on the way.

Who was Geoffrey Chaucer?

Chaucer was born in London in 1342, the son of a rich wine merchant. He worked at the king's court and collected taxes at the Port of London. The cathedral's learning site says he never finished the Tales.

Why Canterbury?

The pilgrims are going to the shrine (the holy resting place) of Thomas Becket. He was killed in the cathedral in 1170 (see the page before this one) and made a saint in 1173. The cathedral says this made Canterbury the third most important Christian pilgrimage site in the world, after Jerusalem and Rome.

The contest, and the missing end

About thirty pilgrims meet at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, across the river from London. The innkeeper plans 120 stories, and the best teller wins a dinner paid for by the others. But the poem stops on the road, and the pilgrims never reach Canterbury.

The Tales in Canterbury today

The Canterbury Tales Experience, in St Margaret's Street, is a walk-through show that follows the pilgrims from the Tabard Inn to Canterbury. Its website says it is open seven days a week, 10:30 am to 4:00 pm, and lasts 45 to 60 minutes (checked 30 October 2026).

Pilgrims you will meet

The Knight
A respected soldier who had ridden to war farther from home than almost any other man.

The Wife of Bath
A cloth-maker from near Bath. She had married five times and had been to Jerusalem three times.

The Miller
A big, strong man who always won the wrestling prize and could break a door by running at it with his head.

Next stop: Leeds Castle →

Compare the tours that stop here

Full guide:
seebeyondthecity.com/london/places/canterbury-cathedral/
Facts checked 20 October 2026

Leeds Castle

A castle on the water

Your route ↓

Toilets and food ↓



WHY STOP HERE

A castle reflected in water, rooms shaped by centuries of owners, and gardens to relax in. Leeds Castle brings royal history and the atmosphere of a country-house visit into one day from London. It is the place to choose

if you would rather spend your day in and around one castle than move between several stops.



DON'T MISS

A castle for queens

The Gloriette on the smaller island, joined to the main castle by a stone bridge with arches over the water. The multimedia guide, included with your ticket, tells the queens' stories.

Your route

Walk it in this order. The orange number is your time so far: stop when it reaches your tour's time here.

15 min

Cedar Lake and the first view

15 min here · in the entry ticket

From the cascade at Cedar Lake, your first full view of the castle on its water.



75 min

The castle

60 min here · in the entry ticket

DON'T MISS

Cross the drawbridge to the castle island. Inside are the library and dining room, Lady Baillie's rooms upstairs, and the drawing rooms.



90 min

The Dog Collar Museum

15 min here · in the entry ticket

A small museum of dog collars beside the castle. The collars range from a Spanish iron collar of the late 1400s to modern ones made from tyres, beads and plastic.



110 min

The Culpeper Garden

20 min here · in the entry ticket

A cottage garden of roses, lupins and poppies inside low box hedges, where the castle's kitchen garden once grew.



130 min

Lady Baillie Mediterranean Garden Terraces

20 min here · in the entry ticket

A sunny terraced garden with herbs and fragrant plants, and views across the Great Water.



150 min

The Maze and Grotto

20 min here · in the entry ticket

A maze of 2,400 yew trees. From the mound at its centre you see the circular pattern, and an underground grotto with mythical creatures leads you back out.



Toilets and food

Leeds Castle lists accessible toilets at the main entrance, on the Castle Island, near the Stable Courtyard and near the Knight's Stronghold playground. Its page names the Maze Café, the seasonal Boathouse catering outlet and Castle View Restaurant. The page was checked on 30 October 2026.

More days out from London →

Compare the tours that stop in Leeds Castle

Full guide: seebeyondthecity.com/london/places/leeds-castle/

Facts checked 20 October 2026

More days out from London

Each region has its own page, with every tour's stops and how long you get at each one.

Ready to choose a tour?

See every Kent day trip side by side: the stops, the minutes at each one, and what is included.

Compare Kent day trips



BATH AND STONEHENGE

Stonehenge & Roman Bath

Stonehenge · Bath · Castle Combe

Up to about 180 km · 111 miles

Get the Bath and Stonehenge day guide →



THE COTSWOLDS

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Get the Cotswolds day guide →

Spotted a change?
Opening times and prices change. Reply to the email this guide came in and tell us what you found.

Travelling with someone?
Forward the email, so they have the guide on their phone too.

Sources

WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER

National Trust: the White Cliffs of Dover

National Trust arrival guide: toilets and cafeteria

National Trust walking guide

National Trust Fan Bay guide

DOVER CASTLE

English Heritage: history of Dover Castle

English Heritage: Dover Castle itineraries

English Heritage: facilities and tours

English Heritage: Dover Castle Under Siege

English Heritage: things to see and do

English Heritage, Dover Castle

English Heritage: facilities at Dover Castle

CANTERBURY

Canterbury Archaeological Trust: Westgate and City Gaol

Visit Canterbury: Westgate Towers Museum and Viewpoint

Eastbridge Hospital

Visit Canterbury: Westgate Gardens

Canterbury Museums: Roman Museum visit information

Visit Canterbury: St Augustine's Abbey

Canterbury Museums: the Beaney

The Goods Shed, Canterbury

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

Canterbury Cathedral: architecture

Canterbury Cathedral learning site: the cathedral

Cathedral accessibility

Canterbury Cathedral: cathedral grounds

Cathedral tickets and opening times

Canterbury Cathedral: plan your visit

THOMAS BECKET: THE MURDER AND THE PILGRIMS

Canterbury Cathedral: our story

Canterbury Cathedral: miracles and masterpieces

Canterbury Cathedral learning site: pilgrimage today

THE CANTERBURY TALES: WHY CANTERBURY?

Canterbury Cathedral learning site: Chaucer

Canterbury Cathedral learning site: pilgrimage today

Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer Website: summary of the framing narrative

The Canterbury Tales Experience

Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer Website: General Prologue

LEEDS CASTLE

Leeds Castle: history of the castle

Leeds Castle: the castle

Leeds Castle: the Maze and Grotto

Leeds Castle: the Princess Alexandra Gardens

Leeds Castle: the Culpeper Garden

Leeds Castle: the Lady Baillie Mediterranean Garden Terraces

Leeds Castle: Dog Collar Museum

Leeds Castle accessibility: toilets and cafés

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