

Nine traffic-free bike rides in the South East



Suitable for all abilities

Easy and enjoyable rides

From a gentle cycle through one of London's Royal Parks to following superb seaside paths, the South East of England has some great options for carefree, family-friendly bike rides.

As the custodians of the **National Cycle Network** we've put together some of our favourite traffic-free rides in the South East to inspire your next cycling adventure.

Key to route maps:



Bike Hire



Pub



Café



Restaurant



Routes Menu

Tap on a desired route below or scroll



Route one – West Sussex

Centurion Way



Route two – Sussex

Shoreham Promenade



Route three – Sussex

Brighton Seafront



Route four – Kent

Tudor Trail



Route five – Kent

Oyster Bay Trail



Route six – Kent

Viking Coastal Trail



Route seven – London

Tamsin Trail



Route eight – London

Two Palaces



Route nine – Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire

Phoenix Trail



Top Tips





Route one

Centurion Way, West Sussex



Centurion Way

A picturesque rural ride from the edge of the beautiful cathedral city of Chichester into the rolling hills of the South Downs on the old Chichester to Midhurst railway line. Begin in the shadows of giant oak, sweet chestnut and sycamore trees before following a gentle stony climb into sprawling farmland. Watch out for the Chichester Road Gang en route – a sculpture of spade-wielding Roman workers marking the spot where an old Roman road crosses the path.



Key route information:

Start:	Westgate, Chichester
Finish:	West Dean
Time:	1 - 2 hours
Length of ride:	5.5 miles



Start

Chichester

Westgate,
Chichester
PO19 1RJ

GPS: 50.836251,
-0.790754

Finish

West Dean Gardens

West Dean,
West Sussex
PO18 0RX

GPS: 50.907212,
-0.771590

Terrain, gradients and access

A gentle climb along tarmac path and stony trail with short, quiet on-road sections at Lavant and West Dean.

Ideas for things to do:

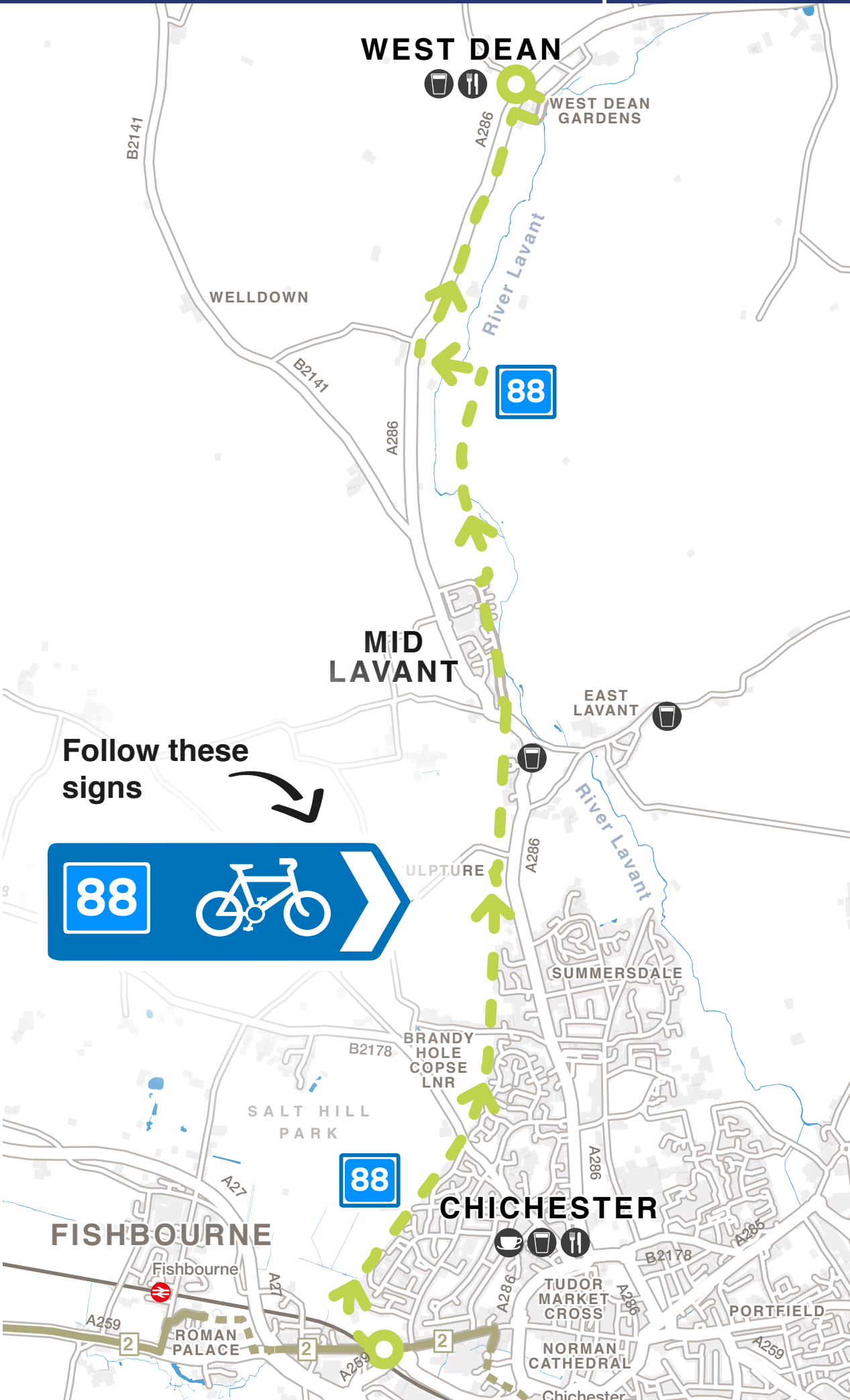
- Detour to Fishbourne to marvel at the remains of its impressive Roman palace
- Visit Chichester's walled city centre to see the ornate Tudor Market Cross and Norman Cathedral
- Explore the attractive Victorian green houses and arboretum of West Dean Gardens
- Visit Weald and Downland Open Air Museum.

Route one

Centurion Way, West Sussex



MENU



WEST DEAN



WEST DEAN GARDENS

WELLDOWN

MID LAVANT

EAST LAVANT

Follow these signs



ULPTURE

SUMMERSDALE

BRANDY HOLE COPSE LNR

SALT HILL PARK

CHICHESTER

FISHBOURNE

Fishbourne

ROMAN PALACE

TUDOR MARKET CROSS

NORMAN CATHEDRAL

PORTFIELD



Route two

Shoreham Promenade, Sussex



Shoreham Promenade

This flat and effortless route along the sunny Sussex coast mixes wild, nature-filled shoreline with elegant seaside resorts. The entire Shoreham shingle beach is a Local Nature Reserve and the Adur Estuary is a great spot to watch flocks of wading birds. Near the halfway point, Beach Green in Lancing, England's largest village, is highly recommended for a picnic and a mid-ride paddle before cycling the final gentle miles to the traditional seaside town of Worthing.



Key route information:

Start:	Shoreham-by-Sea
Finish:	Worthing
Time:	1 - 2 hours
Length of ride:	6 miles



Start

Shoreham-by-Sea train station

Shoreham-by-Sea,
Sussex,
BN43 5WX

GPS: 50.834322,
-0.271771

Finish

Waterwise Garden

West Parade, Worthing,
West Sussex,
BN11 5EB

GPS: 50.80615,
-0.398766

Terrain, gradients and access

Flat tarmac path with a short, on-road section at Shoreham-by-Sea. Cyclists are required to get off and push for very short sections around Lancing Beach Green.

Ideas for things to do:

- Watch flocks of wading birds feeding on the mudflats of RSPB's Adur Estuary
- Picnic and paddle on Lancing Beach Green
- Visit the excellent Worthing Museum and Art Gallery
- Explore the beautiful chalk Highdown Gardens in Worthing
- Why not start your ride in Brighton and follow the National Route 2 east to Shoreham Promenade?

Route two

Shoreham Promenade, Sussex



MENU





Route three

Brighton Seafront, Sussex



Brighton Seafront

On a summer's day the mix of cyclists, skaters, walkers and joggers on Brighton's seaside path gives the seafront an almost Californian feel. As you cycle across the promenade, you'll have wonderful views across the English Channel to admire on one side and on the other, one of the south coast's liveliest cities to visit. The distinctive black Rottingdean Windmill and the magnificently restored Victorian bandstand respectively mark the beginning and end of this refreshing and easy cycle.



Key route information:

Start: Saltdean

Finish: Hove

Time: 2 hours

Length of ride: 7 miles



Start

White Cliffs Café

Marine Dr, Saltdean,
Brighton
BN2 8SQ

[GPS: 50.8007116,](#)
[-0.041996](#)

Finish

Hove train station

Hove,
Sussex
BN3 3RX

[GPS: 50.835113,](#)
[-0.171040](#)

Terrain, gradients and access

Tarmac path with short, on-road sections at Rottingdean, Black Rock and Hove. At the start of the ride there is an alternative option to take a more sheltered ride along Undercliff Walk which closely follows the shoreline beneath the white chalk cliffs.

Ideas for things to do:

- Go shopping in The Lanes, Brighton's historic centre full of independent shops
- Take a short (five-minute) walk inland to visit the extravagant Royal Pavilion
- Visit Brighton's Marina, the biggest marina in Europe and home to sleek boats and parasol-terraced restaurants
- Cycle a further mile down from the Hove Lawns to Hove Lagoon and continue your ride all the way to Shoreham-by-Sea.

Route three

Brighton Seafront, Sussex



MENU



Follow these signs





Route four

Tudor Trail, Kent



Tudor Trail

The majestic view of Penshurst Place on the final stretch of this ride could have been taken straight out of a fairy-tale and makes the final descent a distinctly memorable one. The route begins near the remains of Tonbridge Castle and winds its way through charming countryside into the Weald of Kent. There is one steady climb towards the end but with impressive views and plenty of picturesque picnic stops to choose from, even the climb is a pleasure.



Key route information:

Start:	Tonbridge
Finish:	Penshurst
Time:	30 mins – 1 hour
Length of ride:	5.5 miles



Start

Tonbridge Swimming Pool car park

5 The Slade,
Tonbridge
TN9 1HR

GPS: 51.1965216,
0.271913

Finish

Penshurst Place and Gardens

Penshurst,
Kent
TN11 8DG

GPS: 51.174617,
0.184476

Terrain, gradients and access

Largely flat with one long climb near the end.
Tarmac and concrete path, fine gravel and stony trail. A short and quiet on-road section at Lower Haysden.

Ideas for things to do:

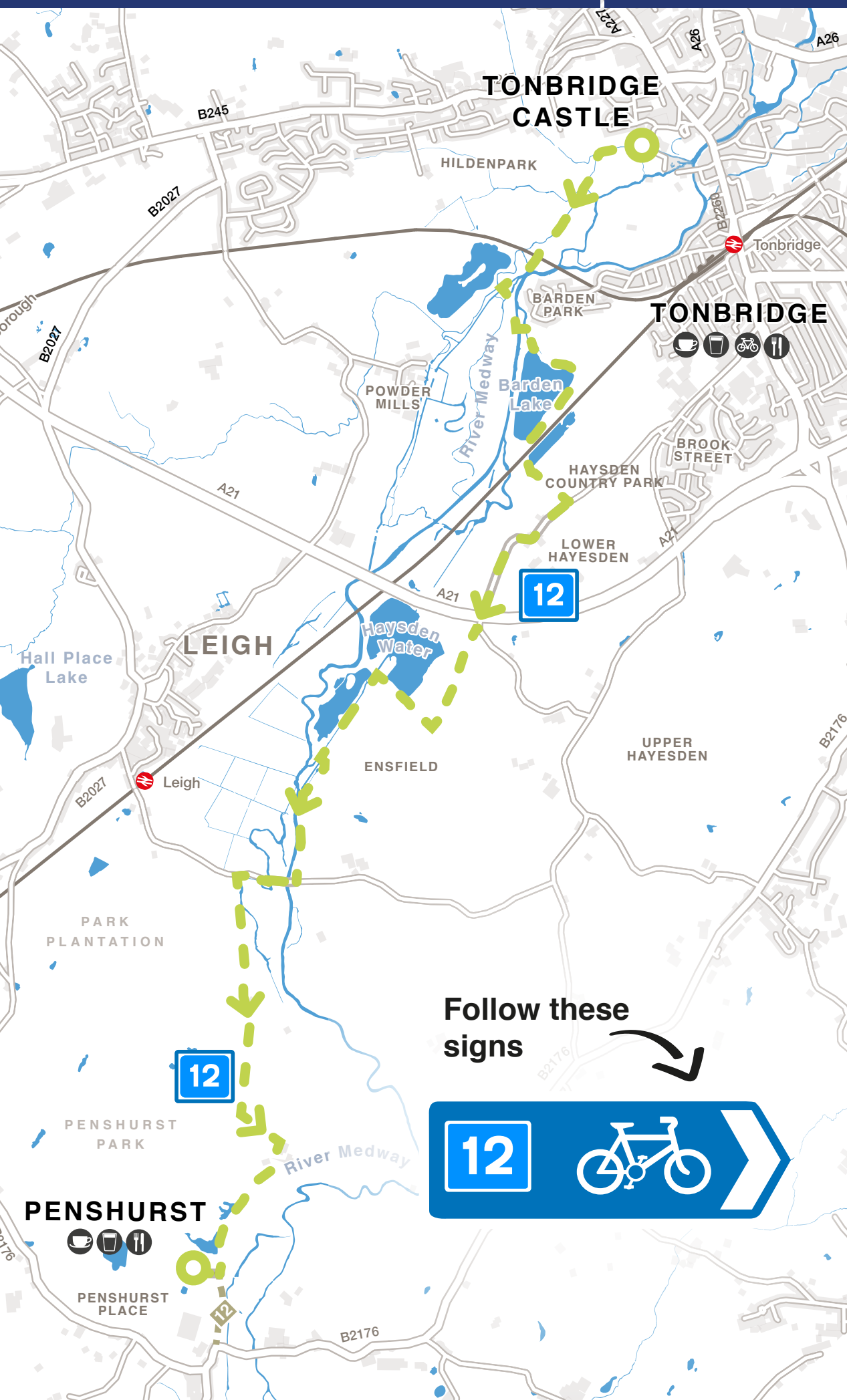
- Take the small detour to visit Tonbridge Castle – the gatehouse is regarded as one of the finest in England
- Enjoy a picnic on the edges of Barden Lake beside the white willow trees
- Explore the house and gardens of Penshurst Place
- Visit the idyllic village of Penshurst with its Tudoresque architecture and ivy-covered cottages.

Route four

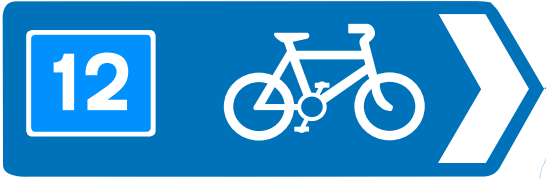
Tudor Trail, Kent



MENU



Follow these signs





Route five

Oyster Bay Trail, Kent



Oyster Bay Trail

Sweeping views of the north Kent coast are the real star of this seaside path. Begin in the quirky fishing town of Whitstable and weave your way from its brightly coloured beach huts to the austere cliffs and untamed shoreline of Reculver Country Park. Enjoy an interesting contrast of traditional seaside resorts and quieter, wilder stretches of shore. In the final mile, the imposing twin towers of the medieval St Mary's church makes for a dramatic end to your ride.



Key route information:

Start:	Whitstable Harbour
Finish:	Reculver Country Park
Time:	30 mins – 1 hour
Length of ride:	4 miles



Start

Whitstable Harbour

Harbour Street
Whitstable, Kent
CT5 1AB

[GPS: 51.363086,
1.027143](#)

Finish

Reculver Country Park

Reculver Lane,
Herne Bay
CT6 6SS

[GPS: 51.377087,
1.194030](#)

Terrain, gradients and access

Largely flat along concrete, shared-use promenade with some climbs and on-road sections at Herne Bay and Bishopstone Glen. A short grassy section leads through Reculver Country Park.

Ideas for things to do:

- Stop mid-way on Herne Bay's shingly beach and enjoy an ice-cream in one of the traditional beachside deckchairs
- For a longer ride why not start in Canterbury and cycle the eight miles to Whitstable on the Crab & Winkle Way?
- Continue your ride from Reculver to Margate on the 9-mile Viking Coastal Trail

Route five

Oyster Bay Trail, Kent



MENU





Route six

Viking Coastal Trail, Kent



Viking Coastal Trail

The wild and chalky Thanet Coast, where the Vikings first landed in Britain, creates an invigorating bike ride. From Reculver's cliff top grassland the path passes a Roman fort before heading over the blustery, concrete top of the Northern Sea Wall. On a sunny day an endless expanse of turquoise sea stretches beside this glorious route. Shingle gives way to golden sand, and oyster catchers and cormorants surrender to colourful beach huts and seaside promenades.



Key route information:

Start:	Reculver Country Park
Finish:	Margate
Time:	1 – 2 hours
Length of ride:	8.5 miles



Start

Reculver Country Park

Reculver Lane,
Herne Bay,
CT6 6SS

GPS: 51.379063,
1.198061

Finish

Turner Contemporary

Rendezvous,
Margate
CT9 1HG

GPS: 51.391119,
1.381943

Terrain, gradients and access

Shared-use, concrete promenade and a short, on-road section from Eppe Bay to Westgate-on-Sea. On short sections of the promenade at Westgate-on-Sea, St Mildred's Bay and Westbrook Bay, cyclists are required to dismount and push in the peak summer season.

Ideas for things to do:

- Enjoy an early ice-cream and paddle in the sea at the sandy Minnis Bay with lovely views looking back at the sandstone cliffs of Reculver
- Play a game of mini-golf at Strokes Adventure Golf in Westbrook Bay
- Visit an exhibition at Margate's seafront Turner Contemporary gallery

Route six

Viking Coastal Trail, Kent



MENU





Route seven

Tamsin Trail, London



Tamsin Trail

A perfect path for families and less confident cyclists. The Tamsin Trail is a lovely loop exploring the many attractions and hidden corners of Richmond Park, the largest and wildest of London's eight Royal Parks. There's a Georgian mansion to visit, landscaped gardens to discover and iconic views to enjoy – the most memorable of which is the 10-mile vista down to St Paul's Cathedral from King Henry's Mound. All in all, it's a great spot to escape the hustle and bustle of south London.



Key route information:

Start / Finish:

**Roehampton Gate,
Richmond Park**

Time:

1 – 2 hours

Length of ride:

7.5 miles



Start / Finish

Parkcycle at Roehampton Gate

Roehampton Gate Car Park,
Priory Ln,
London
SW15 5JP

[GPS: 51.452868, -0.255512](#)

Terrain, gradients and access

Fine gravel track, undulating throughout with one reasonably long climb and some short, steep descents. Small crossings over the quiet roads within the park.

Ideas for things to do:

- Pick up a trail map from Parkcycle, Richmond Park's cycling centre for details of points of interest on the ride
- Take a small detour at Ham Cross to explore the exotic, ornamental woodland garden of Isabella Plantation
- Stop for tea and cake and visit Pembroke Lodge, an attractive Georgian mansion at the highest point in Richmond Park

Route seven

Tamsin Trail, London



MENU





Route eight

Two Palaces, London



Two Palaces

Tick off some sightseeing hotspots with this short and easy ride through three of London's leafy Royal Parks. From Buckingham Palace, skirt the edge of Green Park and head into Hyde Park alongside the fountains and formal rose gardens. As you enter Kensington Gardens the impressive Kensington Palace façade soon comes into sight. Cycle up Broad Walk for the best views, before making the return trip down Mount Walk and along the lovely north bank of the Serpentine.



Key route information:

Start:	Buckingham Palace
Finish:	Hyde Park Corner
Time:	30 mins – 1 hour
Length of ride:	4 miles



Start

Buckingham Palace

Westminster,
London
SW1A 1AA

GPS: 51.501364,
-0.141889

Finish

Hyde Park Corner

Hyde Park Corner,
Knightsbridge, London
SW1X 7LY

GPS: 51.50303,
-0.152420

Terrain, gradients and access

Flat tarmac path. Some road crossings. Take care at Buckingham Palace as it's a very busy spot that teems with tourists, especially mid-morning during the Changing of the Guard ceremony.

Ideas for things to do:

- Join the crowds for the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace
- Rent a paddle boat on the Serpentine, or cool off from your bike ride at the lido
- Visit the modern and contemporary exhibitions at Serpentine Art Gallery in Kensington Gardens
- Enjoy tea and cake at the baroque Orangery Restaurant next to Kensington Palace

Route eight

Two Palaces, London



MENU





Route nine

Phoenix Trail, Oxfordshire/Bucks



Phoenix Trail

Popular with cyclists and walkers alike this rural trail is rich in wildlife (it is particularly renowned for its red kites) and boasts panoramic views of the Chilterns. There is seating every 500 metres along the path with the most elaborate 'Winged Seat' appearing in the first few miles, a perfect spot to have a break and admire the landscape. Further down the path, look out for more artwork in the form of precariously perched copper creatures high on the telegraph poles.



Key route information:

Start:	Thame
Finish:	Princes Risborough
Time:	1 - 2 hours
Length of ride:	8.5 miles



Start

Thame Leisure Centre

Oxford Rd,
Thame
OX9 2BB

GPS: 51.746089,
-0.992663

Finish

Market Square

Princes Risborough
Buckinghamshire
HP27 0AN

GPS: 51.722845,
-0.829784

Terrain, gradients and access

Mostly flat tarmac path, fine gravel track and stony trail. Some small road crossings and a short on-road section at Princes Risborough.

Ideas for things to do:

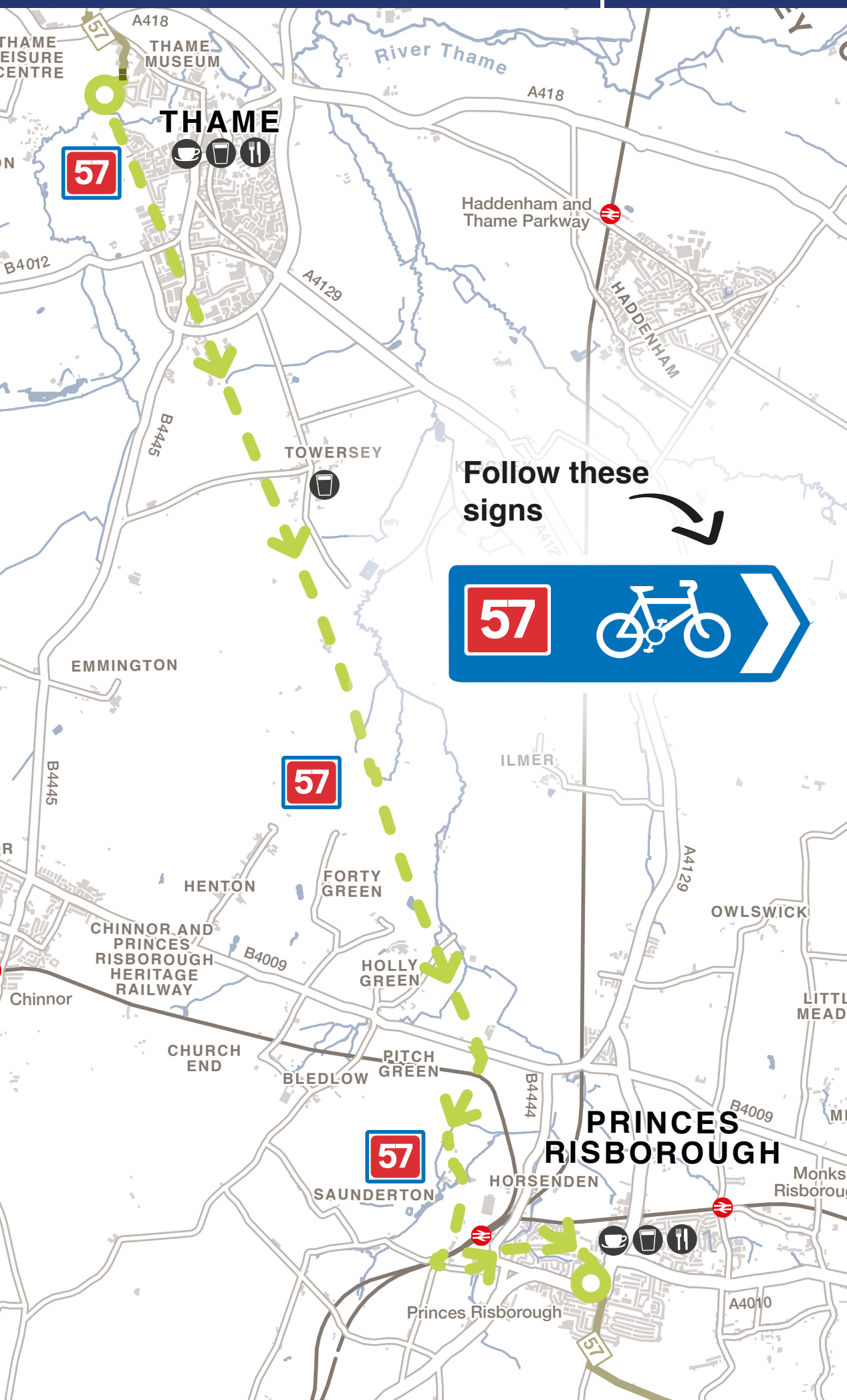
- Follow the signed, quarter of a-mile link path into the centre of Thame to admire the thatched roofs and visit the Thame Museum
- Stop for lunch at The Three Horseshoes pub in Towersey, popular with cyclists and walkers
- Spot the Whiteleaf Cross carved into the steep chalk hillside above Princes Risborough

Route nine

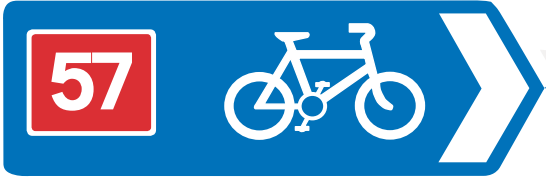
Phoenix Trail, Oxfordshire/Bucks



MENU



Follow these signs





Bike ride checklist

You don't need special or expensive equipment to enjoy a short bike ride but here are some items you'll certainly find useful.

For you:

- A hat and suncream if it's sunny
- Waterproofs and extra layers of clothing
- Bike helmet – it's not compulsory to wear one in the UK but a well-fitted helmet is especially recommended for children
- Snacks and drinks to keep energy levels up
- Mobile phone and money

For your bike:

- Water bottle
- Puncture repair kit and pump
- Tyre levers, a bike 'multi-tool' or allen keys and adjustable spanner
- Spare inner-tubes (saves you having to repair a puncture immediately)
- Bike lights
- Bike lock
- Bike bell – when on a shared used path a friendly tinkle will let people know you're approaching.



Keep it safe and fun

Here are some tips to keep in mind when out on your ride:

- Let the slowest rider in your group set the pace for your ride.
- Ride in line on busy paths with any children in the middle of the adults. If there's only one adult, ride at the rear so you can keep an eye on everyone in front.
- Take extra care along any on-road sections and at road crossings. You may prefer to push your bike, especially with younger children or less experienced riders.

Plan your route



The routes in this guide are signed and easy to follow – just look out for the National Cycle Network blue signs. You can also check out your route in detail on our online map.

Check your bike



Before you set off on your ride, check your bike is in good condition. We've put together a guide to help you safety check your bike in 11 easy steps.

Fix a puncture



Thankfully, punctures don't happen often and are easy to fix yourself. All you need is a pump, puncture repair kit and a set of tyre levers. Watch our video to learn how to repair a puncture.



Please be aware that routes in this guide may not be accessible to everyone.

One of our top priorities is making the National Cycle Network accessible to everyone.

But not everyone can easily access the Network.

We work hand in hand with communities to find the best ways to remove and redesign barriers.

This is to help everyone experience the benefits of walking, wheeling and cycling in their local area.

Improving accessibility



As custodians of the National Cycle Network, we're committed to making it safe and accessible for everyone.

We deal with restrictive barriers at a local level, working with communities, local groups and landowners to design alternative solutions together.

How we remove barriers



Find out how our team go about removing barriers.

Enjoyed your ride on the National Cycle Network?

Donate to Sustrans



Please help us to look after and improve the National Cycle Network for everyone to enjoy.

Buy the guide



For more inspiring bike ride ideas buy our Traffic Free Cycle Rides guidebook. It includes 150 hand-picked routes across the UK to help you plan the perfect day out.

Our guide offers a unique glimpse into the UK's remarkable landscapes, history, culture and architecture. The rides range from the wild and ethereal mountain tracks of Snowdonia, to fairy tale woodland trails through the Forest of Dean, and elegant city centre paths linking London's Royal Parks and palaces.



Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Find out more at
www.sustrans.org.uk

All photos © Sustrans except front page and Hyde Park cyclist © Jonathan Bewley, Roman mosaic © David Holt, Flickr.com/photos/zongo, Shoreham Promenade © Dawn Reid, Buckingham Palace © Oleg Brovko, Flickr.com/photos/belboo, High Five © Livia Lazar/Sustrans, Cyclist and stag © Christine Gau.

Maps contain Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right (2015).

© OpenStreetMap contributors www.openstreetmap.org copyright and www.opendatacommons.org



sustrans

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

The rides in this guide have been suggested by Sustrans to help you enjoy traffic-free routes on the National Cycle Network. Cycle routes change over time, which may affect this collection of rides. Weather conditions may also affect path surfaces. Please use your own judgement when using the routes based upon the weather and the ability, experience and confidence levels of riders in your group.

Sustrans accepts no responsibility for any accidents or injury resulting from following these routes.

Sustrans is a registered charity no. 326550 (England and Wales) SCO39263 (Scotland)

© Sustrans 2018