

## **Viking Trail Tour**

The first part of your route will follow the old Crab and Winkle Railway Line from Canterbury to Whitstable. This railway line was the second to be built in the world and was turned up in 1953. It is now being preserved as a dedicated cycle route. Whitstable itself is famous for its oysters and if you visit the harbour area you can get some fresh oysters when they are in season. Your route then follows the North Kent Coast through the seaside resort of Herne Bay to the ruined Abbey and Roman Fort at Reculver. At Reculver you ride along the sea wall along the recently created Viking Coastal Trail to Birchington and the Isle of Thanet. At Birchington continue on the Viking Trail. Continue past Westgate, Margate, Cliftonville, Broadstairs and Ramsgate. At Cliffsend you have a choice to either continue to follow the Viking Trail to Minster and catch the train back to Canterbury or you can ride to Sandwich and ride along National Cycle Route 1 back to Canterbury. The distances are 35.5 miles/ 59 kilometers and 58 miles/96.5 kilometers respectively.

1. From Canterbury West Railway Station turn left and ride through a new housing estate. Go straight ahead at mini roundabout and look for a cycle path on the left. Follow it and pass under the railway line. At a large green bear left and at the end bear right. At T junction with Forty Acres road turn left, and almost immediately turn right into St. Michael's Road.
2. Follow Cycle Route signs to the University as it winds through a housing estate. The cycle path then climbs through parkland to the University. Go straight ahead at the mini roundabout and straight ahead at the large roundabout. At T junction turn right, join the Cycle path at the traffic lights and follow the road round to the left. Continue down this road until playing fields and at the end turn right into the Crab and Winkle Way.
3. Descend hill and climb the other side, passing St. Cosmos and Damien Church, Blean on your left. At crossroads with tarmac road go straight across. Continue along gravel track through orchards. By farm shop on your left at Amery Court Cottage. Pass through fields and enter woodland. at crossroads turn right and at T junction in track turn left. You are now riding on the old trackbed of the Crab and Winkle Line. 25m after this junction on your left is a beautiful clearing with a pond. An excellent spot for a picnic.
4. Continue along this track descending a gentle slope. At the bottom of the main track forks right and starts to climb. At the top of a short rise be prepared to bear left and descend through woods until you rejoin a main track and bear right. Continue to descend this farm track with care.
5. In a while track crosses main Thanet way by a new bridge and then rejoins a track on the other side. The track eventually comes out on a

tarmac road by some farm buildings. Turn left and after 200m (immediately after a turning into Millstrood Road), go almost straight ahead onto a Cycle track and follow. This again is the old Crab and Winkle trackbed. Suddenly cycle route comes to an abrupt end. There are several ways to ride into town.

6. Turn right into Ivy House Road and left into Church Street. Follow this road down going straight ahead at junctions. Later road becomes Castle Road. Turn left and follow main road into Harbour.

(7 miles/ 11.5 kilometers)

7. From the harbour head East and by museum fork left and find road along the seafront and on to Marine Parade. At the end of the Parade rejoin Herne Bay Road (B2205) and follow the road to Herne Bay. In a while the road becomes Whitstable Road. Look for Hampton Pier Road on your left and turn into that road and ride down it until you reach the seafront and then follow the seafront through the rest of the resort of Herne Bay.
8. Leave Herne Bay by continuing to follow seawall route towards Reculver. Route may now be signed Viking Coastal Trail. Continue to follow to the Abbey ruins. There are still some parts of a Roman Fort that are gradually being washed away into the sea. Pass the King Ethelbert Public House and commence to follow the footpath along the seawall towards Birchington. signposted Viking Coastal Trail.

(15 miles/ 26 kilometers)

9. Pass the pumping station at Plum Pudding Island and on to Minnis Bay and Birchington. There is a cafe at the point where you rejoin the road at Minnis Bay. Follow along The Parade. Continue to follow signs Viking Coastal Trail which most of the time follows the parade along the seafront. Pass through Birchington, Westgate and on to Margate.

(23 miles/ 38 kilometers)

10. Continue to follow Viking Coastal trail around North Foreland Point and on to Broadstairs, when you get to Broadstairs head inland up the High Street and turn left into Queens Road.

(27.5 miles/ 46 kilometers)

11. Return to seafront and continue along marked trail towards Ramsgate. Pass the Harbour and Marina and follow the route to cliffsend. By the Viking Ship Memorial you have a choice.

(32.5 miles/ 54 kilometers)

12. Either fork right, veering away from the seashore and continue to follow the Viking Coastal Trail to Minster Railway Station to take the train back to Canterbury

(35.5 miles/ 59 kilometers)

13. Or Follow the route marked Cycle Route 15 towards Sandwich. This continues to follow the shoreline past Pfizer's Pharmaceutical Complex into the ancient Cinque Port of Sandwich.

(37.5 miles/ 62.5 kilometers)

### **Sandwich**

Among the places to visit while you are in Sandwich there is The Guildhall which is still used as a Court Room, the Barbican and Sandwich Quay, the ancient St. Bartholomews Hospital and the Precinct Toy Museum.

14. Leave Sandwich via Strand Street. Immediately opposite the Fire Station turn right into Richborough Road signposted Cycle Route 1. Cross over the railway line. Pass the ruined Roman Castle at Richborough on your right.
15. Pass Potts Farm on your right and then follow route along a bridleway. At the crossroads turn right following Cycle Route 1

(41.5 miles/ 69 kilometers)

16. Keep to the main lane ignoring any side turnings. In a while turn right signposted Elmstone and Preston. Pass Elmdtone Church on your left and at T junction after crossroads turn right signposted Elmstone, Preston and Wingham. Enter the village of Preston and at T junction in the centre turn right.

(45.5 miles/ 76 kilometers)

17. Pass the Moon and Seven Stars Public House on your left and almost immediately afterwards turn left into Grove Ferry and Upstreet. Cross over the Little Stour River and at T junction turn left signposted Stodmarsh, Wickhambreaux and Littlebourne. At fork in the road turn right signposted Stodmarsh and Fordwich. Take the next turning right by a group of houses unsigned. At T junction turn right signposted Stodmarsh and enter the village of Stodmarsh.

(51 miles/ 85 kilometers)

18. Pass the church on your right and the Red Lion Public House, which is has a reputation for good food. Between the Church and Pub is a lane marked No Through Road, It leads to Stodmarsh Bird Reserve and if you are interested in Bird Watching then it is worth a visit. Leave the village and climb up to Trenley Park wood. Ignore side turnings in the wood and after leaving woodland ignore first turning on right marked No Entry but turn right at the second turning into Moat Road signposted Fordwich and Sturry and descend a hill into the ancient village of Fordwich.

(54 miles/ 90 kilometers)

19. You can take a short diversion off to your right and visit the Town Hall, which is the smallest in England. Continue through the village to the George and Dragon Public House. Take the dedicated Cycle Route immediately opposite and ride across the water meadows skirting some woodland then enter the City of Canterbury.

(56 miles/ 93 kilometers)

20. The cycle route eventually comes out by the rear of the Northgate Community Centre. Take the cycle track down the side and in front of the Royal Mail Sorting Office. Follow the cycle route past the Council Offices and along an alleyway. At the rear of the ambulance station turn right and go straight across Military Road via staggered cycle crossing on right into an alleyway. Follow that through to Northgate. Turn left and take second turning on right into St. Radigunds Street. Follow this road and pass Millers Arms on your left, cross over bridge over the river and turn right into the Causeway. At mini roundabout go straight ahead into Station Road West and follow road back to the Railway Station

(58 miles/ 96.5 kilometers)