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YHA South Downs

Firle Beacon and Cuckmere Haven

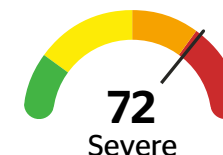
Scan or click to view this route on the OS Maps App – also a route profile and GPX

Hilltop, town, river and coast walk

Distance: 20.3 miles (32.7km) **Ascent:** 405m (1,329ft) **Time:** Allow 8h 45m to 10h (caution slow walkers, may require over 14h)

Map: OS Explorer 1:25k (OL11) Brighton & Hove and OS Explorer 1:25k (OL25) Eastbourne & Beachy Head

Start/Finish: OS Locate TQ 433 055 **what3words** ///soups.decreased.anchors



A stunning long route with amazing views, beautiful rivers, coast path and interesting towns. From the hostel courtyard follow the road ahead and turn left after the YHA car park to cross the bridge over the A26. Follow the South Downs Way over Firle Beacon and into Alfriston. Cross the Cuckmere River and turn right. Cross back at Exceat Bridge to ensure the river is on your left as you walk to the sea. At Seaford Head turn right along the coastal cliffs, onto Seaford beach and follow the Vanguard Way into Newhaven. Briefly walk alongside the A26 and bear left to cross the railway to the River Ouse. Turn right and follow the river. Turn right at the Southease swing bridge, cross the railway and continue to the hostel.

Hazards

Caution crossing the railway at Newhaven industrial estate and Southease. Uneven ground alongside Cuckmere River. Caution crossing the busy road at Exceat. Steep cliffs on the coastal path towards Seaford, without obvious edges in places. Do not take this route if the rivers are flooded. In winter the route will become more hazardous, especially if covered in snow and ice, and will require winter clothing and footwear.

Accessibility

There are steps and stiles on the route, gates and paths less than one metre wide and sections of rough ground with ruts or stones greater than 10cm. Trains to Southease from Seaford reduce the walk to about 14 miles, from Bishopstone to about 15 miles and from Newhaven to about 16.5 miles.

Points of interest

Incredible views from Firle Beacon. Pretty Alfriston village with a historic church. Chalk horse in the hillside. Beautiful riverside paths along the Cuckmere and Ouse. Lovely beach at Cuckmere Haven. Stunning coastal views from Seaford Head and beyond. Interesting seafront town of Seaford and industrial Newhaven.

Facilities

Food, drink and toilets available at the YHA. Toilets, pubs and food available in Alfriston, Seaford and Newhaven. Pub at Litlington and Exceat Bridge. Toilets at the visitor centre in Exceat and on Seaford beach.



This route has been created by YHA to provide inspiration and to aid planning and preparation of your walk. It doesn't replace the need for an OS Map or the OS Maps App to navigate your walk safely. Digital maps are a guide and do not always reflect the conditions on the ground, ensure you are aware of your immediate surroundings.



Thank you for choosing to walk from our hostel.
We hope you have a great time.

Walking in the national landscapes of England and Wales is part of YHA's heritage. With hostels on National Trails, in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, YHA plays a unique role in the nation's walking community.

To make it easy for everyone to enjoy walking from YHA hostels, we have curated three walks – an easy, moderate, and more challenging option. They have all been graded – the higher the grade, the more challenging the route.

Before you go:

- Check the local weather forecast (metoffice.gov.uk).
- Check the tide times for coastal routes (tidetimes.org.uk).
- Get the right clothing, footwear and kit for the route and weather.
- Ensure you have enough time to complete the route before dark.
- Download the OS Locate and what3words apps to your phone.
- Contact 999 by SMS text (must pre register by texting 'register' to 999) (relayuk.bt.com/emergencysms).
- Plan your walk by completing the YHA route notification card it helps Emergency Services if you get into difficulties or fail to return from your walk when anticipated (yha.org.uk/route-card).
- Ensure your entire group have the fitness and skills to complete the route.
- For further information on how to stay safe visit adventuresmart.uk

For more walks or information on route grading and timings go to yha.org.uk/walks

If you encounter problems with this route contact walking@yha.org.uk



Scan or click to shop
for OS maps online
osmaps.com/yha

Share your walks



What to wear

- Base layer and mid layer.
- Walking trousers.
- Warm jacket(s).
- Take extra layer(s).
- Hat, gloves and neck gaiter.
- Sun hat, sun cream and sunglasses.
- Waterproof jacket and trousers.
- Cushioning walking socks.
- Walking shoes or boots.

Kit

- Map, compass and GPS device or OS Map app on your phone.
- Water, lunch and high energy snacks.
- Charged mobile phone and portable charger.
- First aid kit.
- Head torch, spare batteries.
- Watch.
- Whistle and survival bag.
- Rucksack, with waterproof cover or a dry bag or plastic bag inside.
- Medicines or toiletries you would usually use.

You might also want to take

- Spare socks, hat, gloves.
- Balaclava.
- Leg gaiters.
- Waterproof baseball cap (handy if you wear glasses).
- Walking poles.

- Bivi bag or group shelter.
- Spare food and hot drink.
- Duct tape (handy for fixing things).
- Penknife or multitool.
- Tissues and hand sanitiser.
- Plastic bags to take away your rubbish or dog poo.

In case of emergency

- Call 999 (or text 999 if pre-registered) and ask for the Police.
- Use OS Locate or what3words to provide a detailed description of your location.
- If you need to attract attention shout or give six blasts on a whistle at regular intervals. In low light flash your torch six times at regular intervals.
- If you can send someone for help, they need to know your location (grid reference), number of people in the group and the nature of the emergency.
- Help could be some time coming so whilst waiting make the casualty comfortable.
- Keep the casualty warm and dry using spare clothing. Use coats or rucksacks to insulate them from the ground.
- Remember the rest of the group could be getting cold whilst waiting. Use an emergency shelter or find a sheltered location.