



Visit Thanet Press Pack

Margate • Broadstairs • Ramsgate

Escape to the Isle of Thanet

The Isle of Thanet is around 40 square miles (103.30 square km) with coast on three sides at the most north-easterly edge of Kent, the Garden of England. Historically the isle was separated from the mainland by a significant waterway, the Wantsum Channel. Today the isle is easily accessible with excellent road links to the national motorway network.

It takes just 75 minutes from London's St Pancras International aboard HS1, the country's only high-speed rail service. Rail services also link Thanet to other London stations and mainland Europe (Eurostar) via Ashford International. Cross-Channel services are available from the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel.

Thanet's three resorts – Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate – have golden sandy beaches, chalk cliffs and mainline railway stations. They are geographically so close to each other but their personalities could not be more different.





Margate Main Sands



Royal Harbour, Ramsgate



Botany, Broadstairs

Thanet's unique selling points

- 16 spectacular sandy beaches and bays – 14 with Blue Flags and/or Seaside Awards (21 awards in total - applied for and awaiting confirmation)
- North East Kent Marine Protected Area – the coastline is covered by international and national designations for its marine and bird life.
- Longest continuous stretch of coastal chalk in Britain.
- The only Royal Harbour in the country.
- Turner Contemporary – the largest purpose-built gallery in the South East, outside London, which will be hosting the Turner Prize 2019 from 28 September 2019 to 12 January 2020..
- Dreamland, the UK's original pleasure park, reimagined.
- Rich historic connections and commemorations such as the evacuation of Dunkerque, helping hold the frontline in WW1 and WW2, the arrival of the Saxons, the invasion of Hengist and Horsa, the start of Roman Britain led by Julius Caesar and the arrival of England's first Christian.
- Famous literary and artistic connections such as Charles Dickens, JMW Turner, Augustus Pugin and Tracey Emin.
- High Speed 1 from St. Pancras International – Margate (90 mins), Broadstairs (85 mins) and Ramsgate (75 mins).

THANET VISITOR ECONOMY

- 4.2 million visitors each year.
- 7,950 jobs.
- Contributes £319 million to the local economy each year (Cambridge Model Economic Impact survey 2017). This figure does not include the value of language schools to the local economy, which 2013 research found to be £41 million.

THANET PEOPLE

- Thanet population: 141,300 (ONS mid-2017, March 2019 version).
- Mean age: 42.6 years (2017 mid-year population estimates ONS)



Margate Harbour Arm



Botany Bay



Royal Harbour, Ramsgate

Why visit?

Londoners have been **escaping** to the Isle of Thanet for more than 200 years to enjoy the **laidback** seaside vibe, breathtaking sandy beaches, **fresh** sea air and **romantic** Turner skies.

At the very **edge** of the **Garden of England**, three **Georgian** and **Victorian** resorts, each with its own distinctive character – Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate – **cluster** around the **bays** at the far end of the **peninsula**.

There's a **retro** feel to these harbour towns, with their impressive 18th and 19th century **architecture**. Their **classic seaside heritage** and kitsch, eclectic attractions, and live arts and music venues alongside a variety of **independent** places to shop, eat, drink and stay delight thousands of visitors every year.

Miles of low **chalk cliffs** edge the peninsula, sheltering a string of **secluded, unspoiled sandy bays**. Chalk **rockpools**, chalk stacks and

rare chalk reefs teem with **wildlife**. The bays offer the closest **surfing beaches** to the capital city and are a popular destination for southeast boarders.

Artists, writers and musicians have long been inspired by this almost-island and continue to be drawn here. **Turner** said Thanet has "the loveliest skies in all Europe" while for **Dickens**, Broadstairs was "the freshest, freest place". More recently, Tracey **Emin** declares in neon on Margate seafront: "I never stopped loving you".

The Isle's a **historic landing place** reflecting for the story of Britain: Julius Caesar and the Romans, the **first Saxons and the Jutes**, led by **Hengist and Horsa**, arrived and settled here while **St Augustine** who brought Christianity to southern England stepped on land at Thanet's **Ebbfleet** on his way to nearby **Canterbury**.

For this is the **furthest** south east you can go in

Britain, almost touching mainland **Europe**, yet now, thanks to **HS1**, just 75 minutes from **central London**. Today a new generation is discovering this original seaside escape exploring **Turner Contemporary** gallery, the iconic pleasure park **Dreamland** and an expanding range of attractions and **boutique hotels**.

On the menu

Thanet has a wide range of eateries and fine dining opportunities.

Angela's Margate aims 'to serve delicious, ethically sourced, sustainable seafood, alongside simple, seasonal vegetable-based dishes', and is featured in The Good Food Guide, receiving the Editors Award in a new category, 'Best for Sustainability'.

Hantverk and Found is a fish and seafood restaurant, with a small selection of vegetarian dishes and local cheese and charcuterie on offer, which is listed in the Michelin Guide.

Gadds No 11, produced by The Ramsgate Brewery, is Kent Beer of the Year runner-up in the Taste of Kent Awards 2019, which are run by Produced in Kent. Go to www.visitthanet.co.uk/stay-and-eat/eating-and-drinking/food-awards/ to see more award winning restaurants.

Cliftonville Farmers' Market (last Sunday of each month excluding December) is a popular source of local goodies while foodies are spoiled for choice at **Broadstairs' Food Festivals** in October.

Numerous places serve great local fish 'n chips while the traditional taste of a seaside holiday can be experienced at **Mannings**, a family-run cockle and whelk stall in Margate and **Cannons** seafood stall in Ramsgate.

Where to stay

Contemporary and richly restored quality boutique hotels are to be discovered across the isle, many with stunning views of sea, sands and Thanet's stunning sunsets.

Stylish and chic B&Bs and guest houses are flourishing alongside delightful self-catering town houses, flint-faced fisherman's cottages and apartments. Outdoor enthusiasts have an excellent selection of caravan and camping sites

Find full details of Thanet's quality assessed accommodation at www.visitthanet.co.uk/plan-your-visit-introduction/places-to-stay



Broadstairs Food Festival



Mannings Seafood Stall, Margate



'Room with a view'



“the freshest, freest place”

Charles Dickens

“the loveliest skies in all Europe”

JMW Turner

“I never stopped loving you”

Tracey Emin

Roots, revival and regeneration

ROOTS

The origins of the district's three distinctive resorts – Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate – and their surrounding villages lie in farming and fishing.

The passion for the health benefits of sea air and bathing, which started among the aristocracy in the 18th century, led to a building boom and development of the towns to cater for a rapidly growing number of wealthy visitors.

With an increase in ferry services from London and even more significantly the arrival of the railways, many more people gained access to the coastal resorts, each of which has its own mainline stations.

Investment in buildings and businesses followed providing accommodation and entertainment for holidaymakers, group excursions and day trippers from the capital and beyond.

The resorts shared much in common – golden sands, sweeping beaches and hidden bays framed by impressive chalk cliffs.

However, each developed differently. Ramsgate's waterfront reflects its maritime heritage including its working Royal Harbour and port. Broadstairs grew up around its traditional fishing roots with narrow streets frequented by Charles Dickens. Margate's wide and open seafront was shaped by its capacity to develop the heyday of classic seaside fun and entertainment alongside the narrow, cobbled streets of its Old Town.

As the visitor economy grew so did the number of wealthier people wishing to enjoy much more of the year on the healthy coast or spend their retirement in an area where they had enjoyed happy summer holidays. Grand houses and gated communities were built along the coast on the outskirts of the main resorts as were many estates of classic bungalows.

From the mid-20th century wider access to package holidays abroad gradually took its toll on the Thanet visitor economy. Increasingly cheaper flights and the rapid growth of resorts in destinations such as Spain meant more people chose to go abroad for their one or two-week family sun and sand holidays. Thanet continued to be popular as a daytrip or weekend destination but many of the larger hotels and guest houses had to close followed by larger entertainment venues.



Margate Old Town



Broadstairs Harbour



Ramsgate Main Sands



Turner Contemporary, Margate



Viking Coastal Trail



Westcliff, overlooking Royal Harbour, Ramsgate

REVIVAL

In recent years, fashions in holidays have changed once again. Popularity of package holidays has declined in favour of a widening interest in independent travel to more unusual destinations. More people want to be travelers joining the local community rather than tourists.

Concerns about the environmental costs of flying abroad are also heightened and the popularity of the staycation and long-weekend break has increased dramatically. At the same time, people have become more interested in re-discovering different areas of the UK enabled by the new trend for taking one or two short breaks during the year alongside the main holiday.

There is a growing desire to escape big towns and cities to get outdoors and enjoy the health benefits of walking and cycling, alongside a wealth of water sports. Thanet with its superb coastline and beaches, alongside its history and heritage in three highly distinctive resorts in easy reach of London, is ideally placed to cater for the needs of today's visitor economy.

Margate captures the fun and entertainment of the Great British Seaside Holiday alongside a cultural and creative revolution inspired by the internationally acclaimed Turner Contemporary gallery and the regeneration of Margate Old Town with a wealth of cafés, galleries and independent shops.

Broadstairs, with its narrow streets, flint-faced cottages and picturesque harbour that would still be recognised by its most famous resident, Charles Dickens, retains its traditional seaside atmosphere including two 1950s-style ice-cream parlours.

Meanwhile, the impressive Georgian and Victorian architecture of Ramsgate, overlooking its historic Royal Harbour and modern marina, reflects its maritime heritage as well as its 18th and 19th century role as a very popular health and leisure destination with the wealthy. Perhaps reflecting its importance as a port and proximity to Europe, the resort is now famous for its busy waterfront continental café culture.

REGENERATION

Public and private investment in regeneration has seen the arrival of HS1, improvements to the road infrastructure, development of Ramsgate's Royal Harbour and marina, and the rebirth of Margate as an internationally acclaimed destination.

Regeneration is totally refreshing the visitor industry in Thanet and bringing benefits to the wider economy across the resorts and their villages.

High Speed 1 links Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate to St. Pancras International in 90, 85 and 75 minutes respectively, while other rail services link Thanet to other London stations and mainland Europe (Eurostar) via Ashford International. Cross-Channel services are available from the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel, Folkestone.

4.2 million visitors each year contributing more than £319 million to the local economy and supporting 7,950 jobs (Cambridge Model Economic Impact Survey 2017), (this does not include £41 million generated by local language schools).

People working in London are making their homes in Thanet and others are opting to invest in second homes on the isle.

Thanet is attracting new investment in 21st century boutique hotels, guest houses, restaurants, cafés and outdoor leisure opportunities alongside new and relocating businesses.

The isle now has world class attractions, such as Turner Contemporary and The Powell-Cotton Museum and Quex House, at Birchington, voted the UK's most inspiring museum. Meanwhile, there is a long list of other key attractions – many relatively new such as Dreamland and The Ramsgate Tunnels – alongside traditional favourites such as Margate's Shell Grotto and the Dickens House Museum at Broadstairs.

Turner Contemporary, designed by award-winning architect Sir David Chipperfield, opened to the public in 3 million visits from all over the world.

Thanet District Council was the first local authority in Kent to take up on the Visit England

initiative for Destination Management Plans (DMP). Working with the local tourism industry the five-year plan includes staff training, tourism marketing initiatives, highlighting grant and advantageous funding streams available to small and medium-sized businesses alongside investment opportunities available locally, countywide and nationally.

The need to deliver and continuously refresh an all-round high-quality visitor experience is also improving the quality of life enjoyed by everyone living and working in the district. For example, Thanet District Council worked with an artist and landscape architect to make sure flood defences constructed in Margate were designed to enhance the regeneration of Margate Old Town Conservation Area and to provide a new amenity area on the seafront. Thanet District Council has also played an active role in the redevelopment of Dreamland.

New schemes have also been introduced by the council in Margate to improve the street scene and bring problem and derelict buildings back into use as family homes. There are also major

initiatives in Thanet encouraging the restoration and conservation of historic properties such as Ramsgate being awarded Heritage Action Zone status by Historic England, one of only ten towns in the county.

Enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike plays a major role in many other regeneration initiatives attracting new businesses and investment in other sectors across the district and its business parks. Find out more about the regeneration of Thanet at: www.visitthanetbusiness.co.uk.

There is also a full events calendar with long-standing favourites such as Broadstairs Folk Week, Minster Show celebrating its 133rd anniversary in 2019, and Ramsgate Week to newer additions to the calendar such as Screamlan and the Ramsgate Festival. Find out more on www.visitthanet.co.uk



Margate Flood Defences



Ramsgate Tunnel



Powell-Cotton Museum and Quex House, Birchington

What's New

TURNER CONTEMPORARY

Turner Contemporary will host the Turner Prize 2019 from 28 September 2019 to 12 January 2020. One of the best-known prizes for the visual arts in the world, the Turner Prize aims to promote public debate around new developments in contemporary British art. Every other year, the prize leaves Tate Britain and is presented at a venue outside London.

DREAMLAND, MARGATE

Dreamland is one of Britain's oldest surviving amusement parks and has been an essential part of Margate's identity for nearly 100 years.

Thanet District Council's efforts to secure the site has unlocked significant regeneration works and, along with the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Dreamland Trust and other public organisations, has helped secure £18m of public funding. It is likely that the site's jewels – the Grade II* listed Scenic Railway; the Grade II* listed cinema complex and the Grade II listed menagerie cages – would have further degenerated without this intervention.

Alongside the operator's new and rejuvenated offer, which opened on 26 May 2017, the council has undertaken the next phase of redevelopment to restore the front of the cinema building and bring the iconic Sunshine Café, offering panoramic views over Margate Sands, back to life. www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/dreamland-developments

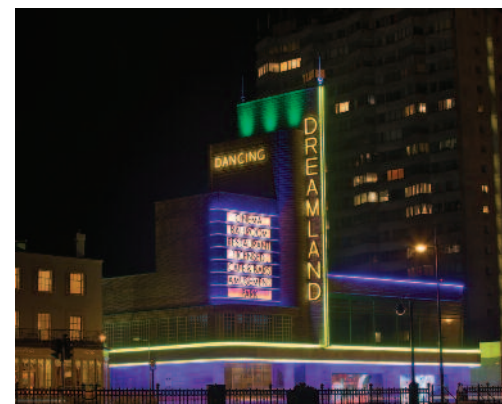
MARGATE CAVES

Margate Caves are set to open to the public in summer 2019 following a long campaign to develop a new tourist attraction in the town. They were closed in 2004 following a structural survey.

Since 2011, campaigners determined to save the caves have gained major funding from the Big Lottery Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund, boosted by a crowdfunding initiative. Find out more about this exciting project at: www.margatecaves.co.uk.



Turner Contemporary, Margate



Dreamland Cinema Building



© Frank Leppard

NEW DIGITAL DISCOVERIES PLAQUES

10 eye-catching new plaques can be seen at key locations across the Isle of Thanet. The plaques tease the reader with a hint of information that can be discovered, then upon entering a code into their mobile device, the location and its stories come alive through video, audio and imagery.

www.visitthanet.co.uk/digitaldiscovery

THE ESCAPEMENT AT RETORT HOUSE

Six immersive new escape rooms, including a Harry Potter inspired adventure and an Orient Express train themed room, are due to open in June. Run by the couple behind The Escapement in Margate, the focus will be on story telling theatrics.

www.escapementmargate.co.uk



© Dreamland





Viking Bay, Broadstairs



Viking Ship 'Hugin'



St Augustine's Cross



Tudor House, Margate

Interesting Facts

- The Thanet coastline represents 20% of the UK's and 12% of Europe's coastal chalk and we have the longest continuous stretch of chalk cliffs in Britain.
- The 19 miles of Thanet coastline boasts 16 beaches and bays, six with Blue Flag Awards and Four with Seaside Awards (2018).
- Thanet has 27 conservation areas and over 2,000 listed buildings.
- The whole of the Thanet coastline is designated as part of the 'North East Kent European Marine Sites' covering a number of international nature conservation designations www.nekmpa.org.uk
- The world's largest offshore windfarm is situated off the Thanet coast.
- Thanet is unique. It is the most easterly of the British Isles and for this reason Stone Age people buried their ancestors here so that they could be nearest to the rising sun.
- Thanet has around 250 hectares of intertidal chalk reef that is home to an array of shorelife from the white bivalve 'piddock' shells – which entomb themselves for life there – to seaweeds and vibrant rockpool life.
- Thanet's latest marine designation is the new Marine Conservation Zone in 2013 and covers amongst other things the blue mussel beds and stalked jellyfish.
- The area has a rich agricultural tradition.
- During the Middle Ages the island was owned by two monasteries of Canterbury, which ran it as a farming estate dominated by massive churches and administered from monastic granges.
- Even in its early period as a resort, Thanet was considered close to London being conveniently reachable by boat. Simultaneously it was far enough removed from the capital to allow visitors to feel that they could 'let their hair down'.
- Thanet has been described as the gateway island since it has been the point of arrival of a succession of continental people and ideas since the earliest human occupation of Britain.
- Thanet was home to both the man who saved Stonehenge for the nation, Lord Lubbock (who was also the inventor of Bank Holidays) and the band most associated with Stonehenge, Hawkwind (who were also the precursors of Punk and New-Age Travellers).
- The Georgian architecture of health and pleasure peppers the district as a monument to the island's life-enhancing properties and it is no coincidence that Margate pioneered the mixed bathing rebellion among the Edwardian working class; a revolution led by the great Soubrette and Margate-lover Marie Lloyd.
- One of Thanet's rarest and strangest wildlife can be found at the back of our chalk sea caves – living algal communities cover the sides and back of the caves.



Dreamland ©Oliver Dixon



Margate Main Sands



Margate Old Town

Our three resorts

MARGATE

Margate is a classic seaside destination with deep roots in the original development of visits to the coast for the health benefits of exhilarating sea air and salt water bathing.

As the passion and fashion for seaside fun and frivolity became more accessible with boat trips from London and the arrival of the railways, Margate and neighbouring Cliftonville became synonymous with family holiday fun, weekend escapes (including romantic liaisons) and daytrips.

Visitors today soak up the sun, sands and sea with all the enthusiasm of previous generations of the bucket 'n spade brigade as well as a wealth of retro and vintage seaside pleasures presented in 21st century style.

The re-opened and re-imagined Dreamland Pleasure Park is the newest addition and celebrates the age of the Great British seaside amusement experience, including the country's

oldest wooden roller coaster, the Grade II* listed Scenic Railway.

Along with the resort's residents, visitors find themselves at the heart of the cultural and creative arts revolution sweeping along the coast of Kent.

World-class art and cultural exhibitions at Turner Contemporary gallery. Turner Contemporary from 28 September 2019 to 12 January 2020 will host the Turner Prize 2019.

- Dreamland, the UK's original pleasure park.
- Margate Old Town, vibrant and expanding creative sector.
- Classic seaside heritage – magnificent sands, beaches and bays, water sports, rockpools, cockles and whelks, fish 'n chips and candyfloss.

- Major attractions and entertainments alongside many hidden gems.
- Time and space to relax and enjoy the resort's famous sunsets, clifftop walks and trails, and contemporary culture.
- Independent galleries, vintage and retro hotspots, and quirky shops along cobbled streets.
- Easter Beer Festival (March/April), Mods and 60s Festival, Margate Meltdown (May), Skagate Play Expo Margate (July), Margate Soul Festival and Carnival, Margate Festival (September - January 2010), Screamland (October), Frosted Fairground (December).

A Margate press pack is available, see back cover.



Botany Bay

BROADSTAIRS

Broadstairs succeeds in more than satisfying the needs of today's generations of short break, weekend visitors and daytrippers who flock to its beaches. This coastal honeypot retains all the charms and features of a traditional seaside destination.

Morelli's, the quintessential 1950s ice cream parlour, still stands at the top of the chalk cliffs overlooking the flowers planted along the promenade and the gently sloping sands and rock pools of Viking Bay. Charles Dickens, one of the town's most famous former visitors and resident, would easily recognise the narrow streets and flint walls in the older parts of the town and the streets winding down to the small fishing harbour.

Throughout the summer demand is high for the town's many guesthouses and B&Bs, self-catering houses and apartments. As a resort, and a long-standing favourite destination for people of all



Viking Bay

ages and interests, Broadstairs has more than held its own and is thriving in the 21st century.

- Seven sand-filled, family-friendly beaches and bays, two with Blue Flag Awards and two with Seaside Awards
- Stunning chalk cliffs including caves and much-photographed stacks at Botany Bay
- Closest surfing beaches to London and best in the south east
- Timeless seaside charm
- Traditional fishing harbour, cobbled squares and narrow streets
- Vibrant nightlife economy and exciting eateries
- Classic ice cream parlours and coffee shops
- Clifftop gardens and bandstand
- Clifftop and foreshore strolls, cycling and golf

- Blues Bash (February), Dickens Festival (June), Folk Week and Water Gala (August), Wheels and Fins (September), Broadstairs Food Festival (October and Easter).

A Broadstairs press pack is available, see back cover.



Westcliff Arcade

RAMSGATE

Ramsgate, a favourite seaside destination of Princess Victoria, is an architectural jewel in the coastal crown of the Isle of Thanet.

The town's long maritime history as a port, with the country's only Royal Harbour, and its thriving modern marina have contributed to the development of a relaxing Mediterranean-style waterfront filled with a wealth of bustling bistros and restaurants.

The resort's fine weather, superb sands, sea air and stunning views from the chalk cliffs alongside elegant side streets, independent shops, galleries and seaside entertainments add even more flavour to Ramsgate's popular café culture.



Royal Harbour

- UK's only Royal Harbour
- Golden sands, famous family-friendly beach, boat trips and clifftop walks
- Modern marina filled with luxury yachts
- Augustus Pugin's house The Grange and St. Augustine's Church
- Elegant Georgian, Regency and Victorian architecture – hundreds of listed buildings
- Ramsgate Tunnels - deep shelter tunnels built to protect civilians during WWII
- Active Ramsgate itinerary – including two new canoe trails and a new coastal walk



Ramsgate Tunnels

- Thriving continental café culture along the south-facing waterfront
- Fine eateries serving local produce including seafoods
- Retro and contemporary boutique hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs and self-catering
- Events include St. Augustine Week (May/June), Great Bucket and Spade Run (June), Ramsgate Week, an alternative to Cowes, including the Ramsgate Festival (July) and Heritage Open Days (September)

A Ramsgate press pack is available, see back cover.



Quex House



Spitfire and Hurricane Memorial Museum



West Bay

THANET VILLAGES

Just a short distance from the coast visitors discover a treasure chest of delights in Thanet's traditional villages.

Popular visitor gems include:

- Birchington and Westgate – Coastal villages with Blue Flag beaches at Minnis Bay, West Bay and St. Mildred's Bay.
- Quex Park Estate and the Powell-Cotton Museum, Birchington, www.quexpark.co.uk has a wide range of attractions including the internationally acclaimed museum, restored gardens, activities for children and opportunities to enjoy the best of Kent produce. Full and varied diary of annual events.
- The Spitfire and Hurricane Memorial Museum, Manston, now with a Spitfire cockpit simulator
- RAF Manston History Museum
- Minster Abbey – possibly the oldest inhabited house in the country near where St. Augustine led the first Christian mass in Britain
- Minster Show – (www.minstershow.org.uk) celebrating its 133rd anniversary in July 2019. Minster and neighbouring villages work together to present action-packed entertainment, celebrating the success of flower and vegetable growers, cooks, jam and preserve makers and more.
- Monkton Nature Reserve and Observatory – trails, UK's first artificial bat cave, fossils and visitor centre
- St. Mary the Virgin Church at Minster – a large Roman Catholic church with 18 fine medieval misericords, which are amongst the best in south east England.

For further media information including packs on Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate, press trips and access to up-to-date images, please contact Julie Edwards, Senior Tourism Officer at Visit Thanet, tel: 01843 577671 or email: Julie.edwards@thanet.gov.uk

For further information on the Isle of Thanet, attractions and accommodation go to www.visitthanet.co.uk
for visitor stats go to www.visitthanetbusiness.co.uk



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