ESSEX COASTAL EXPLORER ACTIVITY BOOKLET

Day trip treats

Wriggly rivers and hidden islands

Wish you were here

Living world bingo

Gone crabbing

FUN

activities for all ages at home and on The Essex Coast

#THEESSEXCOAST

THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE

- Respect other people
- Protect the natural environment
- Enjoy the outdoors

VisitEssex.com

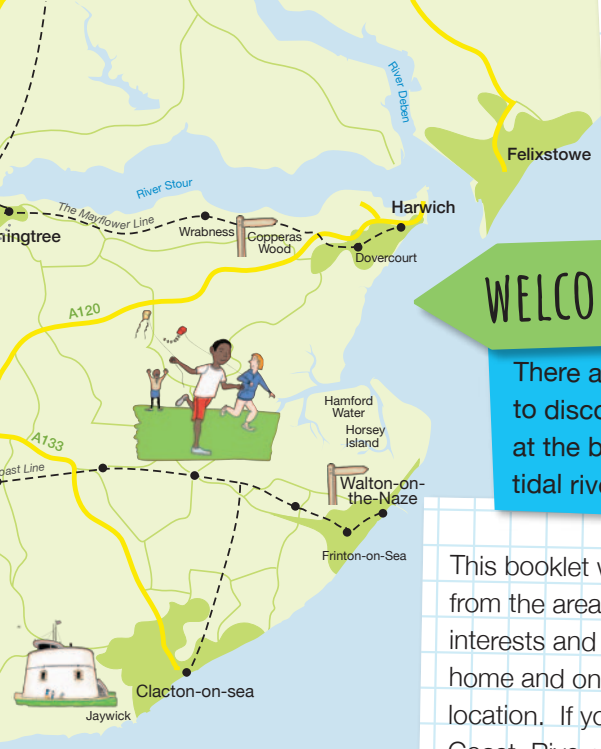
theessexcoast.com

RSPB.org.uk

essexwt.org.uk

NationalTrust.org.uk

visitengland.com/destinations/east-england



Key

- A road
- B road
- Railway & station
- Public walks

WELCOME TO THE ESSEX COAST

There are many amazing places and stories to discover along The Essex Coast, not only at the beaches but also on the banks of our tidal rivers and estuaries.

This booklet will help you and your family get the most from the area with activities that appeal to different interests and ages. There is a mix of ideas to try at home and on a visit to the coast or to a riverside location. If you're a teacher looking for Seaside, Coast, Rivers or Living World topic ideas there are activities indicated that you might find useful.

Why not make getting there part of the adventure? The Mayflower, Sunshine Coast, Southend and Crouch Valley train lines take you all the way to the coast.
Go to **greateranglia.co.uk** and **esscrp.org.uk** or **essexbus.info**

Refill your water bottles at Refill Stations wherever you see the droplet, or use the free app. You'll be saving money, staying hydrated and preventing plastic pollution
refill.org.uk/get-the-refill-app

Remember to plan ahead. Some stretches of the coast and rivers are remote and liable to flooding. Check tide times at **tidetimes.org.uk** and opening times. Download our walks from **gojauntly.com** and parking **MiPermit Parking App**

Follow signs to keep noise levels low and dogs on leads when walking in areas where birds are nesting.
essexcoast.birdaware.org

BIRD AWARE ESSEX COAST

OTHER WEBSITES TO CHECK OUT

#THEESSEXCOAST

1. Wish you were here

WHERE Home

ACTIVITY Art • Seaside

WHAT YOU NEED Card or paper • Glue Colouring pens/pencils, Collage materials - paper, old leaflets, newspaper ads, Photos

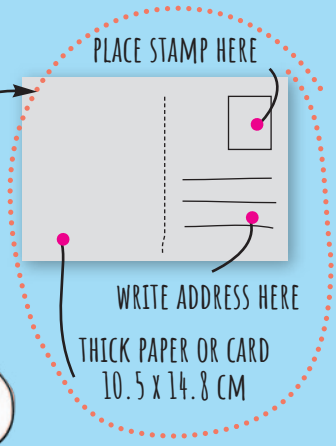
FACT

Postcards first became popular as a quick way to send short messages just like we send a text today.

Let people know what you've been up to along The Essex Coast by making your own postcards.

Copy the postcard template included for each new card. Draw, collage or use photos for the front and write a message.

Postcards are designed to be sent without an envelope but you could put yours in one for safe keeping as a memory of all the things you've done.



Tag us in a picture – we'd love to see your postcards.

#THEESSEXCOAST

2. Wriggly rivers and hidden islands

WHERE Home

ACTIVITY Geography • Rivers • Coast

WHAT YOU NEED A pencil

FACT

Author Arthur Ransome was inspired by Horsey Island in Tendring for his Swallows and Amazons stories.

The Essex Coast is about more than just beaches. Unscramble these letters to find the names of six important rivers in Essex.

HCOAR UOCCHR NELCO TEWCAABLKR MATHES OUTRS

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Surprisingly, there are lots of islands in the estuaries of these rivers. Some of the islands are large with towns and people others are so small only birds live there and some need special permission to visit.

The names of 10 islands in Essex are hidden here. Can you find them?

Bridgemarsh
Canvey
Havengore
Horsey
Mersea
Northey
Osea
Pewet
Two Tree
Wallasea

B	R	I	D	G	E	M	A	R	S	H
B	R	Z	M	X	J	N	H	S	P	W
C	O	A	N	M	A	R	A	T	E	A
D	A	B	O	E	L	S	V	Y	W	L
F	Q	N	S	R	M	E	E	V	E	L
G	R	O	V	S	N	V	N	W	T	A
H	O	R	S	E	Y	Z	G	X	P	S
I	U	T	S	A	Y	V	O	Y	P	E
J	PV	H	T	W	O	T	R	E	E	A
K	W	E	U	G	R	D	E	Z	P	O
L	X	Y	V	H	S	A	R	S	H	S

WHY DON'T YOU

Look up the islands to see which ones you can visit.

Always check notices and tide times before you plan a visit.

3. Gone crabbing

WHERE River • Home • Coast

ACTIVITY Science • Living World • Rivers

WHAT YOU NEED

Crabbing line and net
Bucket of seawater
Bacon rind

Cardboard egg box
Paints or colouring pens
String • Pipe cleaners

FACT

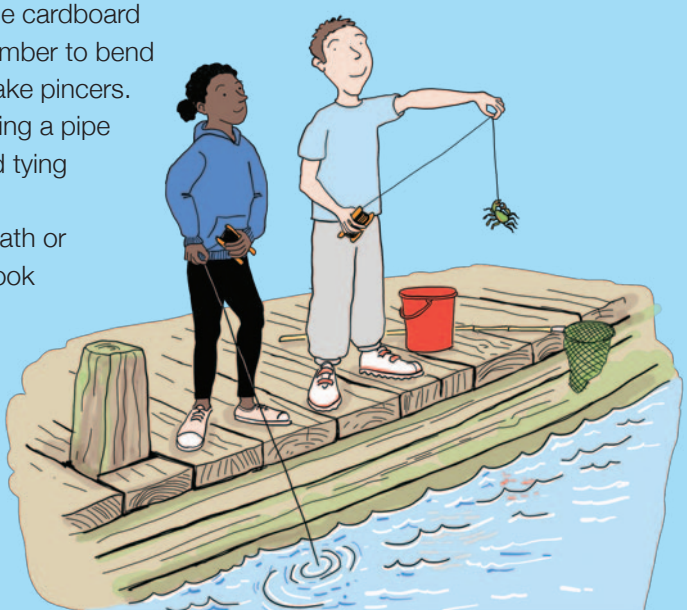
Green shore crabs live in the mud and seaweed all along the coast and creeks in Essex. Burnham-on-Crouch and Maldon even have annual crabbing competitions.

CRABBING OUTSIDE

- Find a good spot along a seawall or jetty.
- Put some bacon rind into the net and let the line into the water.
- Carefully pull the line back up to see what you've caught but always put the crabs back into the water when you're finished.

MAKE YOUR OWN CRABBING GAME AT HOME

- Tear an egg box into separate egg cups. These will be the crab's body so paint or colour them in and draw or stick on eyes.
- Poke pipe cleaners through the cardboard body to make 10 legs. Remember to bend the ends of two of them to make pincers.
- Make a crabbing line by bending a pipe cleaner into a hook shape and tying it onto some string.
- Put the crabs into an empty bath or washing up bowl and try to hook them onto your line.



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4. Take the Essex Plastic Pledge

WHERE Home

ACTIVITY Science • Living World • Art

WHAT YOU NEED Rubbish bag • String

FACT

There are zero waste shops all over Essex to help customers buy food and products without extra packaging. Visit **loveessex.org/** to find out more and pledge to reduce single-use plastics.

Litter pollution along the coastal path is a problem we can all tackle. Rubbish can end up there from miles away or be left by visitors. However litter gets there, it is all harmful to wildlife as well as looking messy. What can we do to help?

Next time you go for a picnic put all your rubbish in a bag and take it home with you. Give it a clean and then take a close look at what you used. Could you reduce the rubbish by refilling bottles and using containers for food. Challenge yourself to do it differently next time.

MAKE A MOBILE FROM YOUR CLEAN RUBBISH TO REMIND YOU

Here are some ideas:

- Fold or cut clean crisp packets or snack wrappers to make birds or flowers
- Cut plastic bottles into hoops or spirals
- Use the neck and lid of a bottle to hang everything from.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some artists create sculptures from litter collected on the beach

5. Living world bingo

WHERE	Home • Coast • River
ACTIVITY	Science • Living World
WHAT YOU NEED	Paper • Pens • Glue

Challenge yourself and your family to some bingo. This is a game you can play whatever the weather and wherever you visit but you'll need to get ready before you go.

FACT

Thousands of brent geese arrive along The Essex Coast from October each year and stay all winter before flying north again for the summer.

HERE'S HOW

- Decide what your theme for the day will be – Animals? Plants? Sounds? You might want to group them some more, for example vertebrates and invertebrates, in the water, on the bank.
- Research online what you might be able to find. Visit **wildlifewatch.org.uk/get-started-your-spotter-sheets** to create and print a spotting sheet or create your own bingo card by drawing or sticking pictures of what you might find. Aim for 5-10 things to find.
- You can all play from the same bingo card or have your own. The first person to tick them all off is the winner.

#THEESSEXCOAST

6. Land art

WHERE Coast • River

ACTIVITY Art • Seaside

WHAT YOU NEED Natural materials you find on the beach or riverbank

FACT

Some artists use the land around them to create their art. Research land art in Essex online to see what artists have made.

Land art is made directly onto the land around you using natural materials such as sand, stones, shells or leaves. Here are some ideas for you to try wherever you are.

- Search out different sizes of stones and shells and try stacking them up. Make several stacks to build a different type of sand castle. Be careful not to stack the stones too high though.

Try this tongue twister

WE'LL WEATHER THE WEATHER, WHATEVER THE WEATHER.

- Use your finger, a stone or stick to draw in wet sand or mud. Make your drawing as large as you can so that people can see it from any nearby piers, promenades or bridges.
  How about going really big so that someone in a plane can see it?
- Arrange stones or shells into patterns or shapes on the sand. Select materials to add interest to your creation, maybe making the patterns change colour or size.
- Make sand or mud sculptures. It's like making sand castles but make the shapes of people or animals instead. Why not try making the person you're with or your pet?
- Add decorations to your work using the natural materials around you.

REMEMBER...

Your art will be washed away by the tide so remember to take a photo of it.

7. The seaside at home

WHERE Coast • River

ACTIVITY Art • Seaside

WHAT YOU NEED
Paint and brushes
Salt • Paper
Sun print paper
Bowl of water
Felt tip pens

FACT

Famous artist J M W Turner made sketches of boats and the land around Essex while he was on a boat out at sea.

Try these ideas to be reminded of The Essex Coast even when you can't get there.

SEAWATER PAINTING

Paint a scene, perhaps the beach, fish or shells. Before the paint is dry sprinkle lots of salt all over the paper. Let it dry and either shake the salt off or leave it there.

SUNSHINE PRINTS

Collect a few natural objects, maybe shells, grass or leaves. Experiment with how to place them together to make patterns or faces. On a sunny day that isn't windy, lay the items out on a piece of sun print paper and put it in the sunshine for a few minutes. When you remove the objects the paper underneath them will be a different colour. Carefully rinse the paper in water and leave to dry.

MAKE SOMEONE SMILE WITH LOVE ON THE ROCKS UK

Paint or draw a design onto a large pebble and maybe add a message that will make someone smile.
Include the words **Love on the Rocks UK** and put the stone somewhere for other people to find.
You can look at examples on Facebook.

#THEESSEXCOAST

8. Day trip treats

WHERE Home

ACTIVITY Science • Design • Seaside

WHAT YOU NEED Ice-cream ingredients: 300ml double cream, 2tbsp caster sugar, few drops vanilla extract

Fork or whisk • Freezer-safe container

One large and one medium sized ziplock bag • 6 tbsp salt ice cubes • Oven gloves

Try this tongue twister
I SCREAM, YOU SCREAM, WE ALL SCREAM FOR ICE-CREAM.

FACT

Before wafer cones were invented people bought ice-cream in a glass bowl called a penny lick. These were banned because the ice-cream sellers didn't always wash the glass between customers.

What would your ideal beach treat be?
An ice-cream, fish and chips, cockles or crab?

MAKE YOUR OWN ICE-CREAM

You can make ice-cream at home with only 3 ingredients.

QUICK ICE-CREAM...

- Put the cream, sugar and vanilla extract in the medium ziplock bag and make sure it's closed tightly.
- Put the ice cubes and salt in the large ziplock bag, then put the ingredient bag inside the ice bag and close.
- Use oven gloves to stop your hands from getting too cold as you shake and rub the bags.
- After about 10 mins the ingredients will have turned to ice-cream and it's ready to eat.

OVERNIGHT ICE-CREAM...

- For an overnight version, use a fork or whisk to whip the double cream until it is thick and gently add the sugar and extract.
- Pour into a freezer safe container and leave overnight.
- Once you've tried this, you could ty it again with different flavours.

DID YOU KNOW?

Adding salt to the ice stops it from thawing too fast

9. Smuggling stories

WHERE Home • Coast • River

ACTIVITY History • PE

WHAT YOU NEED
Hoop or box
Beanbags or rolled up socks
2 or more people

FACT

Tea, wine, spirits and lace were the main things being smuggled in the 18th century.

There are many tales of 18th century smuggling along The Essex Coast. Sometimes these sound like adventure stories but it was a serious business often carried out by gangs.

Smugglers broke the law by bringing goods into the country without paying taxes. The Essex Coast provided good hiding places away from the customs officers, who kept an eye out for smugglers and imprisoned those they caught.

SET UP

This is a game for 2 or more people.
Agree on the size of your play space. Put all the bean bags or rolled up socks around the space and a hoop or box on one side. Make two teams, one will be smugglers and the other will be customs officers.

HOW TO PLAY

- The customs officers try to move the goods (bean bags) into the customs house (hoop).
- The smugglers keep moving the goods around the play space and can take items out of the customs house.
- Both teams can only move one item at a time.
- Play continues until all the goods are in the customs house or everyone is worn out!

10. Fly a kite

WHERE Home • Coast • River

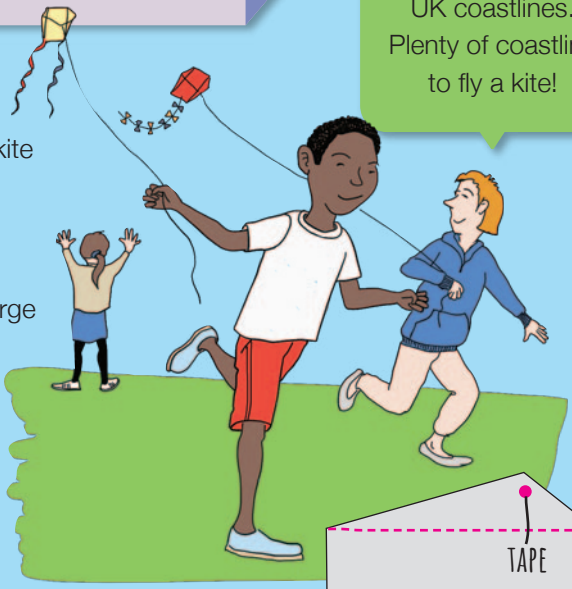
ACTIVITY Design

WHAT YOU NEED 2 barbecue skewers or paper drinking straws
Newspaper
Ruler • Tape • String

FACT

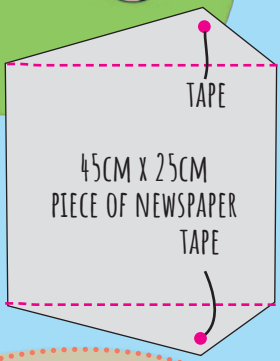
The length of The Essex Coast is about 350 miles or 560 km. It is one of the longest UK coastlines. Plenty of coastline to fly a kite!

Flying a kite is great fun and perfect to do where there is plenty of space. This is an easy kite design that really does fly.



HERE'S HOW

- Draw the kite outline onto a large piece of newspaper.
  You might need to tape two pages together.
- Cut out the shape and tape the straws or skewers along the dotted lines shown.
- Stick tape onto the corners and then carefully make a hole through the tape and paper. A hole punch will help.
- Cut 60cm of string and tie each end onto the kite through the holes. Cut a long bit of string, maybe 5m, and tie one end into the middle of the first piece. You'll hold on to the other end when you fly the kite.
  Add tails and streamers if you like.



TOP TIP

As this kite is made from paper you might have to keep patching it up.

11. Fossil hunting

WHERE Home • Coast • River

ACTIVITY Science • Coast • Rivers

WHAT YOU NEED
Plasticine or sand
Homemade casting plaster made from: 3 cups of flour
2 cups of warm water
2 tbsp salt

FACT

A fossil is a mark in stone made by something that was once alive. It is evidence of life millions of years ago.

There are great places to hunt for fossils in Essex. You could head to the beach at Walton-on-the-Naze or Dovercourt, or try along the river banks at Burnham-on-Crouch or Steeple Bay in the Blackwater.

If you look carefully you might spot fossilised sharks' teeth, fish skeletons, deer bones and plant remains. Even woolly mammoth bones have been found in Essex.

Try this tongue twister
SHE SELLS SEASHELLS
ON THE SEASHORE,
THE SHELLS SHE SELLS
ARE SEASHORE SHELLS
I'M SURE.

WHY DONT YOU...

If you can't get to the beach try making your own fossils at home.

- Press shells or stones into a soft material such as wet sand or plasticine.
- Mix up some homemade casting plaster and pour into your mould.
- Leave to dry and remove.

TOP TIP

Some people find it easier to spot fossils in the winter or on days when the sun isn't shining.

12. Home regatta

WHERE Home

ACTIVITY Design

WHAT YOU NEED 3 corks • 2 elastic bands
Cocktail stick • Paper
Colouring pencils

Regattas are a mix of exciting boat races, on-shore activities, food and drink, and are perfect for learning about the different boats you can see in the many marinas around Essex. You'll see lots of different boats in Essex, from motor cruisers, dinghies and canoes, to tall yachts, smacks and barges. If you can't visit one in person you can have your own regatta by recycling household materials into model boats.

Make these small sailing boats and see who can move them from one end of the bath first or take them to the beach to sail them in a pool.

HERE'S HOW

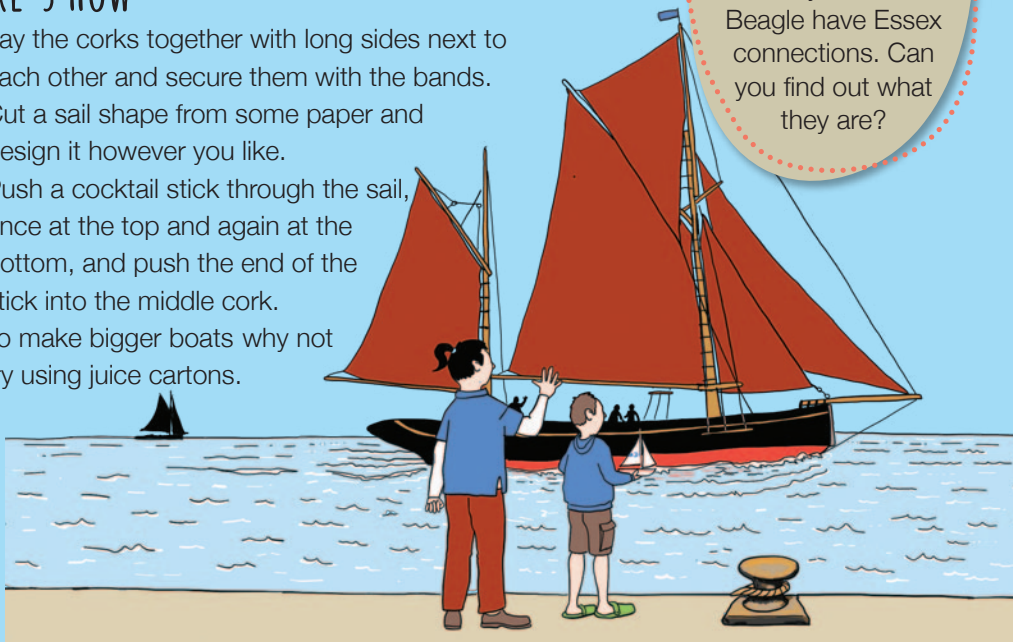
- Lay the corks together with long sides next to each other and secure them with the bands.
- Cut a sail shape from some paper and design it however you like.
- Push a cocktail stick through the sail, once at the top and again at the bottom, and push the end of the stick into the middle cork.
- To make bigger boats why not try using juice cartons.

FACT

The sails of traditional smacks and barges are orange because the waterproofing treatment was made from tree bark or ochre, cod oil and seawater. These are called tanbark sails.

DID YOU KNOW?

Famous ships the Mayflower and Beagle have Essex connections. Can you find out what they are?



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The seaside at home

Fossil hunting

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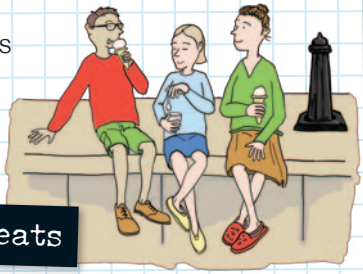
Look out for our leaflet 30 Things to Do, Spot and Discover on **theessexcoast.com** for more ideas of places to visit and things to do.



Day trip treats

PLEASE Tag your coastal pictures on social media **#theessexcoast**

EXPLORE, EXPERIENCE, ENJOY

theessexcoast.com

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With thanks to the Coastal Community Fund

Coastal Communities Fund

THE GREAT BRITISH COAST

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Essex County Council