

WHAT TO SEE AND DO IN DORSET



WHAT TO DO AND SEE A selection of suggested itineraries is included in the following pages. These cover all of the main sites of interest in Dorset. Each excursion is designed to take a day, with plenty of time for getting there, exploration and a picnic or meal along the way. Many of the places covered in the Introduction and Gazetteer are listed in each section with page numbers for reference.

Private Transport The itineraries here all assume the use of a car to reach the places mentioned during the course of a day, or longer. Many could also be done by bicycle or by a combination of public transport and walking, though this would take longer.

Public Transport The dorsetforyou.com website has a

great deal of information about all forms of travel within the county, including by car, bus, cycling, walking, rail, boat and air. The live travel alerts are especially useful: mapping.dorsetforyou.com/TravelDorset

Another excellent website for Dorset transport and travel information is dorset-transport.info. It offers real-time transport information on aircraft movements, trains and National Express coaches. Some buses also have tracking devices.

Access to the Outdoors is normally free and available at all times at the sites mentioned. Most of the museums, heritage centres and other visitor attractions charge for entry. Some, very helpfully, include multiple visits for a year. Many have seasonal opening, but may be

visited by arrangement at other times, or have special openings. Contact should be made well in advance since, out of season, many sites are unstaffed. Websites, addresses, postcodes and phone numbers are listed on pages 216-325.

Car Parking is charged for throughout Dorset, even at seemingly remote sites. Membership of the National Trust and the RSPB is strongly recommended. Car parking permits are available, but there is no comprehensive scheme for the whole county, making them of little use to visitors. It is strongly recommended to have a good supply of £1 coins on hand at all times.

Walking Dorset is a walker's paradise, with thousands of miles of quiet country lanes, byways, tracks, hollow ways

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and footpaths. This guide does not suggest detailed walking routes as exploring is half of the delight of any visit. For those wishing such directions there is a good selection of walks books available. Visitor information centres, nature reserves and most attractions stock leaflets giving current details of opening times, prices, walks, etc.

Country Lanes Dorset has thousands of miles of highly attractive country lanes. These are usually narrow, winding, hedge-lined and have few passing places. Locals tend to drive quite fast, while traffic may include huge tractors, cattle, sheep, cyclists and pedestrians. All road users should proceed with care and attention, no matter how rural and quiet the road might appear.

Although not specifically mentioned in the itineraries, the verges, hedges and field boundaries throughout Dorset are a haven for wildlife, including wildflowers, birds, butterflies and mammals. Visitors are advised to slow down, keep their eyes and ears on the alert and to enjoy the deep peace of the Dorset countryside.

Maps The use of OS Explorer 1:25,000 or OS Landranger 1:25,000 maps, or their digital equivalent, is assumed. The 1:25,000 scale maps are by far the best for exploration as they provide excellent detail. The 1:250,000 maps used throughout this book are intended only for orientation, and are of too small a scale for walking or cycling. Each itinerary lists the OS maps for that particular area.

COUNTRYSIDE CODE

Please observe these guidelines:

1. Always use stiles and gates, and close gates behind you.
2. Always ask permission before entering farmland.
3. Keep to paths and avoid fields of grass and crops.
4. Do not disturb livestock.
5. Take your litter away with you and do not light fires.
6. Do not pollute water courses.
7. Never disturb nesting birds.
8. Do not pick wild flowers or dig up plants.
9. Drive and park with care and attention, do not obstruct or endanger others, park responsibly.
10. Take care near cliffs and beaches, particularly with children and pets. Some beaches are dangerous.
11. Walkers should take adequate clothes, wear suitable footwear and tell someone of their plans.
12. Above all, please respect the life of the countryside - leave only footprints, take only photographs and pleasant memories.

Notice: Most of the sites in this guide are open to the public and have marked access; many are on private land. No right of access is implied; if in doubt it is always polite to ask. Many roads and tracks are rights of way, but not all are.