



Keep active and enjoy yourself – for free

A recession shouldn't stop you from enjoying yourself. East Sussex offers a wealth of free things to do, so the difficult financial climate should be no barrier to taking part in activities and having fun. From discovering the great outdoors to visiting museums and galleries, there's something for everyone.

In a recent survey you told us that you wanted to know more about the free places to go and things to do – so here are some suggestions that won't cost you a penny.



Take a walk

East Sussex is blessed with some of the most spectacular countryside in the UK – and most of it can be enjoyed for free. A few examples include the South Downs and Beachy Head, the Cuckoo Trail, Pebsham Countryside Park and the historic coastline. There are also over 2,000 miles of footpaths just waiting for you to discover them – so pack up a picnic (or choose a route with a lovely country pub) and take a hike!

Try the websites below for more suggestions:

- www.eastsussex.gov.uk/walks
- www.visit1066country.com/experiences/walking
- www.eastbourne.gov.uk/environment/countryside/walks
- www.wealden.gov.uk/environment_and_transport/Roads_and_Footpaths

Guided walks, which feature educational talks on our county's flora and fauna, are conducted through 'Exploring East Sussex'. For a booklet and programme of these walks call **01273 481654** or email walksandrides@eastsussex.gov.uk

Hit the beach

The county has around 47 miles of beautiful coastline, with award-winning beaches, secluded coves, some great spots for rock pooling and even the odd offshore shipwreck!

When the sun shines it's perfect for relaxing with the family, but even when the weather turns colder the stark beauty of the sea can still be enjoyed. To find out about the county's different beaches, coastal habitats and plants, or for links to tide tables and the 'Good Beach Guide', go to www.eastsussex.gov.uk/coast

Free events

Festivals, talks, exhibitions and shows... there are loads of free events to attend throughout the year in East Sussex. Local newspapers are one way to find out what's going on near you, or try the websites below (which are useful for finding out whether the organisers charge for entry):

- www.eastsussex.gov.uk/events (you can also list your own event here)
- www.visitsussex.org
- www.visit1066country.com
- www.visiteastbourne.com
- www.wealden.gov.uk/Community/Whats_On

Museums and galleries

East Sussex has a colourful history and vibrant culture – so there is always something new to learn or experience! Many of the county's museums and galleries cost nothing to visit and make a great place to go if the weather isn't kind.

Good examples include the new Towner Gallery in Eastbourne, the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill and Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, but there are plenty more to choose from – go to www.eastsussex.gov.uk/topattractions for more ideas.

Love your library

If you haven't already joined your local library, there are lots of reasons why you should – and they're all free!

In addition to borrowing books, you can access encyclopedias, specialist publications and a range of magazines and newspapers, use the internet or research local or family history. For a small charge, you can also hire talking books, CDs and DVDs.

With regular events for children (over 8,500 took part in this year's summer reading challenge, for example), information on reading groups and an E-library service that allows you to reserve and renew items online, what's not to love? Go to www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries or head down to your local library to find out more.

Go swimming

If you're under 16 or over 60 swimming is now free at many pools across the county. It's a great way to keep fit and healthy, and many regular swimmers also find they make new friends at the pool.

If you're under 16 you swim for free at:

- Lewes Leisure Centre, and
- Seahaven Swim and Fitness Centre, Newhaven.

If you're over 60 you can swim for free at:

- Bexhill Leisure Pool
- Crowborough Leisure Centre
- Motcombe Pool, Eastbourne
- Sovereign Centre, Eastbourne
- Rye Sports Centre
- Hailsham Leisure Centre
- Lewes Leisure Centre
- Summerfields Leisure Centre, Hastings
- Uckfield Leisure Centre, and
- Seahaven Swim and Fitness Centre, Newhaven

Cycling

East Sussex offers lots of different landscapes to explore with your bicycle. From rolling hills to flat promenades, there are routes to delight seasoned cyclists, absolute beginners, and everyone in between. Go to:

- www.eastsussex.gov.uk/cycling for routes, maps and information about guided rides and cycling awareness training for children, or
- www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk to find out about National Cycle Network routes and developments in East Sussex.

Parks, gardens and play areas

Borough, district, town and parish councils provide dozens of these facilities throughout the county, ranging from vast woodland parks to small children's play parks. The most important thing is they're free.

Whether you're looking for some peace and tranquillity, a place to play football or some swings for the children, explore your neighbourhood's local parks and play areas. We're also investing in more 'multi-use games areas' (MUGAs) in town and village communities – these can be used for football, basketball, cricket and a host of other activities.

Children's Centres

The county's Children's Centres offer all families with children under five a range of services, information and support in their local community. From parent-and-toddler play sessions to adult education courses to cookery classes, there's always something going on – many parents find the Centres a godsend.

Each centre has a monthly list of events, most of which are completely free. Call East Sussex County Council's Early Years, Childcare and Extended Schools Service on 01323 747490 or go to www.eastsussex.gov.uk/childrenscentres to find your nearest Centre.

Get involved...

... In your local community. If you have some spare time, why not volunteer? Whether it's coaching a local rugby team, conservation work, driving a community bus or supporting animal welfare, the range of volunteering opportunities is huge. Go to www.eastsussex.gov.uk/volunteering to find out more.

Getting more copies of this leaflet

You can get all our leaflets in large print, easy read format, in Braille, on audio tape or CD, or in other languages.

They are also available in PDF form, which you can download from our website at eastsussex.gov.uk

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