

Golf in Kent

Kent has been the home of some of the most famous moments in golfing history, with the Open Championship coming to these shores 15 times already. In 2008 the London Golf Club hosted for the European Open Golf Championship while the world's oldest major golf event the British Open is returning to Royal St Georges at Sandwich in 2011.

With more than 100 scenic courses around Kent, the county has every type of course you could dream of playing. You will not be able to play a full round at each course on the itinerary suggestion below but it will give you some inspiration for enjoying Kent's fabulous courses.

Away from the fairways it is worth spending time exploring Kent's rich heritage, countryside and towns. The world famous cathedral city of Canterbury or the delights of Royal Tunbridge Wells provide both quality shopping experiences as well as fascinating cultural attractions to enthral visitors of all ages. Combine all this with award winning restaurants, revered village pubs and extensive coastlines and a short break could easily develop into an extended holiday.

Day One - Coastal courses

With a coastline of international importance the coastal resorts of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate offer five challenging links courses. All are open to visitors and welcome all levels of ability. North Foreland is a cliff top downland course with views of the sea from every tee and green. Nearby St Augustine's Golf Course is the jewel in the crown, as far as the golf courses in the corner of south east England are concerned. Although St Augustine's is not a Championship course the pleasure achieved by playing makes it a very popular venue for the club golfer.

White Cliffs Country (covering Dover, Deal and Sandwich) is home to some of the most challenging and testing courses in the world. The world-class courses here have hosted many a famous visitor and competitions. All four of the district courses, such as Royal Cinque Ports, and Prince's, enjoy spectacular channel views, set amongst beautiful surroundings.

A visit to Kent's coastal courses would not be complete without a mention of Royal St Georges. St Georges has hosted the British Open 13 times already and the championship is set to return in 2011. This famous club is immortalised by legendary club member Ian Fleming in the novel Goldfinger as the golf course in which James Bond plays the classic match against Auric Goldfinger. Non-members can play this iconic course on weekdays by pre-booking a tee time.

Day Two - City courses

Surrounding the historic city of Canterbury are a range of golf courses. A former home to Lord Kitchener, Broome Park offers the best of old and new, heritage and culture in this 18-hole championship length golf course. Canterbury Golf Club set within glorious woodland has some of the prettiest sets of holes in the county. While Boughton Golf Course has something for golfers of all ability, whether it is the Driving range, Par 3 academy course or the practice area to perfect your bunker shots.

Canterbury itself is the perfect place for golf widows with attractions, spas, shopping, restaurants and cafes. The world heritage site of Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's Church should not be missed.

Day Three – Country courses

The Garden of England has an abundance of countryside courses and a plethora of high quality courses designed by professional golfers. A round at the Nick Faldo designed Chart Hills at Biddenden with its American-style fast greens and Florida-style bunkers set in the Weald of Kent is a must for any golf enthusiast.

Situated in an area of natural beauty in the North Downs countryside the London Golf Club was home to the European Open in 2008. The club's Heritage Course has been praised by professionals for its long and short holes whilst the club's second course, The International, is not just the talented understudy; it stands alone as a complement to The Heritage.

Day Four – Golf with a twist

Visitors to Kent have the luxury of combining a round of golf with a visit to a wonderful heritage attraction. The setting alone is inspiration enough at Hever Castle's 250 acre 27-hole parkland course with its traditional Tudor style clubhouse. The Club has hosted the Kent P.G.A. Championship for five years, together with Junior tour events. For such a testing course, Hever Castle is surprisingly not intimidating to the less experienced golfer and the beautiful surroundings make playing the courses a real pleasure.

The 9-hole course at Leeds Castle is set in parkland surrounding the beautiful medieval castle. The course provides both challenging and spectacular holes from start to finish and has many attractive water hazards.

Combine the last evening of your tour with some luxury. The tranquil surroundings of [Tudor Park, A Marriott Hotel and Country Club](#) provide a backdrop for an invigorating round of golf on the 18-hole championship course. The course takes advantage of the natural features of an ancestral deer park and features long, narrow fairways bordered by beautiful, mature pine trees and undulating greens. After golf treat yourself to a treatment in the spa, benefit from the leisure facilities and enjoy a meal in the newly refurbished restaurant.

Most golf courses in Kent will take non-members on a pay-and-play basis, although it is always best to phone and check first. A comprehensive list of courses can be found on www.visitkent.co.uk/golf