

# Coast and Castles



The Coast and Castles tour winds through some beautiful and dramatic scenery, beginning in one of the quieter parts of England, Northumberland.

Lovely roads take you traditional seaside towns, passing by castles and lots of different birds and wildlife before arriving at Berwick-upon-Tweed, a fascinating town with a contested history, having changed hands between Scotland and England many times. Turning inland, we make our way into Scotland through the historic borderlands along the river Tweed, which is dotted with castles and abbeys, before we finish in Edinburgh.

The route is based on Sustrans route number 1, however we have adapted this to make it fully suitable for road bikes, diverting down lovely quiet lanes wherever the Sustrans route hits gravel or muddy tracks. The total distance is approximately 200 miles / 320km, which is split over 4 days of fully supported cycling.

## Highlights

- Stunning coastline - the Northumberland Coast is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Quiet roads, with some traffic free sections
- Dramatic castles and abbeys, some in ruins, some intact - including the impressive Bamburgh castle
- The historic island of Lindisfarne (Holy Island), famed for its priory and castle
- A relatively flat route with some steady climbing through the Moorfoot Hills
- Edinburgh - Arthur's Seat, Holyrood and Edinburgh Castle

## What's included?

**4 nights' accommodation, 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches**

**Refreshment stops with our famous red brew vans**

**Mechanical support including spare bikes and equipment**

**GPS files and route notes**

**Full logistical planning and support from the first to the last night including luggage transfers**

**2 back up vans and a guide cycling at the back of the group**

**A Peak Tours certificate**

**Lots of fun!**



# Itinerary

**Arrival day** – welcome to the tour! – We will assemble at the start hotel in Tynemouth from 5pm onwards and then enjoy a group meal round about 7:30pm

## **Day 1: Tynemouth to Warkworth**

Distance: 40 miles / 65 km  
Elevation: 1120ft / 340m

Begin next to the stunning Long Sands beach  
Enjoy the coastal views at Cullercoats Bay and Whitley Bay

The start of the day is on mostly traffic-free tarmacked paths (Sustrans route)

Finish at the impressive Warkworth Castle

## **Day 2: Warkworth to Beal**

Distance: 50 miles / 80 km  
Elevation: 2220ft / 680m

Cycle through the Northumberland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a hotspot for birdwatchers

Take in the mighty Bamburgh Castle

We continue on quiet lanes through sleepy villages to reach Beal, before you have the chance to cycle across to Lindisfarne (Holy Island) and back

## **Day 3: Beal to Innerleithen**

Distance: 70 miles / 112 km  
Elevation: 4000ft / 1250m

We leave the coast and begin to make our way into Scotland along the lovely River Tweed

Enjoy the sights of lots of different castles and abbeys along the way – including the spectacular Kelso Abbey, founded in 1100, and Melrose Abbey, the burial place of Robert the Bruce's heart

A stunning road leads us through hills and forests to Innerleithen

## **Day 4: Innerleithen to Edinburgh**

Distance: 38 miles / 61km  
Elevation: 2200ft / 650m

We start the day with a steady climb through the beautiful Moorfoot Hills

A fantastic descent takes us into Edinburgh

We use Edinburgh's network of cycle paths to make our way into the heart of the city

Seeing some of Edinburgh's historic sights – Arthur's Seat, Holyrood Palace and Edinburgh Castle – is a fine way to finish 4 brilliant days of cycling!





# Tour Logistics

## The start of the tour

The tour starts in Tynemouth and finishes in Edinburgh. The guides will meet you at the first hotel in Tynemouth. There are a few options for arriving into Tynemouth:

**Train:** Newcastle has a large train station which has good connections to many places in the UK. Taxis are readily available.

**Plane:** there is an airport in Newcastle. If you are arriving into Newcastle International Airport you can then make your way to Tynemouth via public transport or a taxi.

**Ferry:** those travelling from Europe, there are ferries which arrive into Newcastle from Amsterdam, from Newcastle ferry port you can then make your way to Tynemouth via public transport or a taxi.

**Car:** the tour begins at the Tynemouth Castle Inn hotel. Guests will be able to park at the hotel for the night that we are staying there, but after that we won't be able to park at the hotel car park.

However, there is a public car park (Grand Parade Car Park) with 80 spaces right next to the hotel, so you will move your car to that car park on the morning of the first day of riding.

The Grand Parade Car park is tucked away from the main road and can be paid for via an app (you can download a user guide for it here) or via phone, and will just need to be updated each day (the cost each day is £3). It's a very quick process on the app and the guides on the tour will be happy to help with this.

## The end of the tour

The tour ends at around lunchtime / early afternoon. From Edinburgh, there will be the option to be transferred back to Tynemouth with your luggage and your bike. You will likely arrive back at Tynemouth some time between 6-7pm. Alternatively, some people choose to book their own accommodation in Edinburgh and make their way home in their own time.

If you have brought your own bike and want to stay in Edinburgh, then you will either keep your bike with you or we can take it back to our HQ in Glossop for you to collect at a later date.

## Support

Usually each tour has 3 guides:

- One driving the 'brew van' - each day will usually have a morning and afternoon 'brew stop,' with a table full of snacks and drinks. You will also bring a small bag/rucksack to the morning brief and leave this in the 'brew van' which can be accessed throughout the day.
- One driving the 'luggage / lunch van' - transporting your luggage from hotel to hotel, as well as setting up your lunches.
- One riding at the back of the group - you will have detailed route notes so that you can go slower or faster than the group or, if you prefer, you can cycle with the tour guide at the back so that you don't have to navigate at all.
- Mechanical support: we carry a range of spare parts so that repairs can be made en route and we also have spare bikes available in the event that your bike has a serious breakdown. If we can't fix your bike then we will get it to the nearest bike shop.
- Each guide will be contactable by phone during the day so if you have any issues you can get straight in touch with them.
- For smaller groups you might only have one guide that cycles with the group and one back up driver or for groups of 12 or less just one tour leader will provide back-up for you.

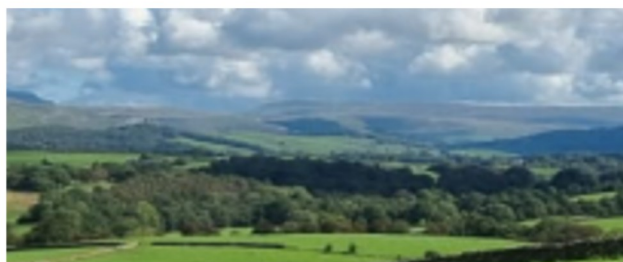


## What's Included?

- 4 nights' accommodation, 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches
- Refreshment stops with our famous red brew vans
- Mechanical support including spare bikes and equipment
- GPS files and route notes
- Full logistical planning and support from the first to the last night including luggage transfers
- 2 back up vans and a guide cycling at the back of the group
- A Peak Tours certificate
- Luggage transfer each day
- Lots of fun!

## What's not included?

- Evening meals / dinner
- Drinks at lunchtime
- Insurance
- Cycle hire (available for a fee)
- Garmin hire (available for a fee)
- Transport back to Tynemouth at the end of the tour for you and your bike (available for a fee)



## Food

### Breakfast

Breakfast is included in the cost of the tour, and will vary slightly between the various hotels and B&Bs that we use, but you can usually expect have a choice of some cooked breakfast options, as well as toast, cereals, fruit juices, tea, coffee etc.

### Lunch

Lunches will be provided each day and will generally be a buffet at a cafe or a country pub.

### Evening meals

Evening meals can be bought at your accommodation or in a nearby pub. On the first and final evenings of the tour we will have a group meal at the hotel.

### Dietary requirements

Please let us know of any dietary requirements you have and we will ensure that all lunch stops and places we eat evening meals are informed.

There will also be snacks on the 'brew van' to suit any and all dietary needs!

## Accommodation

You have a choice sharing a double or a twin room. If you would like your own space then you can choose the single room option, or sole occupancy of a double. Most of the rooms are en suite however there maybe a few nights where your room isn't en suite (Sole occupancy of a double room or double is guaranteed en suite). Generally on the Coast and Castles tour we stay in hotels, pubs or smaller bed and breakfasts.

## Kit list

Clothing for all weathers is recommended so waterproofs are essential.

A full recommended kit list is provided and we are always happy to answer any questions that you may have. You can see details of a kit list [here](#).

Luggage is restricted to a maximum of 18kg per person—we have to look after our guides and their backs as they will be carrying your luggage in and out of the hotels!

## Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out adequate insurance for your tour which, as an absolute minimum should cover accident & medical expenses if you are travelling outside the UK, cover for your bike and belongings and cancellation cover in the event that you have to cancel your tour for unforeseen circumstances.

You should be aware that if you have an accident or fall ill while on the tour you will lose the money paid for the trip. A travel insurance policy would allow you to reclaim most of the money as well as providing insurance in case you lose your bags or if your bike is stolen, broken etc.

Your policy should also cover cancellation costs if you cancel the tour within 8 weeks of departure. If this happens we will try to fill your space and return your funds to you but if we are unable to fill your place you will lose the funds paid for the tour.

We have partnered with Yellow Jersey who provide Travel and Cycle insurance for UK residents. You can find further details [here](#).

# Am I fit enough?

## Difficulty

The Coast and Castles Tour is aimed at those who have perhaps done some multi-day cycle tours, perhaps 2 or 3 day tours, and are now looking to do a longer tour.

It shouldn't be underestimated, however, as you will be expected to be able to complete an average of 50 miles / 80km per day.

This tour is classed as a grade 3 tour. See details of difficulty rating [here](#).

Generally most people on the tour will be fairly active cyclists, and cycling 40 miles / 60km will not be too challenging for them.

## How fast do I need to be?

Generally, most cyclists completing this tour will be capable of cycling at 9 miles / 14.5kmph over the whole day, keeping in mind that some days are hillier than others, and you will be stopping for breaks and lunches.

Most days start at 8:30 and we ask that all riders are finished by 18:00 at the latest, to allow you time to relax and explore the culture of the places that you stay in the evenings.

## Are there any hills on the tour?

The route is mostly flat or taking you through rolling hills. Day 3 is the hardest day, as it does have some more strenuous climbs, and there are more of them, but you will have been able to ease into things with a very flat day on day 1, and a slight step up for Day 2.

On the final day there is a hill which takes us out of Innerleithen over towards Edinburgh, and whilst long at 6 miles / 10km, this hill is not too steep, averaging 3%.

## Training

The fitter you are and the more training that you do beforehand will add to the enjoyment of your tour and improve your chances of succeeding the challenge.

If you need any advice about fitness please contact us and we will be happy to discuss any questions and concerns that you may have.

We have a training document which has a

suggested training programme, which you can access [here](#).

## Bikes

The Coast and Castles tour can be completed by people on all types of bikes: we have made the route completely road bike suitable, but those on hybrids or mountain bikes will be perfectly at home as well.

You can transport your bike in the following ways:

- Bringing your own - most people using this option will arrive by train or by car (see the travel section for details on parking your car then coming back to it after the tour)
- We can transport your bike for you if you can get your bike to us in Glossop in the Peak District

Please ensure that your bike is fully serviced and in good working order before the start of the trip. It is advisable to have your bike service a few weeks before the start of the tour. This will allow time to 'bed in' before you start your ride.

Alternatively you can hire a bike from us, please see our website for more information.

