

OFFICIAL VISITOR GUIDE

# PORTSMOUTH





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Spicing Up

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With over 90 leading fashion and lifestyle brands offering up to 60% off RRP, Gunwharf Quays is the refreshing waterfront escape that is unmatched.

Shopping is just the beginning of your Gunwharf Quays adventure! Whether you're planning a relaxed lunch with friends, a lavish family celebration or you fancy something tasty on the go, our amazing restaurants, cafes and bars are guaranteed to satisfy every tastebud.


From our 14-screen cinema and bowling alley to exciting year-round pop-up events – and not to mention our stunning historic harbourside setting – we're the ultimate day out destination.

# GUNWHARF QUAYS

WATERFRONT OUTLET SHOPPING





 PORTSMOUTH  
 HISTORIC  
 DOCKYARD

OPERATED BY

THE  
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# TAKE ON BOARD VICTORY



BOOK ONLINE AT [HISTORICDOCKYARD.CO.UK](https://www.historicdockyard.co.uk)

**UNEXPECTED  
EXPERIENCES**



# WISH YOU WERE HERE



1 Aerial view of Portsmouth Harbour and Spinnaker Tower  
Adobe Stock Photo

2 Gunwharf Quays

3 Aspex Gallery  
Image by Dan Boss

4 HMS Victory

5 The D-Day Story  
Image by Matt Scott-Joynt





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## Welcome to Portsmouth – the great waterfront city

Portsmouth, the UK's only island city, is the perfect location for your next short break or day trip. If you are a regular visitor and already a fan of the city – welcome back! If you haven't visited for a while we really recommend you add Portsmouth to your plans in 2025.

Portsmouth has something for everyone – from world-class attractions, amazing events, fabulous shopping and great evening entertainment to an array of great places to stay, eat and drink.

The iconic Spinnaker Tower is the perfect place to start your visit. Take in the amazing views then head down to earth for the fabulous outlet shopping available at Gunwharf Quays – grab yourself a designer bargain then relax with a bite to eat overlooking the harbour.

Walk along the waterfront into Old Portsmouth, visiting Aspex art gallery en route. Discover centuries of history along the Millennium Trail by following the chain motif on the pavement. On your way, explore the cobbled streets and harbour fortifications (home to the Hotwalls Studios) and walk up the historic High Street to Portsmouth Cathedral.

Visit Portsmouth Historic Dockyard where you can view over 500 years of maritime history, including HMS Victory, Mary Rose, HMS Warrior, the National Museum of the Royal Navy and much more.

In Southsea discover The D-Day Story, where your visit begins aboard the immense landing craft LCT 7074.

Explore more Tudor history at Southsea Castle and enjoy amazing views across to the Isle of Wight.

As an island city, Portsmouth has miles of waterfront and beaches to explore, along with large open spaces and easy access to countryside walks.

After dinner you can choose music, theatre, comedy or drama at one of the city's variety of venues offering year-round entertainment.



### A full calendar of events

Across the year the city's literary connections will be celebrated, with the local arts and culture collective Portsmouth Creates designating 2025 as its 'Year of Literature and Literacy'.

In June, Portsmouth is proud to be the home of the national UK Pride event and July will once again see the International Kite Festival return to the city.

Portsmouth will host two large sailing events this year, Sail GP in July and The Ocean Race in August. The award-winning Victorious Festival returns on the August Bank Holiday weekend, followed by The Great South Run in October.

These are just a few highlights for the year, check out the full listings on [visitportsmouth.co.uk](http://visitportsmouth.co.uk) before your visit.

Head to the official Visit Portsmouth website for further information on all the attractions and accommodation listed in this guide, as well as the most up-to-date event listings.







# PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC DOCKYARD



**T**ake on an unforgettable adventure this year at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. Marvel at rare treasures, from tiny coins to colossal Georgian ships, and witness breathtaking wrecks recovered from the ocean's depths. Step aboard Vice-Admiral Nelson's legendary HMS Victory, explore Henry VIII's prized Mary Rose, and stand in awe of the world's first iron-hulled warship, HMS Warrior. Dive into the history of a genuine First World War monitor ship, HMS M.33. This is a day over 500 years in the making, what will your adventure be?

Experience the Mary Rose like never before in the thrilling Dive the Mary Rose 4D cinema! Immerse yourself in the untold story of the ship's discovery, excavation, and recovery through stunning 3D visuals, CGI, and never-before-seen footage. Feel the excitement come alive with the scents and sounds of the historic raising, all while wearing 3D glasses that make you feel like you're right there in the action.

Be part of history with Victory Live: The Big Repair. Get an exclusive behind-the-scenes pass to the epic restoration of HMS Victory. Watch as expert craftspeople



- 1** Mary Rose  
Image by Hufton+Crow
- 2** Victory Live
- 3** HMS M.33
- 4** HMS Warrior  
Adobe Stock Photo
- 5** Harbour Tour
- 6** Dive the Mary Rose 4D
- 7** HMS Alliance,  
Submarine Museum





replace decaying planks with new oak, restore the ship's structural framework, and re-rig her in a massive 10- to 15-year, £35 million project. Special viewing areas let you witness every step up close. Don't miss this rare opportunity to see a legend reborn right before your eyes!

That's not all! Included in the Ultimate Explorer ticket are the two Gosport museums, Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower, and the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, available to visit with a short hop across on the scenic waterbus. Explore the depths of the sea at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, where you can visit the WWII submarine HMS Alliance, marvel at the pioneering HMS Holland 1, and check out the compact but powerful X24. Immerse yourself in submarine history on the legendary HMS Dolphin site.

Feel the adrenaline at the Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower! Get up close with awe-inspiring missiles, torpedoes, and small arms inside a genuine 18th century armaments depot. Discover the explosive stories of naval engineers and munitions workers who shaped maritime warfare through the ages.

There's a perfect ticket for everyone, with the Ultimate Explorer offering unbeatable value! Gain entry to all nine attractions, including the Harbour Tour for breathtaking views of Britain's modern navy at work. Explore diverse galleries around the dockyard, from stories of everyday heroes to stunning displays of the UK's naval evolution.

[historicdockyard.co.uk](http://historicdockyard.co.uk)



# GUNWHARF QUAYS

Enjoy a day out at Gunwharf Quays and discover a retail paradise on the stunning Solent waterfront!



If you haven't experienced the magic of Gunwharf Quays yet, you're in for a treat! Perched at the mouth of the scenic Portsmouth Harbour, the shopping centre offers a captivating environment.

Marvel at the impressive waterfront setting, with stunning views of the historic harbour and the iconic Spinnaker Tower. Breathe in the salty sea air as you explore the marina, lined with luxury yachts and boats, creating a picturesque backdrop for your day of exploration.

At Gunwharf Quays, you're invited to embark on a retail adventure and uncover the remarkable experiences waiting to be discovered in the vibrant city of Portsmouth. The centre is also proud to be a dog-friendly destination, where well-behaved four-legged companions are welcome in most stores.



1  
**Vue Cinema**

2  
**The Square**  
Image by Sonny Flanagan Photography

3  
**Taking selfies on the waterfront**

4  
**The Avenues**  
Image by Sonny Flanagan Photography

5  
**Shopping trip at Gunwharf Quays**

6  
**Kate Spade**





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### Time to shop big brands, at little prices!

Gunwharf Quays boasts over 90 outlet stores. Premium brands at outlet prices include Michael Kors, Polo Ralph Lauren, Nike, Hugo Boss, Coach, Kate Spade, L'Occitane and so many more, all offering significant discounts of up to 60% off RRP. Whether you're looking for fashion, accessories, homeware, sportswear, gifts, health and beauty and more... there's something for everyone.

### Waterfront dining for the whole family

No need to worry about where to dine during your visit. Gunwharf Quays boasts a fantastic selection of waterfront restaurants, offering a perfect setting to savour a sumptuous meal while enjoying stunning views of the marina.

With more than 30 restaurants, bars, and cafés, the dining options are plentiful. From casual eateries to fine dining, guests can enjoy a variety of cuisines. Highlights include Brasserie Blanc for French cuisine, Las Iguanas for Latin flavours, Giggling Squid for a taste of Thailand and The Alchemist for innovative cocktails.



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### Bringing the little ones?

If you're visiting with children, family-friendly entertainment and activities can be found by the bucketful. For a dose of friendly competition, head to Hollywood Bowl and let the whole family score a strike! Or why not settle in for a big screen experience at VUE Cinema?

Fancy a spot of sightseeing? The striking Spinnaker Tower offers breathtaking views stretching up to 23 miles across the Solent on a clear day. Daredevils can also test their mettle on the Sky Walk and view the harbour 100 metres below through a clear glass walkway.

For an adventure on the high seas, Solent Harbour Tours are great fun for parents and little pirates alike to take in the sights of Portsmouth's historic harbour! Departing from Gunwharf Quays Marina, you'll get fantastic views of the Royal Navy's ships in port, along with a full commentary on the captivating history of the Dockyard.

### Accessible and inclusive

Gunwharf Quays warmly welcomes all visitors. With convenient access to all stores and facilities, there's a comfortable experience for those with additional mobility needs. The Guest Services team is dedicated to supporting individuals with hidden disabilities, ensuring an enjoyable visit for everyone.

[gunwharf-quays.com](http://gunwharf-quays.com)





# Breath taking



Your destination in the sky

**SAVE  
WHEN  
YOU  
BOOK  
ONLINE**



# SPINNAKER TOWER



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The iconic Spinnaker Tower stands at a soaring 170 metres tall, offering awe-inspiring 23-mile views over Portsmouth, the Solent, the South Downs and the Isle of Wight.

The experience starts in the high-speed lift and in 30 seconds you step onto the viewing decks where Portsmouth, 'the great waterfront city' is showcased in all its glory.

These are unmissable sights, seen from a 350-degree panorama, and each with its own story. Discover the rich history behind the view with informative touch screen displays and take in the sea air from the open 'Sky Garden'.

For those brave enough, there's a thrilling 'Sky Walk' 100 metres above sea level or the opportunity to abseil down the Tower!

Right on the waterfront, The Spinnaker Kitchen & Bar is a relaxing spot to enjoy a drink or bite to eat made with delicious, locally sourced ingredients. For a real 'high' tea, head to the Clouds Café for a traditional afternoon tea or brunch with a glass of bubbly.

From 7.30pm the Clouds turns into Sky Bar – the perfect setting to drink in the view. Enjoy sunset, evening and night views while sipping a classic cocktail or the signature 'Spinnaker Tower'.

A spectacular venue for events or your own special occasion, the Tower is available for private hire, corporate functions and weddings.

Find out more and save on standard all day admission when you book online. Visit [spinnakertower.co.uk](http://spinnakertower.co.uk)



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1  
Sky Bar  
Image by Compass  
Photography

2  
Sky Bar mixologist

3  
Clouds Café

4  
Sky Walk and  
View Deck 1



It made  
it home.  
It made  
history.



THE D-DAY STORY  
PORTSMOUTH

It makes  
a great  
day out.



Visit the only UK museum dedicated to the momentous events of 6 June 1944. Step onboard LCT 7074, explore the museum's collection and marvel at the Overlord Embroidery. [thedaystory.com](http://thedaystory.com)







# THE D-DAY STORY

The D-Day Story is an essential part of any visit to Portsmouth. The Normandy landings remain the largest seaborne invasion ever seen, which marked the beginning of the end of the Second World War, and The D-Day Story is the only UK museum dedicated to the telling of this significant moment in history.

With the museum divided into three distinct parts, your visit begins on Landing Craft Tank 7074, the last surviving preserved LCT, which crossed the Channel during June 1944. Step onboard and discover its fascinating history from construction and its role during the Normandy campaign carrying up to ten tanks across the Channel, through to its post-war role as a floating nightclub! Sound effects, recreated crew quarters and Sherman and Churchill tanks bring the experience to life.



Inside the museum, discover how D-Day was planned and how those in charge took the critical decisions to make the operation a success. Audio visual displays and interactives put you in the shoes of those involved, whilst vehicles and objects provide a compelling insight into the personal stories of the individuals who were there.

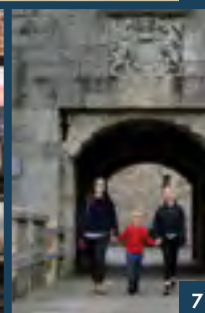
The stunning 83 metre Overlord Embroidery completes the visit. Inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry and comprising 34 hand-stitched panels, the embroidery was created to commemorate those who took part on D-Day. You can also hear veterans' personal stories as they reflect on their wartime service. The museum is open from 10am to 5pm daily. [thedaystory.com](http://thedaystory.com)


# SOUTHSEA CASTLE

Henry VIII's Southsea Castle is located a short walk from The D-Day Story. Built in 1544, the castle is reportedly from where Henry VIII watched the sinking of his favourite ship the Mary Rose. A buoy marks the wreck location and is viewable from the castle ramparts.

Visit the castle keep and discover more about the fortification's fascinating history, stop for a bite to eat at The Courtyard restaurant and climb the stone steps to walk around the ramparts to take in the expansive city and sea views.

The castle is fully open to visitors from April to October, while The Courtyard restaurant is open all year. [southseacastle.co.uk](http://southseacastle.co.uk)



-  1 LCT 7074, The D-Day Story  
Image by Matt Scott-Joynt
- 2 4 The D-Day Story  
Image by Matt Scott-Joynt
- 3 Overlord Embroidery, The D-Day Story  
Image by Matt Scott-Joynt
- 5 Southsea Castle
- 6 7 Southsea Castle  
Image by Matt Scott-Joynt







1  
2



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# FAMILY FUN IN SOUTHSEA



*At the southern end of the island of Portsmouth is Southsea, where you will find a fabulous mix of traditional seaside fun with a twist of modern and contemporary thrown in.*







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- 1 Clarence Pier  
Image by Mike Walker / Alamy Stock Photo
- 2 South Parade Pier
- 3 Blue Reef Aquarium
- 4 Portsmouth Natural History Museum
- 5 Exploria

The beautiful seafront offers miles of beach and seafront promenade to explore, with the designated bathing area being to the east of South Parade Pier.

You are spoilt for choice with not one but two seafront piers. **Clarence Pier** to the west is home to a funfair, indoor Pitch and Putt, adventure Mini Golf, arcade games and much more. Further along the seafront to the east is the majestic **South Parade Pier**, home to arcade games, family activities and great food options – including fish and chips. Take a stroll onto the pier and enjoy the amazing views across the Solent to the Isle of Wight. The pier also comes to life in the evening with regular entertainment in The Gaiety.

Just across the road from here is Canoe Lake and **Portsmouth's Natural History Museum**. This small, free museum includes the A-Z of Natural History exhibition, plus geology and wildlife

habitat displays, a working beehive and a seasonal butterfly house.

In the garden behind the museum you will find a wooden sculpture of a bumblebee forming part of a bench. This is one of five wildlife sculptures to discover in and around Canoe Lake.

Nearby, constructed on the site of the ancient Lumps Fort, is Southsea Model Village – a 1/12 scale miniature world including G scale railway featuring Thomas and friends.

If you are looking for great indoor play to keep the children active and entertained, **Exploria** at Portsmouth Pyramids Centre is ideal. Discover extreme fun across three connected worlds, with areas for juniors, toddlers and babies alike. Activities include a ninja run, slides, ball pit and Little Tykes' car track.

For something truly exhilarating try one of the Hovercraft Experience Flights, leaving from Southsea beach throughout the year.

For visitors with disabilities Wet Wheels Solent provides power boat experiences for all.

There is more of the natural world to discover at **Blue Reef Aquarium** situated between Clarence Pier and The D-Day Story. The Solent Seas, Tropical Treasures and Freshwater Fun displays have a range of animals to view, including axolotls, clown fish, eels, snapping turtles, seahorses, stingrays, porcupine pufferfish and red bellied piranha. There is also an outdoor splash pool play area for sunnier days.

With major coastal defence works taking place in 2025 a large section of the seafront road will be closed. The best parking for Blue Reef Aquarium is the D-Day car park which is just a few minutes' walk away. You can still easily access the area from the west by foot along an all-weather path on Southsea Common.





# WHAT'S ON IN 2025



UK Pride, June

© Gale Photography

Portsmouth has a packed calendar of year-round events. The city hosts everything from breathtaking theatre productions to huge music festivals, free family activities and loads more besides. For the most up-to-date listings of everything going on head to [visitportsmouth.co.uk](https://visitportsmouth.co.uk) – or here are just some of the event highlights this year.

## JANUARY – FEBRUARY

The year kicks off with a decidedly literary slant. We'll be marking the birth of Charles Dickens on 7 February at the home in which he was born – which is today a museum. Then it's the turn of **Portsmouth BookFest**, bringing a host of authors to locations across the city for talks, workshops and readings.

## MARCH – APRIL

There will be some egg-cellent family activities at many Portsmouth attractions over the Easter holidays. You can egg-spect craft activities, trails, and plenty more besides. April also sees the return of the South's premier metal music event, **Takedown Festival** at Portsmouth Guildhall.

## MAY – JUNE

The festivities continue in early May with **Portsmouth Comic Con**. The international festival of comics welcomes world famous actors, writers and cartoonists. Later, Portsmouth takes centre stage as the location of **UK Pride 2025**. A huge party is planned for the occasion. The city will also host a number of events to mark the **80th anniversary of VE Day** in May.



Sail GP, July





Victorious Festival, August



Look Up Portsmouth, September

### JULY – AUGUST

Summer brings with it not one but two major sailing events, in the form of **Sail GP** and **The Ocean Race** – both of which will offer fantastic opportunities for spectators, as well as ways to get involved with the sport. There will also be the return of **Portsmouth International Kite Festival** on Southsea Common and classical music events on Guildhall Square. Plus, don't forget the incredible **Victorious Festival** over the August Bank Holiday weekend.



Great South Run, October



International Kite Festival, July

### SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER

The summer may draw to a close but the events certainly do not. In September **Look Up Portsmouth** celebrates all things street art, where you can watch national and international artists create new works live. Or how about going behind the scenes for free tours as part of **Heritage Open Days**? There's also **Games Fest** at Portsmouth Guildhall and the hugely popular **Great South Run** – the world's premier 10-mile running event.

### NOVEMBER – DECEMBER

As the year concludes, Portsmouth explodes into colour with firework displays and **Christmas Light Switch On** parties. The festivities continue with a whole host of **pantomime performances** at the city's numerous theatres, as well as many Christmas Markets for you to grab that perfect gift. You can also get your skates on as **Portsmouth On Ice** returns to Guildhall Square.



© Sail GP





# VICTORIOUS FESTIVAL



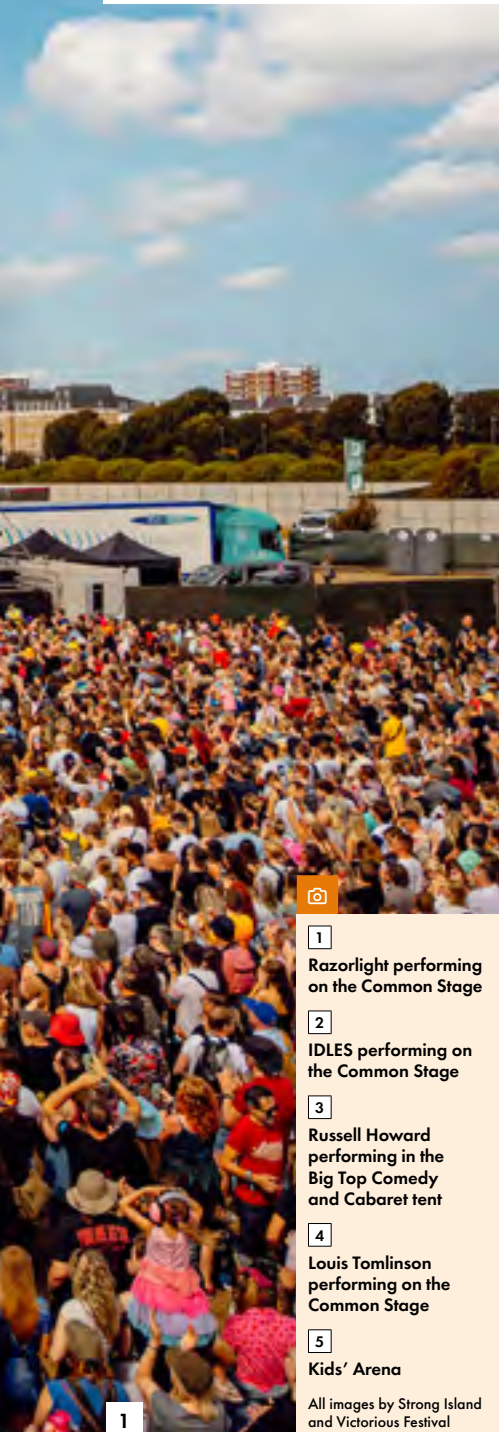




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1  
Razorlight performing on the Common Stage

2  
IDLES performing on the Common Stage

3  
Russell Howard performing in the Big Top Comedy and Cabaret tent

4  
Louis Tomlinson performing on the Common Stage

5  
Kids' Arena

All images by Strong Island and Victorious Festival

*“Nestled on Southsea seafront, it’s a special kind of festival that can boast coastal views and a world-class musical lineup.” – One on One*

**G**et ready for an amazing summer experience at Victorious Festival! Every August Bank Holiday, Southsea seafront comes alive with world-class music, stunning coastal views, and endless festival fun.

With 13+ stages to explore, each offering its own unique feel, there’s something for every music lover. Head to the World Music Village for global rhythms or pull up a deck chair at the Seaside Stage. Don’t miss the afternoon comedy sessions, where the UK’s funniest comedians will have you laughing non-stop. Plus, afternoon special guest slots mean the party kicks off early each day.

The fun doesn’t stop there – hit the Skatepark for roller discos and skate demos, and dance the night away at Henry’s House, a party set inside historic Southsea Castle.

It’s not just for the grown-ups – Victorious is packed with fun for the whole family! The Kids’ Arena has free activities like retro gaming, bouncy castles, art walls, and face painting, plus a talent-packed Kids Stage.

Feeling hungry? There are hundreds of food traders ready to serve up festival feasts. And be sure to catch pop-up performances throughout the day or dive into literary fun at the Spoken Arts Parlour.

**Don’t miss out – grab your Victorious 2025 tickets now!**  
[victoriousfestival.co.uk](http://victoriousfestival.co.uk)



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# COASTAL CULTURE

**P**ortsmouth most certainly knows its arts from its elbow. The city is home to not one but two Matcham theatres, as well as the fantastic Guildhall, multiple art galleries and iconic music venues.

Theatre-goers really are spoilt for choice in Portsmouth. There's the **Kings Theatre** in Southsea (a 1,400-capacity room in a stunning Grade II-listed building) and the **New Theatre Royal** in the city centre (with 656 seats, as well as the Minghella Studio and Coffee Bar). Both were designed in part by the eminent architect Frank Matcham, whose name is synonymous with beautiful and functional theatres that are equally as stunning as anything you'll witness on stage.

Both venues welcome touring drama and comedy shows all year round, whilst also putting on events for the local community and working with regional theatre groups.

In 2025 the Kings Theatre's programme will include award-winning musical *Bat Out of Hell*, *Strictly* stars Dianne and Vito, and the return of Broadway smash hit *Six*.

Meanwhile, at the New Theatre Royal there's the chance to see renowned author Kate Mosse, TV funnyman Chris McCausland and everyone's favourite villain Craig Revel Horwood.

That's not all, as the smaller Groundlings Theatre hosts touring shows, amateur productions, live music and more inside its converted Georgian schoolhouse near Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and Gunwharf Quays.

The city's largest venue is **Portsmouth Guildhall** – which hosts the biggest names in music and comedy. In fact, it has welcomed luminaries such as The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, U2, Arctic Monkeys, Elton John and countless others over the years. It was also where Pink Floyd gave their seminal album *Dark Side of the Moon* its full live debut.

Over 2025 the Guildhall will host performances by Greg Davies, James Martin, Mo Gilligan, Anastacia and Riverdance, as well as a full programme of classical music and a host of smaller shows from up-and-coming acts in the Lens Studio.



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On Albert Road you'll find a truly iconic music venue in the **Wedgewood Rooms**. Having survived when so many other independent grass-roots venues have closed down, 'The Wedge' is known throughout the land for putting on shows by bands, artists and comedians on the up. In fact, it hosted Oasis, The Killers and Muse before they hit the stratosphere, not to mention bands that would go on to headline Victorious Festival – among them Kasabian, Biffy Clyro and Jamie T.

There are artists of a different kind frequenting **Aspex** – a contemporary art gallery located within the Gunwharf Quays complex. Here you can see work from the cutting edge of modern, boundary-pushing art – with many of those featured previously having since gone on to achieve great success.

As well as its creative programme of installations, the gallery also hosts regular events for families, craft workshops, and activities for those with dementia. Entry is free and there's also a popular café on site.

Just a short walk from Aspex you'll find the **Hotwalls Studios**. Built into centuries-old fortifications lining the seafront are 14 modern artist studios, where designer makers create and sell their wares, host workshops and take commissions. There's also a regular market where you can talk to the resident artists to find out more about their work. The line up of residents change as the artists find success and move to their own premises, but the current crop includes fine artists, ceramicists, potters, jewellers and even a taxidermist.

There are brand new galleries open at **Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery** – offering you the chance to see pieces from the extensive civic collection, as well as items on loan from national galleries. This free museum also includes a range of displays showcasing moments in Portsmouth's history.



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- 1 Kings Theatre  
Alamy Stock Photo
- 2 New Theatre Royal
- 3 Nice Pear Ceramics, Hotwalls Studios  
Image by Dan Boss
- 4 Riverdance 30 – The New Generation showing at Portsmouth Guildhall in Dec 2025
- 5 Harvey Jay Dodgson performing at The Wedgewood Rooms  
Image by Nikki Court / Alamy Stock Image
- 6 Aspex Gallery



# INDEPENDENT ISLAND



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1  
Masterclass at  
Southsea Deli

2  
Artypotz

3  
Coastal Remedy,  
Marmion Road



2



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**F**rom shopping with small businesses to trying out experiences you cannot get anywhere else, there are huge rewards to be had for embracing indie Portsmouth. Thankfully, there's much to choose from in a city that's proud of its independent streak.

To begin, why not shop local? Not only will you help out a small business, it's also your opportunity to take home something not readily available on any copy-and-paste high street up and down the land. Whether it's clothing from Strong Island or some quality spirits from the Portsmouth Distillery, there's no shortage of places to pick up something unique.

In Southsea you're spoilt for choice. A walk along Castle Road, Marmion Road or Albert Road will bring you to independent bookshops, record stores, homeware manufacturers and plenty more besides.

Castle Road is a particular favourite, with many much-loved indie businesses packed into a relatively small area. There's Pie & Vinyl, serving up hot meals and the coolest new releases, Brocante, which specialises in quality antiques, and Artypotz, where you can design your own ceramics to take home. Food and drink is covered by (among others) bar/bistro Delaneys and beloved pub The Barley Mow.

A short walk will bring you to Marmion Road – where there are independent shops selling furniture, homewares, vintage clothing, gifts, cosmetics, jewellery and more. There's also the Southsea Local, offering food and drink from small, local manufacturers.

Over on Elm Grove you'll find the Southsea Deli where, as well as picking up food to take away, you can also attend masterclasses to learn how to make artisan bread, pies, street food and more. Then, just a little way along the road is the famed Bread Addiction – though it's worth getting there early as the much-loved sourdough loaves and sweet pastries often sell out.





- 4 Pie & Vinyl
- 5 Portsmouth Distillery Co.
- 6 MakeMake
- 7 Crushed & Cured



For a real treat get yourself a bottle or two from the Portsmouth Distillery Co. Based out of an old fort, the distillery makes truly incredible rum and gin – and the wonderful surrounds are often used for music and comedy nights.

Craft beer lovers are well catered for with a selection of breweries to try out. Urban Island is located in Hilsea and serves a great selection of its own ales from a tap house at the top of Portsea Island. Or, near Fratton Park you'll find Staggeringly Good – its IPAs being particularly popular – whilst the Southsea Brewing Co that started out of Southsea Castle now has its own pub in Eastney.

The independent shopping continues at Portsmouth's many markets – find out more about these on page 27.

Slightly newer on the scene are MakeMake off the Eastern Road (bringing real ingenuity and originality to its brews), and Powder Monkey, based in Priddy's Hard over the water in Gosport.

Each of these offer the chance to drink in at the on-site taprooms, or you can take bottles, cans and mini kegs away to enjoy at home.

Wine more your thing? Wines By The Sea has a great selection that you won't find in the supermarket, as well as expert information readily available for you to find your next favourite. There's also a top selection (including some real left-field options) at Crushed & Cured. If you've an hour to spend, drop in for a cheese and wine flight, or pick up some quality charcuterie. You may also be able to book onto a tasting night, replete with expert advice and insight.



# LITERARY LEGACY

*From Dickens to Doyle, Manning to Magorian, Portsmouth has a rich literary history.*







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**1**  
 Painting of Charles Dickens by artist William Powell Frith  
 Image by Heritage Image Partnership Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

**2**  
 A Study in Sherlock, Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery

**3**  
 Statue of Charles Dickens by sculptor Martin Jennings

**4**  
 Charles Dickens' Birthplace Museum

**5**  
 Bedroom where Charles Dickens was born in 1812  
 Image by Matt Scott-Joynt

It was within the city that **Charles Dickens**, perhaps the most celebrated Victorian author, was born. The Dickens family moved to Portsmouth for his father's work in the Royal Navy, making a home on what is now Old Commercial Road. Today, this humble terraced house is a museum to celebrate Dickens' life, being decorated in the styles favoured at the time and displaying some of his personal possessions.

You can visit the museum on select open days throughout the year, or make a special journey for Dickens' birthday on 7 February, when it opens for free to all and has a small ceremony – often featuring some of his direct descendants.

Another literary icon to have come out of Portsmouth is Sherlock Holmes. Whilst

working as a doctor in the city, **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** devised the character that would go on to become famous around the world. His 'consulting detective' may have an address on London's Baker Street, but he was made in Portsmouth.

This wasn't Doyle's only impression on the city, however. A keen sportsman, he also played in goal for Portsmouth AFC – making 76 appearances.

The author's links with the city are remembered at **Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery**, in which some of the items from the world's largest collection of Conan Doyle memorabilia are displayed. These include various Holmes books and paraphernalia, as well as the personal artefacts of Doyle himself. The exhibition – like the museum itself – is free to visit.

Other eminent writers to have lived in Portsmouth at one point in their lives include **HG Wells** (who took a job as a draper's assistant but left for London citing the 'drudgery' of the job), and **Rudyard Kipling**, whose parents sent him to the UK from India for schooling. He lived in Southsea with his sister Trix for six years – at a home where a blue plaque now bears his name.

More recently Portsmouth has been home to **Michelle Magorian**, the writer behind *Goodnight Mister Tom* and *Just Henry*.

These literary connections are being celebrated keenly this year, with local arts and culture collective **Portsmouth Creates** designating 2025 as its Year of Literature and Literacy. There will be a host of events and celebrations, to not only honour the famed authors who have lived or worked in the city, but also boost literacy levels and foster the next generation of best-sellers.

This will be in addition to the regular **Portsmouth BookFest** event, which takes place every February and March. It welcomes renowned celebrities and writers to the city's libraries and other venues for talks, workshops and readings.

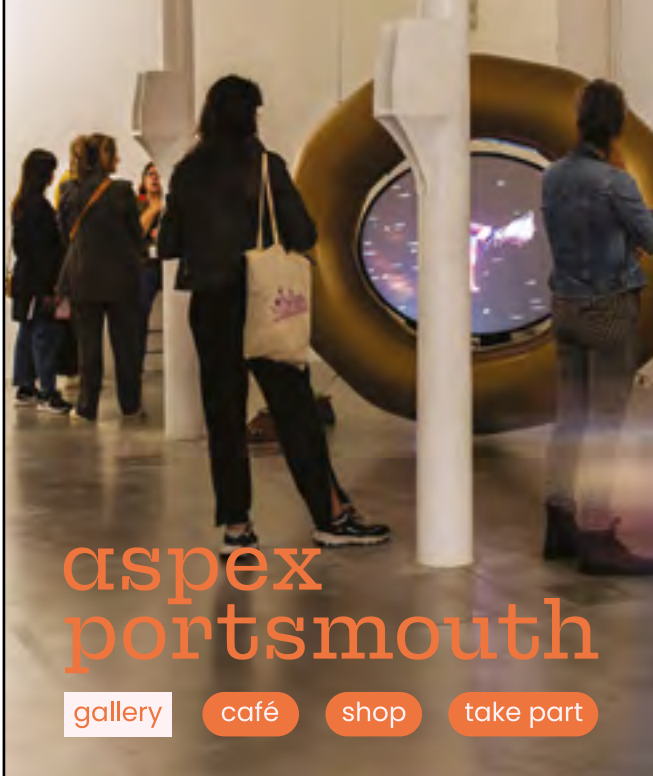
Keep an eye on the Visit Portsmouth website for all the details on literary-themed events taking place over the year ahead.



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# MORE SHOPS TO EXPLORE



1

In addition to the amazing variety that Gunwharf Quays offers across its 90+ brands (see pages 8-9), Portsmouth is also home to a selection of high street names, independent shops, and year-round markets.

Cascades shopping centre and Commercial Road in the city centre offer a wide range of well-known brands that you would expect to find in a British high street. Bag a bargain in TKMaxx (along with that gift for yourself that you didn't know you needed) and pick up the latest fashion in nearby Next, H&M or River Island.

Check out the latest footwear styles, treat yourself to a range of beauty products or buy a gift of jewellery for that special someone.

There is a good mix of places to enjoy a bite to eat too. Browse the reading matter in Waterstones while relaxing in their in-house café or grab a takeaway and stroll to Victoria Park, a haven of quiet for a picnic break from all the retail therapy.



2



3

In Southsea you will find a mix of big brands and independent and vintage stores across Palmerston Road, Marmion Road, Castle Road and Albert Road. Find out more on pages 22-23.

At Port Solent you can browse the waterfront shops while checking out the yachts in the marina, the perfect place for a pit-stop with a choice of places to eat and drink.

Portsmouth also has several retail parks that are home to larger stores and supermarkets. These include Ocean Retail Park, North Harbour and the Pompey Centre.



1

Cascades shopping centre

2

Next in Cascades shopping centre

3

Palmerston Road

4

Hotwalls Studios Open Studios

## Market days



Local markets add to the Portsmouth shopping experience right throughout the year. Check out the What's On listings at [visitportsmouth.co.uk](http://visitportsmouth.co.uk) for the most up-to-date information.

### City Centre Market

A range of fruit and vegetables plus clothing, gifts, hardware, flowers and much more – every Thursday, Friday and Saturday all year.

### Hampshire Farmers' Market

Every third Sunday of the month in Palmerston Road.

### Love Southsea Market

A regular market of independent creatives plus food and drink in Palmerston Road.

### Port Solent Waterside Market

A range of fresh produce and artisanal food products, handmade crafts and gifts, every second Sunday of the month.



4

### Hotwalls Studios

A regular Creatives Market and Open Studios events.

### Christmas Treats

In the run up to Christmas the markets turn festive with special stalls in Gunwharf Quays, Commercial Road, Port Solent and others.





# PIECING TOGETHER THE PAST

*From the arrival of iconic ships to turning points in global wars – and even a royal wedding – Portsmouth has seen it all. Ours may be a relatively small island, but it's rich in history.*

Old Portsmouth is, as the name suggests, one of the city's oldest developed areas. However, even though it's home to some historic fortifications (among them the Round Tower which has stood in one form or another since 1418), the Old Portsmouth of today is also where you'll find popular pubs, well-rated restaurants and modern artist studios.

Standing tall over Old Portsmouth is the **Cathedral of St Thomas** – located on the site of the original chapel that was dedicated back in 1188. Formally a cathedral since 1927, it's now a popular spot not just for the regular services but also year-round events – everything from markets to live music performances and art exhibitions.

The nearby **Royal Garrison Church** is also rich in history, being the location of Charles II's marriage to Catherine of Braganza. Originally a hospice (back in 1212) the building has since been used as a church and armoury. What's most striking about the building is that it has no roof over the nave – a result of The Blitz – which makes it a popular subject for photographers.



1



2



1

**Cathedral of St Thomas**  
Alamy Stock Photo

2

**Royal Garrison Church**

3

**Spice Island Inn**  
Image by Mogzy /  
Adobe Stock Photo

4

**Portchester Castle**  
Image by You Got This  
Media / Adobe Stock Photo

5

**Millennium Promenade**  
Image by Parkes  
Photographic Archive /  
Alamy Stock Photo

6

**Fort Nelson**  
Image by Edmund Summer /  
Alamy Stock Photo





4



3

Head north of the city and you'll find **Fort Nelson**. Located atop Portsdown Hill with stunning views of Portsmouth and the surrounding areas, this Victorian fort is now home to some prize items from the Royal Armouries' collection – including a 15th-century Turkish bombard cannon, a gigantic 200-tonne railway howitzer, and the infamous 'Big Babylon' Iraqi supergun.

In addition to the armoury collection, Fort Nelson also has tunnels, ramparts and a parade ground to explore, across a site measuring some 19 acres.

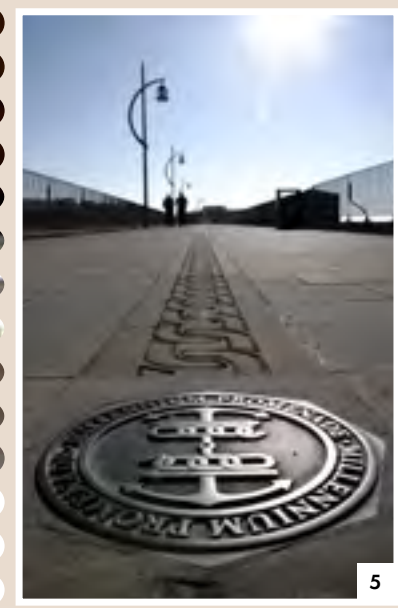
A short hop from Fort Nelson is the magnificent **Portchester Castle** – the best-preserved Norman Fort in northern Europe. Thought to have been built between AD 285 and AD 290, the castle has gone through many different uses. It was where medieval kings gathered their forces before crossing the Channel (the most famous being Henry V who, in 1415, launched the invasion of France that culminated in his triumph at Agincourt), was a prisoner of war camp as far back as 1665, and more recently was a pleasure garden. Today it's a popular tourist attraction managed by English Heritage.

Elsewhere in Portsmouth you can take in the elegant Boulton & Watt steam engines that brought sanitation to residents during the Victorian era at **Eastney Engine Houses**, or walk around the very home in which renowned author Charles Dickens was born.

All this heritage and that's even without **Portsmouth Historic Dockyard** – which is covered in detail on pages 6-7. And don't forget, you can get free entry into **Portsmouth Historic Quarter** at the dockyard – where you can explore the displays at Boathouse 4 (and take a harbour tour from the pontoon), step into the world of navy workers at The Dockyard Apprentice in Boathouse 7, or enjoy some downtime at Porter's Garden and Mast Pond. Simply ask for a Historic Quarter Pass at the dockyard ticket office.

All that exploring is sure to work up an appetite; thankfully there are some great pubs and restaurants on offer in Old Portsmouth. Near the area known as The Point you have the ever-popular triumvirate of the Still & West, Spice Island Inn and the Bridge Tavern, each located right along the water's edge and offering wonderful views of the local area. Plus on High Street you have The Dolphin – which is believed to be the city's oldest pub still in operation (established 1716) – with self-styled 'proper pub' The Pembroke just around the corner.

For restaurants, Abarbistro has won countless people over with its quality international menu, whilst back on High Street is Florio's Italian, as well as Smoke & Mirrors for modern fine dining. Alternatively, if you're in self-catering accommodation you may want to treat yourself to the freshest seafood to take away from Fish Portsmouth right on the Camber Docks.



5

You can take in all this history (and more) with a walk along the **Millennium Promenade**, which starts at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and runs all the way to Southsea Castle. The route is clearly signposted, either by plaques along the route or through the chain link motif set into the pavement throughout Old Portsmouth.

Discover much more with the series of information boards lining the route, each giving an insight into the area, its buildings and the notable people who have left their mark. A guide to the Millennium Promenade is available from the Visitor Information Points, or digitally on the Visit Portsmouth website.



6





# THE GREAT OUTDOORS

**A** trip to the coast wouldn't be complete without getting some fresh sea air. On your next trip to Portsmouth, make sure you allow some time in your itinerary to explore the great outdoors.

What better place is there to start than at the seafront? With the Portsmouth section of **England's Coastal Path** now complete, you have plenty of choice (though please note that ongoing sea defence works may impact access to certain areas over the coming years).

The newly opened walkway along the seafront side of Blue Reef Aquarium and Southsea Castle is an ideal starting point. Here you can enjoy a scenic walk or rest for a while at the 'Theatre of the Sea' –

a vantage point at Portsea Island's most southerly point that's perfect for watching the comings and goings of the Solent.

From here, head eastwards past South Parade Pier and you'll reach the large and open beaches of Southsea and Eastney. With plenty of scope to spread out, this area always has space even during the busiest of summer days.

The coast at Portsea Island's eastern edge provides quieter walking routes. If you want to get away from some of the busier tourist spots, this is the place to go. It's also a must for wildlife spotters, with the adjoining **Langstone Harbour** and **Farlington Marshes** designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Species to be seen here include avocets, redshanks,

dunlins, short-eared owls, redstarts, spotted flycatchers, wheatears, reed warblers, sedge warblers, lapwings and more.

Of course, though the coastline may be most people's first port of call for time spent outdoors, that's far from all there is to enjoy.

Portsmouth has plenty of green space. Most notable of them all is **Southsea Common**, taking up a huge area right along Southsea seafront from Clarence Pier to the Pyramids Centre. The open grassland covers around 75 acres and is a popular space for playing ball games and flying kites, or for dining al fresco in the designated barbecue areas. Visitors bringing their dogs will also find plenty of space for off-lead walks.





There's also much sporting action to be had, with the common area also being the location of the iconic Southsea Skatepark, as well as beach volleyball courts and Southsea Tennis Club (which offers six hard courts on a pay-and-play basis). Youngsters will be well catered for, with Southsea Splash Pool nearby and a large play park near the Hovertravel terminal.

Another popular green space is the area around **Canoe Lake**, which also has tennis courts open to the public, not to mention the beautiful Rose Gardens, peaceful Japanese Garden, two cafés, splash park, play park and Model Village.

Over at the city centre you'll find **Victoria Park**, which has been at the heart of Portsmouth for more than 140 years. It contains nine monuments, a historic fountain, an aviary for birds and mammals, a relaxing café and an accessible play park.

It's a more rugged affair at **Milton Common** – a mixture of natural grassland, scrub and ponds. Take a walk along the network of paths criss-crossing the common, passing the three lakes that provide a home for insects, mammals and birds. Depending on the time of year you could see swallows, swifts, house martins, moorhen, tufted ducks, foxes, owls and kestrels.



**1**  
Southsea Castle and the Theatre of the Sea  
Image by Marcin Jedrysiak

**2**  
South Parade Pier  
Adobe Stock Photo

**3**  
Wildlife watching at Farlington Marshes  
Image by Jessica Marsh

**4**  
Historic fountain in Victoria Park

**5**  
Southsea Common  
Adobe Stock Photo



# SPORT BY THE SEA

*Portsmouth has a proud sporting heritage – both on land and sea – making it the perfect place to stay active, try a new activity or simply enjoy watching one of the city’s larger sporting events taking place right across the year.*



1

In 2025 Portsmouth will proudly host two major sailing events – Sail GP in July and The Ocean Race in August.

Along with Pretty Muddy and Race for Life in July, the major running event in the calendar is the Great South Run in October – known as one of the world’s best ten-mile races. We can’t forget football and Fratton Park, of course. Why not catch a Pompey men’s or women’s home game during your visit to the city?

As the UK’s only island city, Portsmouth has a wide range of water-based activities on offer and has three marinas: Gunwharf Quays, Port Solent and Southsea Marina.

The **Andrew Simpson Centre** is the first port of call for any enthusiast, with courses and access to water-based activities including sailing, rowing,

powerboating, kayaking, canoeing and paddle-boarding. The centre also houses a 13 metre outdoor climbing tower; one for the brave!

Or try out wakeboarding at the **South Coast Wakepark**, equipped with a premier cable wake system and offering a wide range of equipment and hire gear suitable for all abilities, from beginners to experienced wakeboarders.

For runners the seafront in Southsea is perfect, with amazing views across the Solent to the Isle of Wight. If you prefer to run with company, join one of the regular organised weekend runs that take place across the city. The seafront is also home to adventure mini golf, pitch ‘n’ putt, play parks and beach volleyball courts to keep you entertained.



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5

indoor and six outdoor courts. The city also has the Tennis Academy in Burnaby Road, Southsea Tennis Club on the seafront and Court X at Canoe Lake, with a tennis pavilion, four top-specification artificial grass courts and newly refurbished grass and hard courts.

The University of Portsmouth's **Ravelin Park Sports Centre** includes an eight-court sports hall, eight-lane 25 metre swimming pool, 175-station fitness suite, multipurpose studios, squash courts, a climbing and bouldering wall, and a ski simulator. One of the UK's most sustainable sports centres, Ravelin Park has pay-as-you-go options for city visitors.

In the north of the city **Hilsea Lido** is undergoing a major renovation project and is set to open in 2025 in line with its 90th anniversary, offering outdoor swimming. Check for opening updates on [visitportsmouth.co.uk](http://visitportsmouth.co.uk)

On Portsdown Hill are the **Peter Ashley Activity Centres**, located in the historic environments of Fort Purbrook and Fort Widley. Activities to pre-book include horse riding, archery, bushcraft, mountain biking, climbing, orienteering, rifle shooting and laser tag. Book a family adventure day and learn a new skill.

Portsmouth has not one but two 18-hole golf courses – **Portsmouth Golf Centre** and **Portsmouth Golf Course**. Both are available for pay and play, offering outstanding views and affordable sessions on great courses.

The iconic **Southsea Skatepark** is home to international-standard ramps, or check out Pitt Street, an undercover skatepark in the city centre. In winter you can venture onto the ice at the seasonal city ice rink in front of the majestic Portsmouth Guildhall.

## Sport Centres

**BH Live Active** offers two facilities in Portsmouth. **The Pyramids** has high-quality fitness facilities including a cardio zone, free weights, functional fitness, group cycle and PULSE studios. Fitness classes include Les Mills, yoga, group cycling, and much more. These are available to members and on a pay-as-you-go basis.

The **Mountbatten Centre** in the north of the city is home to an Olympic-sized pool, teaching pool, spa, 150-station state-of-the-art gym, health suite, eight-court sports hall, squash courts, athletics and cycle tracks, and a great programme of activities and events.

Next door to the Mountbatten Centre is Portsmouth Tennis Centre with four



1  
**South Coast Wakepark**

2  
**Kayaking at Andrew Simpson Centre**

3  
**The University of Portsmouth's Ravelin Park Sports Centre**

4  
**Peter Ashley Activity Centre**

5  
**Mountbatten Centre**  
Image by Emma Trinder

6  
**The Pyramids**  
Image by David Eaton



6





# EVERY FOODIE'S PARADISE

*Indulge in some of the best food and drink available on your next trip to Portsmouth, where there's a wealth of options to sample – from bustling marketplaces to local producers and incredible award-winning restaurants.*

**A**n island city will, of course, have a great seafood offer, and Portsmouth is no exception. At the Camber Docks you'll find Fish Portsmouth, a market selling everything from Dover sole to plaice, brill, turbot, cod, cuttlefish, black bream, sea bass, whelks and scallops. The company operates its own fleet to land each day's catch within hours of capture, guaranteeing fish of the highest quality.

Alternatively, take a short walk to The Briny which specialises in freshly prepared seafood, sourced locally wherever possible. Watch dishes being prepared by expert chefs at the open kitchen, then enjoy food that has earned the restaurant an elusive AA Rosette Award for culinary excellence.

Other award-winning restaurants include Natty's Jerk Chicken and the King Street Tavern – both located near Portsmouth city centre.

Natty's has seen enormous growth in recent years – not just in size but popularity as well – for its top-notch Caribbean cuisine. Head to the city centre Jerk Shack to enjoy quality, authentic jerk dishes, as well as a vibrant, joyful and inclusive atmosphere. It's no surprise that Natty's has been selected to represent the entire South East at the Uber Eats Restaurant of the Year Awards for two years running.



2





-  **1**  
All Bar One,  
Gunwharf Quays
- 2**  
The Briny
- 3**  
Natty's Jerk Kitchen  
Image by Charlotte Griffiths
- 4**  
Port Solent
- 5**  
Mangosteen  
Image by Click and  
Climb Marketing
- 6**  
Camber Docks  
Adobe Stock Photo

Meanwhile, the King Street Tavern offers a low-and-slow BBQ smokehouse menu featuring all the classics (brisket, ribs and pulled pork – to name but a few). Accompanying the BBQ menu is a selection of top ales and ciders – many of which have been sourced locally. Having a Good Food Award is an achievement all in itself – the King Street Tavern has won so many it has been handed a rare Gold Seal.

Portsmouth isn't just a place for carnivores, of course! On Palmerston Road you'll find Mangosteen – with its motto: 'Where veganism and vegetarianism is more about indulgence than abstinence'. As that suggests, on the menu you'll find plant-based treats from around the world, everything from delicious burgers to curries and pasta.

Or how about Offbeet on Albert Road, which offers innovative plant-based cuisine free from ultra-processed ingredients. Innovation really is the key word, with a menu that will astound even before the food comes out! It's an ever-changing offer so be sure to take a look at what's available ahead of your next visit.

As well as some of the local favourites you'll also find all your familiar big-name places. Gunwharf Quays is home to 30 bars and restaurants offering world-spanning cuisine. From All Bar One to Zizzi (and everything in-between), there's

a whole host of selections to suit every taste and budget.

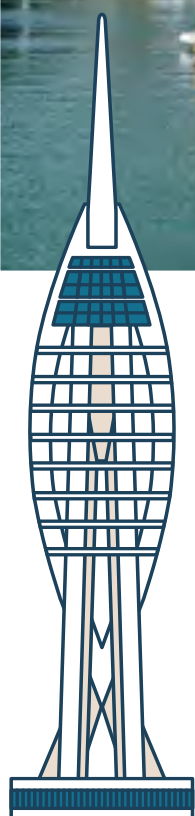
Alternatively, head up to Port Solent where you can enjoy food with a view at the many bars and restaurants located right along its picturesque marina. There's plenty of choice, with restaurants serving up Indian, Thai, Italian, Spanish and Brazilian food, as well as cafés for a daytime hot drink and sweet treat.

With an array of shops, as well as an Odeon Cinema, free parking and the stunning marina, there's much to explore at Port Solent before or after your meal, too.



# A SHORT BREAK

There's way too much to fit into a day trip to Portsmouth. Instead, why not make a weekend of it, so you can experience all the top things to see and do in the great waterfront city.



## Day 1 – Arrive and astound

After you've arrived in Portsmouth and settled into your accommodation the holiday can properly begin – and what better place to start than at Spinnaker Tower? From its View Decks over 100 metres above sea level, you can enjoy stunning views out across the Portsmouth cityscape (as well as the Solent, Isle of Wight, South Downs and more), to get a feel for where you're headed over the coming days. Want a spot of luxury? Combine your visit with a very high tea at The Clouds, or drink in the view by night over a fresh cocktail at the Sky Bar.

Once back onto terra firma you'll find yourself in Gunwharf Quays, the waterfront outlet centre that offers 90+ designer brands (with up to 60% off RRP), as well as more than 30 cafés, bars and restaurants – many of which are located right along the water's edge. Grab a big-name bargain or treat yourself to an evening meal with stunning views as the sun sets on Portsmouth Harbour. If you want to extend your evening there's a multiplex cinema, bowling alley and casino, as well as the many bars that are open into the small hours.



**1**  
**Gunwharf Quays**  
 Image by Sonny Flanagan Photography

**2**  
**Spinnaker Tower View Deck 1**  
 Image by Rod Varley / Alamy Stock Image

**3**  
**Sky Bar mixologist, Spinnaker Tower**

**4**  
**HMS Victory, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard**





4

## Day 2 – History and heritage

There's a full day of exploring to enjoy, and you're going to need it! Today it's the turn of Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, where a whole host of world-class attractions await.

There are few better places to explore Portsmouth's long and storied past than at the Historic Dockyard. Grab an Ultimate Explorer ticket for entry to all attractions – which also lets you return for unlimited visits for a whole year. Climb on board the stunning HMS Warrior (a warship so powerful it was said to have made all others obsolete on the day it launched); view Henry VIII's beloved Mary Rose and the artefacts that lay on the seabed for over 400 years; and see the awe-inspiring work that is going into maintaining HMS Victory for many more years to come.

You may also be able to catch a glimpse of the Royal Navy's current crop of vessels on a harbour tour – also included with your Ultimate Explorer ticket.

Once you've finished at the dockyard (or, more likely, left things to catch on a future visit), head across to Southsea where there's even more to discover.

The D-Day Story is the UK's only museum dedicated solely to the Normandy landings of 1944. Using personal testimonies from those involved in the operation, it tells individual stories of

what happened on the momentous day of 6 June that helped turn the tide of the Second World War. Artefacts on display range from the tiny (a pencil that signed off the invasion) to the huge (LCT 7074, a surviving Landing Craft from D-Day).

A literal stone's throw from The D-Day Story is Southsea Castle, a historic fortification at Portsea Island's most southerly tip. The castle was reportedly built with guidance from Henry VIII himself, and the infamous king was present during the Battle of the Solent to see the Mary Rose sink to the bottom of the sea. Today the castle is a visitor attraction offering a museum in the keep, as well as a restaurant (The Courtyard), gift shop and wonderful views from the ramparts.

All that exploring is sure to have worked up an appetite. A short walk through Southsea Common will bring you to a host of independent pubs, bars and restaurants, so you'll certainly find something that appeals. Stay the night enjoying some local hospitality, or head to one of the city's famed venues for a live show – whether that's touring productions at the New Theatre Royal and Kings Theatre, big-name acts at Portsmouth Guildhall or the best up-and-coming bands at the Wedgewood Rooms.



5

## Day 3 – Seafronts and send-offs

Before setting off why not get a last bit of fresh sea air? At Old Portsmouth you can soak up some sun at the Hotwalls beach then enjoy coastal views from atop centuries old fortifications (following the Millennium Promenade trail, with its information panels detailing the area's fascinating history). Along Southsea seafront, meanwhile, there are equally stunning views to admire from the 'Theatre of the Sea' built into the new coastal defences, and the chance to visit not one but two piers.

Southsea Common is adjacent to the seafront; this vast expanse of open green space provides an ideal location for a run around, some ball games or a lovely picnic – all to set you up for the journey home when you can start planning your next trip to Portsmouth!



6



7

<p><b>5</b> The Round Tower, Square Tower and Hotwalls beach Image by Stephen Dorey Creative / Adobe Stock Photo</p>	<p><b>6</b> Southsea Castle Adobe Stock Photo</p> <p><b>7</b> The D-Day Story Image by Matt Scott-Joynt</p>
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# PLANNING YOUR JOURNEY

With a motorway into the heart of the city offering direct access to Park and Ride, an international port, a rail network direct to London in just over 90 minutes and international airports close by, access to Portsmouth couldn't be easier, whether you are coming to the city from within the UK or overseas.



1



2



3

## Useful information to help plan your journey

Visitor Information Service:

🌐 [visitportsmouth.co.uk](http://visitportsmouth.co.uk)

✉ [vis@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:vis@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

📞 02392 826722

🌐 [myjourneyportsmouth.com](http://myjourneyportsmouth.com)

National Express Coaches:

🌐 [nationalexpress.com](http://nationalexpress.com)

📞 03717 818181

National Rail Enquiries:

🌐 [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)

📞 03457 484950

🌐 [southwesternrailway.com](http://southwesternrailway.com)

🌐 [southernrailway.com](http://southernrailway.com)

## Driving

Portsmouth enjoys good road connections; the A3(M) puts London just over an hour away and the M275 links Portsmouth to the rest of Britain's motorway network. **Portsmouth's Park and Ride** is accessed direct from the M275 as you drive into the city and offers a quick and affordable way to visit. [parkandride.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://parkandride.portsmouth.gov.uk)

## Rail

Travelling to Portsmouth by train is a great option with regular direct services to London (from 92 mins with South Western Railway), the south coast and the rest of the UK. Book in advance and take advantage of regular special offers.

## Air

Southampton International Airport ([southamptonairport.com](http://southamptonairport.com)) is just 22 miles away and the major London airports Gatwick and Heathrow are both 60 miles away with easy rail access to the city.

## Local ferries

Travelling to and from the Isle of Wight couldn't be easier. Hovertravel operates a passenger hovercraft from Southsea to Ryde and Wightlink operates a car ferry service from Portsmouth to Fishbourne and a passenger catamaran service from Portsmouth Harbour to Ryde Pier. Passenger ferries also run across Portsmouth's two harbours to Gosport and Hayling Island.





## Portsmouth International Port

With its dramatic harbour, Portsmouth International Port creates a spectacular arrival and departure for passengers.

It offers a range of routes to Europe and a growing cruise offer, making it ideally located for both short breaks and international travel.

Regular Brittany Ferry services sail to Caen, Cherbourg and Le Havre in Normandy, and St Malo in Brittany, plus Spanish destinations Santander and Bilbao. There are also frequent ferry sailings to Jersey and Guernsey.

Major operators and cruise lines have chosen Portsmouth for its superb position and impressive facilities, offering customers inspiring destinations aboard beautiful luxury liners.

The port also boasts one of the most environmentally advanced terminal buildings in the UK, and sustainability is central to future plans.

At the port you're never far from the city's main attractions, which makes it ideally suited for extending your holiday, giving you the perfect opportunity to stay a while and explore.

## Walking, cycling and bus

The city's buses are a great way to get around once you have arrived. Portsmouth is also flat and compact, making walking and cycling convenient modes of transport. Park up your vehicle or travel by public transport and explore on foot. Rent a Voi e-bike or e-scooter to get around during your visit.

### Average walking times from Portsmouth and Southsea station

Portsmouth Guildhall	⌚ 4 mins
New Theatre Royal	⌚ 5 mins
City centre shopping	⌚ 6 mins
Kings Theatre	⌚ 23 mins
Palmerston Road shopping	⌚ 25 mins
D-Day Story & Southsea Castle	⌚ 32 mins
Pyramids	⌚ 33 mins

### Average walking times from Portsmouth Harbour station

Gunwharf Quays	⌚ 4 mins
Portsmouth Historic Dockyard	⌚ 6 mins
Spinnaker Tower	⌚ 8 mins
Portsmouth Museum & Art Gallery	⌚ 14 mins
Old Portsmouth	⌚ 15 mins
Clarence Pier & Seafront Esplanade	⌚ 24 mins
D-Day Story and Southsea Castle	⌚ 36 mins



4



1 Virgin Voyages' Scarlet Lady

2 Hovertravel

3 Wightlink Ferry returning to Portsmouth

4 Voi e-scooter





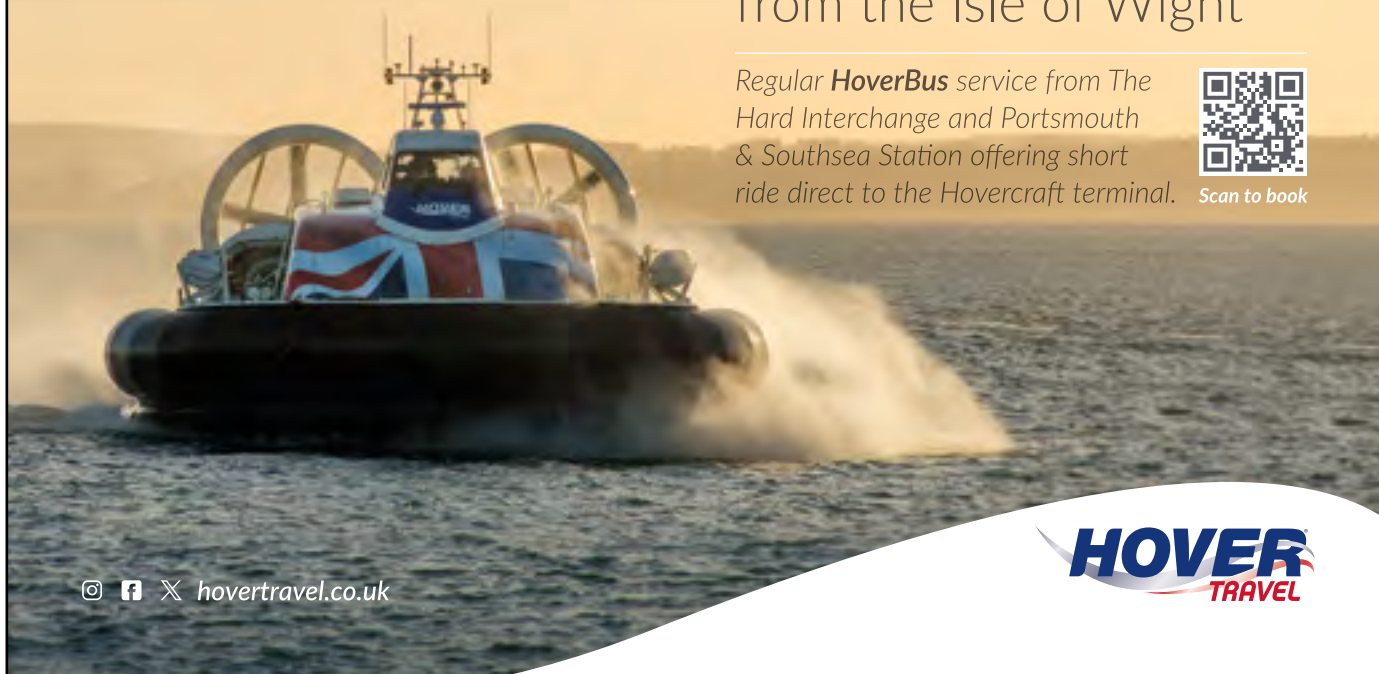
# Take flight

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📷 📘 ✕ [hovertravel.co.uk](http://hovertravel.co.uk)



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RELENTLESS



# ON THE DOORSTEP



1

**W**ith its great location in the centre of England's south coast, Portsmouth is the ideal location to stay a while and explore the surrounding area. Just north of the city you can enter the beautiful **South Downs National Park**, with amazing countryside trails, wildlife to discover and small villages to visit.

Across Portsmouth Harbour the regular ferry takes you to **Gosport**, home to the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower and a 17th century village.

Just across the stretch of sea known as the Solent lies the **Isle of Wight**. There are three options for travel – a Hovercraft from Southsea seafront, a passenger catamaran from Portsmouth Harbour train station, or a car ferry from Old Portsmouth. Along with a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the island has a wealth of attractions including the Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Carisbrooke Castle and Osborne House, the private family home of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

Portsmouth is also the ideal location to explore the area by train. Take a day trip to **London** – just over 90 minutes away – and visit some of the capital's top attractions.



2



1

South Downs Way  
Adobe Stock Photo

2

Freshwater Bay,  
Isle of Wight

## Osborne

Victoria and Albert's palace by the sea



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Lavish royal  
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The English Heritage Trust is a charity, no. 1140351, and a limited company, no. 07447221, registered in England and Wales.





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in school holidays\*

Discover

# the Isle of Wight

with Wightlink



Just 22 minutes away by FastCat from Portsmouth Harbour train station.

[wightlink.co.uk](http://wightlink.co.uk)

\*T&Cs apply, see [wightlink.co.uk/kgf](http://wightlink.co.uk/kgf)

**WIGHTLINK. BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER.**

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**Home of the Big Guns**

National Museum | Victorian Fort | Free Entry

#RoyalArmouriesFortNelson [royalarmouries.org](http://royalarmouries.org)

**PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL**

**Discover the Cathedral of the Sea!**  
Open daily all year

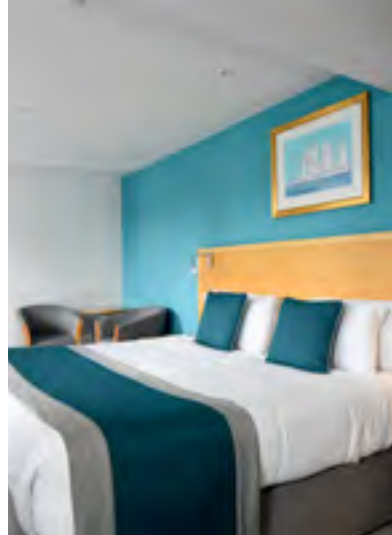
Explore 800 years of history, hidden around each corner of our Romanesque style church, dedicated to Thomas Becket, dating back to 1182.

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- Guided tours
- Sightseeing
- Shop

Plan your visit at [portcath.link/discover](http://portcath.link/discover)

Free entry Dog friendly Events throughout the year





# STAY A LITTLE LONGER

**P**ortsmouth has a great variety of accommodation, with options to suit a range of budgets. Included in this guide we showcase a taster of what is on offer, find out more at [visitportsmouth.co.uk/accommodation](https://visitportsmouth.co.uk/accommodation)

The majestic Queens Hotel stands on the edge of Southsea Common just a few minutes' walk from the beach. The hotel offers quality rooms including some with sea views and is a great choice for afternoon tea, a relaxing dinner, or an evening with cocktails. The hotel garden is perfect for a drink or al fresco dining and has regular outdoor entertainment.

The Holiday Inn is also located in a prime position close to the seafront in Southsea and offers a range of accommodation along with a restaurant and bar plus on-site gym, indoor pool, steam room and sauna. Children under 17 can stay free when sharing a room with adults, so it's ideal for a family break.

At Gunwharf Quays the Holiday Inn Express is located amongst a great range of restaurants and nightlife and a short walk from Spinnaker Tower, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and Portsmouth Harbour train station.

The Royal Maritime Hotel is close to the historic ships, Gunwharf Quays and Spinnaker Tower. The hotel offers comfortable and welcoming rooms accompanied by a delicious full English

breakfast! The on-site restaurant Horatio's is open to all.

In the centre of Portsmouth the Ibis Hotel offers a great base from which to explore the city and is just a stone's throw from Portsmouth Guildhall, New Theatre Royal and Portsmouth and Southsea train station. Along with cozy bedrooms the hotel has a 24-hour snack menu, on-site parking and a stylish restaurant.

To the north of the city the trendy Village Hotel has everything you need for a great stay including a pool, gym, pub and grill with great food, a Starbucks coffee shop and VWorks co-working space. The Village is located in a quiet area just off the M27, a couple of miles from the city centre.



























## Booking conditions


Every attempt has been made to ensure the information included in this guide is correct at the time of going to print. Please note that proprietors reserve the right to amend prices and conditions from those in this guide and/or impose additional conditions, provided they inform you of such before they accept your booking.

## Holiday Insurance


Make sure you have insurance to cover any losses you may incur, even when travelling within the UK.

## Key to facilities

-  Facilities for hearing impaired
-  Facilities for visually impaired
-  Licensed for alcohol
-  Restaurant or café
-  Breakfast
-  Tea/coffee making facilities
-  WiFi
-  Off street parking
-  Ground floor bedrooms
-  Children welcome – minimum age
-  TV in rooms
-  En suite rooms available
-  Air conditioning
-  Hairdryer
-  Electric shaver point
-  Linen supplied free of charge
-  Linen available for hire
-  Iron available
-  Cots available
-  Dogs welcome
-  Conference facilities
-  Lift
-  Staff speak foreign languages
-  Refrigerator provided
-  Laundry
-  Microwave

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**Important note:** Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this publication is correct, Portsmouth City Council cannot guarantee complete accuracy of the information and all liability for loss, disappointment, negligence or other damages caused by this publication, is hereby excluded. As changes often occur after press date, it is advisable to confirm the information given with the relevant organisation. All information is for guidance only, and was current as of November 2024.



## HOLIDAY INN PORTSMOUTH

Pembroke Road, Portsmouth, PO1 2TA

T: 0333 320 9345

E: events.hiportsmouth@kewgreenhotels.com

W: www.hiportsmouthhotel.co.uk

Whether you are in the area for business or leisure, The Holiday Inn Portsmouth is ideally located just minutes from the city centre and the seafront.

The newly designed Portsmouth hotel features 173 stylish and comfortable guest rooms all with modern ensuite bathrooms.

The stunning 'open lobby' dining concept brings together the bar and restaurant into one flexible space with all day dining, Starbucks coffee, local ales and a range of popular gins.

The onsite You Fit Health Club is the perfect place to get active and burn off some energy or simply relax and unwind with facilities including a gym, swimming pool, steam room, sauna and Jacuzzi.

Our Academy conference centre can accommodate 2 to 200 delegates with 10 flexible-layout meeting rooms and a dedicated conference host who will be on hand throughout to ensure the day runs smoothly.

With on-site car parking and complimentary high-speed Wifi throughout, the Holiday Inn is ideal for your stay in Portsmouth.

**Price:** From £75 – £400 per room per night

**Rooms:** 173 **En suite:** All

**Facilities:**



## HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS, PORTSMOUTH-GUNWHARF QUAYS

The Plaza, Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth, PO1 3FD

T: 0333 320 9360

E: frontdesk.hiportsmouth@kewgreenhotels.com

W: www.hiexpressportsmouth.co.uk

Located at the heart of the hustle and bustle of Gunwharf Quays, the Holiday Inn Express is perfectly located within walking distance from a great array of bars, restaurants and plenty of shops along with Portsmouth's main attractions like the Spinnaker Tower and Historic Dockyard.

The hotel's 130 newly refurbished bedrooms ensure a comfortable stay in a stylish room and the refurbished 'open lobby' concept creates a relaxed space to enjoy a drink after a busy day shopping or tuck into a tasty continental breakfast in the morning for a great start to the day with a variety of hot and cold options.

With free WiFi, 24 hour parking and 2 meeting rooms make Holiday Inn Express Gunwharf Quays your next destination.

**Price:** From £75 – £600 per room per night

**Rooms:** 130 **En suite:** All

**Facilities:**







Clarence Parade, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO5 3LJ  
**T:** 023 9282 2466 **E:** reservations@queenshotelportsmouth.com  
**W:** www.queenshotelportsmouth.com

**Discover the Queens Hotel – Where comfort meets luxury**

Located in the heart of Southsea, just moments from Portsmouth’s top attractions, Queens Hotel offers the perfect blend of historic charm and modern comfort. Whether you’re here to explore the vibrant waterfront, visit the iconic Spinnaker Tower, or stroll through the bustling shopping district, everything you need is right on our doorstep.

Our beautifully designed bedrooms are the ideal retreat after a day of adventure, with many offering stunning views of the Solent. For the best rates and exclusive offers, book directly with us.

Dine in style at **Restaurant 1865**, where our chefs craft seasonal dishes using the finest local ingredients. It’s the perfect spot for a relaxed dinner or special celebration.

Planning an event? Our versatile event spaces cater to everything from intimate birthday parties to grand weddings and corporate gatherings. Let us help you create unforgettable memories, whatever the occasion.

From October to March, join us in our **Winter Lodge**, where DJ nights and festive music events set the perfect backdrop for cozy winter evenings. During the summer months, our stunning garden transforms into a hub for live music and outdoor entertainment, perfect for soaking up the sunshine.

We pride ourselves on our partnerships with local businesses, offering our guests exceptional discounts and unique experiences throughout Portsmouth.

For more information and to explore all we have to offer, visit our website: [queenshotelportsmouth.com](http://queenshotelportsmouth.com)

**The Queens Hotel – your gateway to the best of the city.**

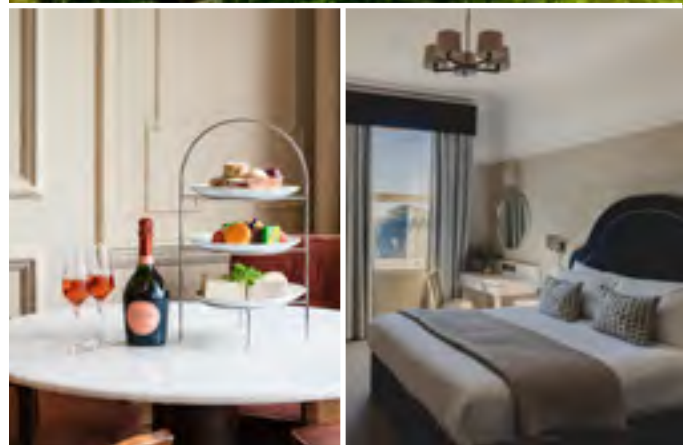
**Price:** From £110 – £300 per room per night

**Rooms:** 73 **En suite:** All

**Facilities:**



some rooms have air conditioning





## IBIS PORTSMOUTH

Winston Churchill Avenue, Portsmouth, PO1 2LX

**T:** 023 9264 0000 **E:** H1461@accor.com

**W:** www.accorhotels.com

Vibrant economy hotel with 144 rooms, bar and restaurant.

Open to everyone.

Our ibis Portsmouth Centre is packed with everything you might need during your stay, whether you're travelling on business or for leisure.

Try our laid-back restaurant, enjoy a nightcap in our sleek bar, and settle in for an unbeatable night's sleep in one of our plush Sweet Beds. Unwind with a game of pool in our lobby or connect to complimentary Wi-Fi.

We offer a varied and plentiful breakfast.

The hotel is located in the centre of Portsmouth, with easy reach of popular annual events including Goodwood Festival of Speed, the Great South Run, and Victorious music festival.

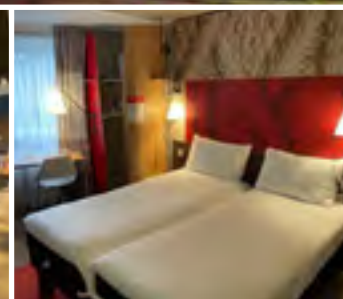
Primary transport links are also nearby, making access easy.

We look forward to making you feel welcome.

**Price:** From £69 – £180 per room per night

**Rooms:** 144 **En suite:** All

**Facilities:**



## ROYAL MARITIME HOTEL

75–80 Queen Street, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 3HS

**T:** 023 9298 2182 **E:** info@royalmaritimehotel.co.uk

**W:** royalmaritimehotel.co.uk

The Royal Maritime Hotel is steeped in maritime history. It originally opened in 1850 as the Sailor's Home Club and received Royal Patronage five years later which it has retained to this day.

Located just five minutes from Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and Gunwharf Quays, the hotel is a short walk from Portsmouth Harbour train station and close to Portsmouth International Port.

With 90 en-suite rooms, comfortable beds and tea/coffee-making facilities, the hotel prides itself on excellent customer care.

Leisure facilities include a small swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna, bar, restaurant, library, skittles alley and games room.

The Hotel's Horatio's Restaurant serves a delicious and varied bistro menu, continental and traditional full English breakfast. You can also choose to relax in the Victory Bar, which is open all day and serves a selection of freshly made food.

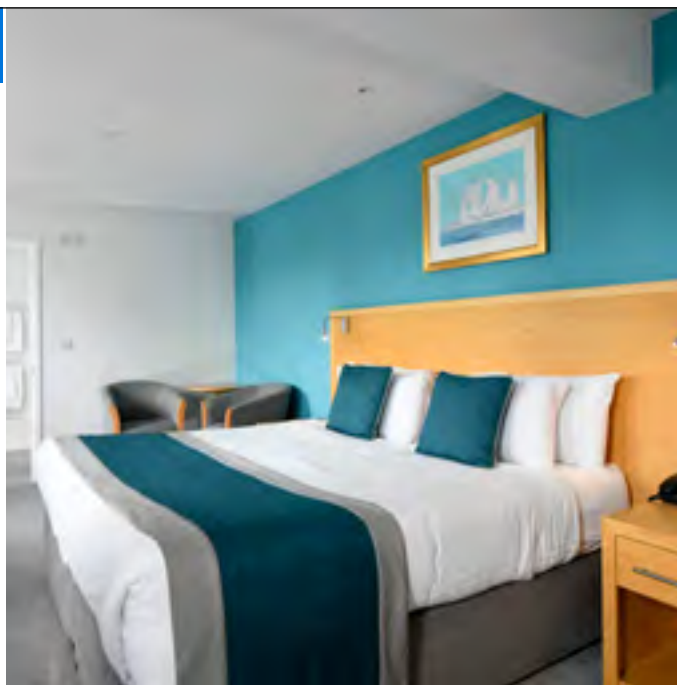
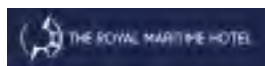
Guests also benefit from discounts from local attractions; just ask at reception.

Profits from the hotel fund charitable work with serving military personnel and veterans of all the armed forces and the merchant navy.

**Price:** £110 – £175 per room per night

**Rooms:** 90 **En suite:** All

**Facilities:**







Lakeshore Drive, Portsmouth, PO6 3FR

**T:** 023 9200 6245 **E:** portsmouthhub@village-hotels.com

**W:** www.village-hotels.com

Village Hotel Club Portsmouth has 153 super stylish hotel rooms, as clever as they are comfortable, with big TVs, handy gadgets and refreshing drench showers. Upgrade to a Club Room for even more extras, including exclusive toiletries and free Gym access.

Village Gym is a huge state of the art health club with the latest Technogym cardio equipment and a choice of award-winning classes such as BodyPump, BodyCombat, BodyAttack Mind and Body, Village's HIIT class 'Burn', the ultimate calorie-burning session, and classes by Les Mills®. And if all that sounds too energetic, you can enjoy a gentle swim in our 20 metre pool, followed by a steam and sauna.

Our Pub & Grill is at the heart of Village Portsmouth, with a vibrant, inviting, friendly atmosphere. Watch live sport on giant HD screens, enjoy ice cold beers and a great choice of wines and cocktails. Tuck in to one of our famous, juicy burger stacks and dare to take on our devilishly hot wings. Or, if you prefer a delicious healthy option, try our succulent skewers or halloumi bowls.

We even have our own in-house Starbucks, so you can wake up to your favourite coffee and tasty snack!

And if you're visiting Village Portsmouth at the weekend, then you're in for an extra treat. Our hugely popular Tribute and Party nights are great fun. Sing and dance the night away to all your favourites before heading upstairs for a great night's sleep in your big comfy bed.

Village Portsmouth is conveniently located just off the M27 motorway, and just a short drive from Portsmouth's city centre.

Booking your stay at Village couldn't be easier on our easy to use website, or via our app, downloadable from the App Store or Google Play.

**Price:** From £59 – £210 per room per night

**Rooms:** 153 **En suite:** All

**Facilities:**





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PORTSMOUTH MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL

Everyone welcome

Discover more about Portsmouth's past.

Visit the art exhibition 'The Quietness of Feeling', an exploration of trees through the art of Benjamin Haughton and The Arborealists.

For information on events and opening times, visit [portsmouthmuseum.co.uk](http://portsmouthmuseum.co.uk)

Free entry

CHARLES DICKENS BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM

Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL

Be inspired! Visit the Birthplace of

**Charles Dickens**

Arguably the greatest novelist of the Victorian era, who still influences popular culture today. Immerse yourself in the unique atmosphere of the late regency period in this exquisitely presented house.

For events, opening dates and times, visit [charlesdickensbirthplace.co.uk](http://charlesdickensbirthplace.co.uk)





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