

The essential
visitor guide to

SWANAGE



Welcome to SWANAGE

The perfect getaway destination for all seasons.

Swanage is located on the Isle of Purbeck in Dorset and is the Eastern Gateway for exploring the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site.

This family-friendly resort is ideal for relaxing breaks, walking, cycling, activity groups and educational holidays.

A DAY TRIP IS NEVER ENOUGH

Popular with all generations and evoking nostalgia from childhood holidays, Swanage is perfect for a family holiday.

Swanage's award winning beach is family-friendly with large stretches of golden sand – great for sandcastle building.

Family fun can be enjoyed by taking boat trips, visiting quality local attractions, learning to kayak or playing mini golf or tennis together.

Enjoy the simpler things in life like having a picnic in Prince Albert Gardens, crab fishing from Swanage's Stone Quay and visiting Durlston Country Park & National Nature Reserve with its Castle and The Great Globe!

Arrive in style on the Swanage Railway by steam train or catch the award winning open top bus from Bournemouth, both with amazing views of the surrounding landscape.

Extend your stay for a relaxing short break.



“hiring a beach hut makes our holiday even more relaxing”



SWANAGE BEACH & BAY

Gently shelving, golden sand and clear unpolluted water are just some of the great reasons that Swanage Beach has been consistently awarded a Blue Flag and Seaside Award.

Experience some of the south coast's best weather while strolling along the promenade or why not hire one of the colourful beach huts to make your holiday extra relaxing.

Padding in the water, collecting sea shells and building sandcastles is something that children will remember for years to come. A lifeguarded watercraft-free bathing zone operates from May half-term to early September from 10:00



“Punch and Judy on the beach makes for happy memories”



SHOPPING IN SWANAGE

With a mix of high street brands and small, independent shops selling everything from sausages to souvenirs, you will be a satisfied shopper in Swanage.

Take your time window shopping and browsing the interesting and eclectic vintage, retro and antique shops.

Chat to friendly shop keepers who will be delighted to help you pick out a great new look for your wardrobe.

Wander around quality art and craft galleries for the special purchase to remind you of a wonderful time in Swanage.

After you've worked up an appetite, take a coffee break or enjoy lunch in one of the street side cafes or restaurants over looking the sea.

At Christmas time look out for the festive Artisans on the Beach where local crafters sell their wares from the beach huts.



“the shops are so close to the sea, my two favourite things!”



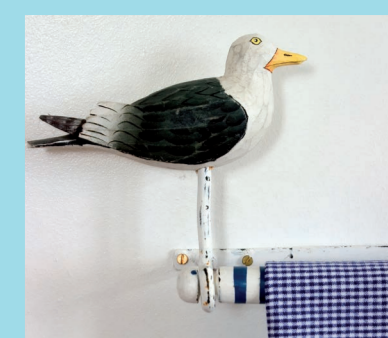
ACCOMMODATION

Whether you're looking for a quaint cottage, farm stay, hostel, traditional B&B, posh hotel, lively holiday park or a rustic campsite, we have it covered in Swanage.

Check availability and book online on our website www.visit-dorset.com or contact our Visitor Information Centre for help finding your perfect getaway.

Can't bear to leave your canine friend at home? We have many places for you to stay, eat and visit which welcome dogs.

If camping is more your style, pitch your tent in one of the family friendly campsites in and around Swanage or hire a camping pod or shepherd hut. Most sites also cater for caravans and motorhomes.



“our hotel room had an amazing seaview”



VISITING SWANAGE

Drop in or contact the teams at our Visitor Information Centres to make the most of your trip.

Swanage Information Centre

The White House, Shore Road, Swanage, Dorset.
BH19 1LB. Tel: 01929 766018
email: welcometo@swanage.gov.uk
beachhut booking: beachhuts.swanage.gov.uk



web: visit-dorset.com/swanage

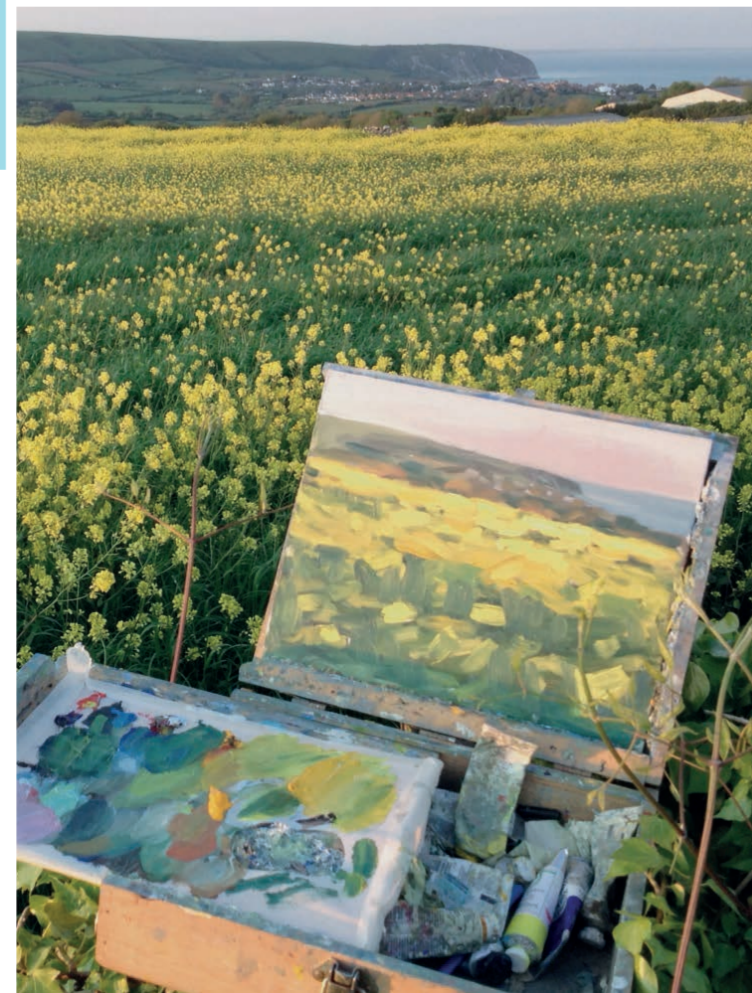
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ARTS BY THE SEA

Many Artisans live and work in the town selling their creations in the studios, galleries and workshops. Art lovers will find quality sculpture, photography, paintings, pottery, glass jewellery and more. Immerse yourself in a range of creative festivals including the open studios of Purbeck and Dorset Arts Weeks.

The town has a central Theatre and Cinema offering a variety of plays, shows and pantomimes throughout the year. Don't miss the autumn Purbeck Film Festival.

Follow the Swanage Seen Art Trail and learn about artists who were inspired by their surroundings. There are nine locations to visit, each showing a painting from the Isle of Purbeck by a different artist.



ILLUSTRATED MAP OF SWANAGE

- 1 Swanage Information Centre
- 2 Cinema & Theatre
- 3 Museum
- 4 Prince Albert Gardens
- 5 Pier
- 6 Wellington Clocktower
- 7 Lifeboat Station (open to the public)
- 8 Coast Watch Station at Peveril Point
- 9 Durlston Country Park & National Nature Reserve
- 10 Anvil Point Lighthouse
- 11 Town Hall and Gaol (lock up)
- 12 Swanage Hospital
- 13 Bus and Train (Swanage Railway Interchange)
- 14 Playground
- 15 Corfe Castle
- 16 Sandbanks to Studland Ferry
- 17 Studland Village
- 18 Old Harry Rocks
- 19 Beach Gardens Sports Park (Putting, Tennis, Bowls, "Tea on the Green" refreshments kiosk)
- 20 Sandpit Field
- 21 Watercraft-free bathing zone
- 22 Punch and Judy
- 23 Friday Market

HOW TO GET HERE

Bus
Purbeck Breezer Bus Routes 30* from Dorchester, 40 from Poole and 50 from Bournemouth
www.purbeckbreezer.co.uk

Train
Train services on South West Trains to Wareham
www.southwesttrains.co.uk with connections by bus.
www.swanagerailway.co.uk

Coach
National Express coaches run daily from London Victoria to Swanage www.nationalexpress.com
National Express tickets bookable from Swanage Information Centre



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Swanage Town Council would like to thank all contributors to this publication.

Map not to scale ©Tony Kerins

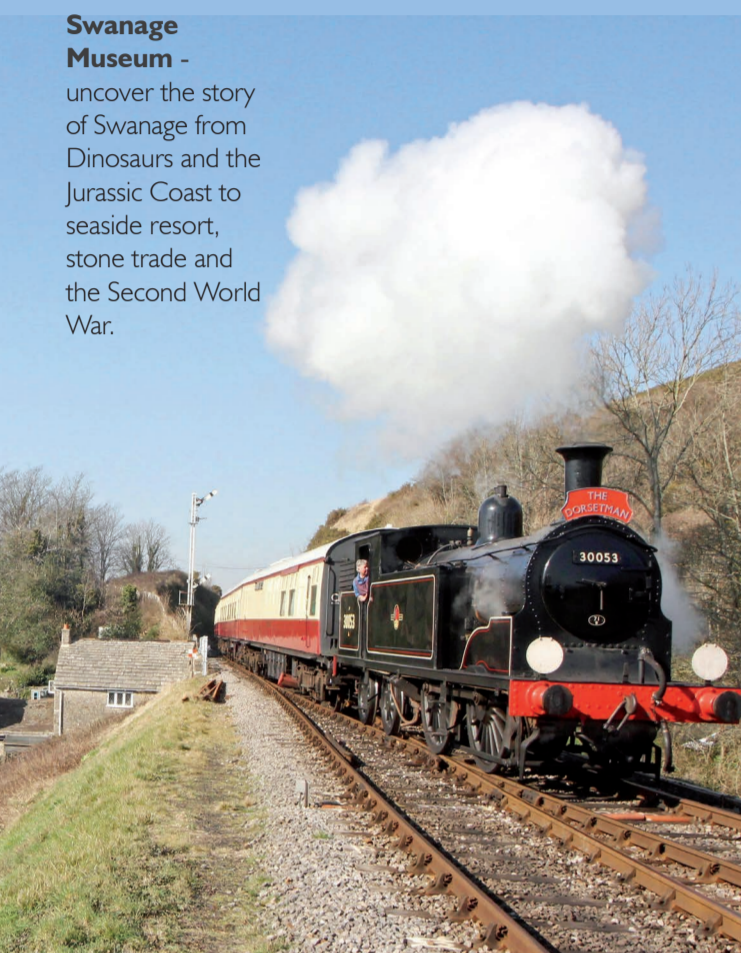
HERITAGE ATTRACTIONS

Swanage Railway - catch the picture postcard branch line to the seaside. Steam trains run through the beautiful Purbeck countryside and past Corfe Castle to the sandy beach of Swanage.

Durlston Castle and Country Park is a countryside paradise just 30 minutes walk from Swanage Town Centre, with coastal walking, stunning views and amazing wildlife. Don't miss Durlston Castle Visitor Centre for events and exhibitions.

Swanage Pier is an integral part of the character of Swanage, reflecting its Victorian splendour and rich heritage. Enjoy a stroll with the finest views of Swanage or catch a boat for a scenic boat trip along the coast. New visitor centre and café.

Swanage Museum - uncover the story of Swanage from Dinosaurs and the Jurassic Coast to seaside resort, stone trade and the Second World War.



THE JURASSIC COAST

No visit to Swanage is complete without walking a stretch of the Jurassic Coast. Recognised by UNESCO for its outstanding geology, our coastline is part of England's only natural World Heritage Site.

See spectacular geological features like nearby Old Harry Rocks. Durlston Country Park has spectacular cliff top walks and a Castle Visitor Centre to help you discover the geology of 185 million years of Earth's history. It can be enjoyed 365 days of the year and highlights include wild flowers, migrating birds and a breath-taking walk to the lighthouse



"Follow in the footsteps of dinosaurs"



FLAVOUR OF SWANAGE

Sample the local fare in the quality bistros, seaview restaurants, traditional pubs and tearooms. You'll find something for every taste.

A firm favourite for visitors is our scrumptious traditional fish and chips. If you are self catering or day visiting, Swanage offers a range of take away establishments from around the world.

Make sure you try our freshly caught seafood, our handmade fresh chocolate and a scoop or two of ice cream for dessert.



"the local ice cream is not to be missed"



MARKETS & LOCAL PRODUCE

There's no need to stock up before arriving as Swanage has independent butchers, bakers, fishmongers and farm shops and well known supermarkets.

There is always a local convenience store or campsite shop just round the corner but remember to try some of the locally produced food including: chocolate, ice cream, beer and cider and cheese. Look out for Dorset Food and Drink.

Swanage Friday Market

Open all year round with a wonderful variety of tempting produce.



"don't miss the Swanage Fish Festival"



SWANAGE HISTORY - FROM STONE PORT TO SEASIDE RESORT

The stone trade was once the main industry of Swanage. Purbeck stone was shipped to London in vast quantities from the 18th century and used mostly for street paving and harbour defences. The two founding fathers of Swanage, John Mowlem and his nephew George Burt, were at the centre of this trade with London.

Burt rescued many old London relics and brought them to Swanage. When exploring Swanage you can still see the facade of the Town Hall, from the Mercers' Hall in Cheapside dating from 1670, and the Wellington Clock Tower, originally erected at the approach to London Bridge in 1854.

Dorset MP William Morton Pitt had seen how King George III's enjoyment of sea bathing popularised the nearby town of Weymouth, and was convinced that Swanage could become a fashionable health resort and "watering place". In the 1820's he created the

first major hotel in Swanage, the Manor House Hotel. Following a visit by Princess Victoria in 1833 they were permitted to rename it the Royal Victoria Hotel.

The opening of the railway in 1885 saw the Victorians arriving in Swanage to enjoy the clean air and the new fashion of 'sea bathing'. Known as one of the sunniest towns on the south coast, Swanage soon changed from a stone port to a flourishing seaside resort.



ACTIVE SWANAGE

Opportunities to enjoy activities in Swanage are endless. The numerous local walking trails are celebrated during the annual Swanage and Purbeck Walking Festival. But if you can't wait until Festival time, you can join a guided walk or let one of our experts plan a walking holiday for you at any time of year.

Swanage is a real walkers paradise with stunning clifftop walks, the Purbeck Ridge and Old Harry Rocks. We are proudly situated on the South West Coast Path

Whatever the weather, Swanage Beach Gardens Sports Park is great fun and value with putting green, tennis and outdoor bowls. Equipment is available along with hot and cold refreshments.

Swanage Bay is a popular dive site for all standards of diver and has several diving schools and boat charter companies for both diving and sea fishing.

Swanage has become a popular destination for sporting events.

Take a day cruise from Swanage Pier to Poole Quay for a scenic tour of the Jurassic Coast along the way or charter a fishing boat to catch some mackerel.

Why not join one of our outdoor adventure specialists and have a go at coaststeering, abseiling, climbing, paddle-boarding or kayaking?



WEDDINGS & CELEBRATIONS

Swanage is the perfect location for your celebration or wedding.

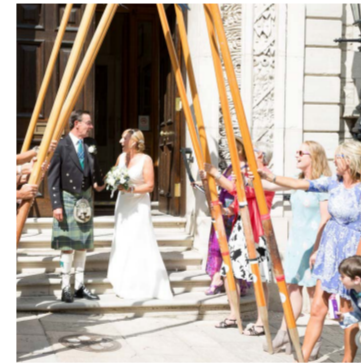
Whether you are looking for a small and intimate wedding or an extravagant day, Swanage meets all your wishes.

Choose from an extensive range of wedding venues, many with outdoor licenced structures to help you create a day to remember and accommodation on site or nearby to suit all budgets.

You will be spoilt for choice with photo opportunities with beautiful backdrops.

Quirky or traditional, religious or civil, indoors or out - you choose.

Licensed civil wedding venues in Swanage include: Swanage Town Hall Chambers, Durlston Castle, The Grand Hotel, Purbeck House Hotel, Swanage Pier and California Barn.



"a perfect venue and a perfect day"



A TOWN OF FESTIVALS

Swanage has a year-round calendar of events to keep you entertained in all weathers. Many of the local attractions organise events during school holidays to keep the whole family entertained and there are lots of events within easy reach of Swanage

For music lovers, the town has a fantastic range of festivals which everyone can enjoy, including Blues, Classical, Jazz and Folk.

The Regatta and Carnival Week offers the lively atmosphere of a Caribbean-style carnival plus spectacular fireworks, music and dancing.

The Fish, Fairy and Pirate festivals are also popular with locals and visitors alike



FESTIVALS & EVENTS

March
Swanage Blues Festival
Swanage Railway Spring Steam Gala

April
Swanage Carnival Classic Motor Show

May
Swanage Railway - Diesel Gala & Beer Festival
Purbeck Art Weeks
Purbeck Pirate Festival

June
Swanage Triathlon Festival
Swanage Fairy Festival
Swanage Fish Festival
Purbeck Plod Walking Challenge
Swanage Sea Rowing Regatta

July
Swanage Jazz Festival
Swanage Carnival

August
Swanage Classic Triathlon
Swanage Lifeboat Week

September
Swanage Railway Transport Rally
Swanage Folk Festival
Dorset Architectural Heritage Week

Purbeck WALX Festival
Waverley Paddle Steamer Excursions

October
Swanage Blues Festival
Swanage Railway Autumn Steam Gala

Purbeck Film Festival
November / December

Artisans on the Beach
Christmas Lights Switch-On
Swanage Railway Santa Specials
Artisans on the Beach
Rotary Christmas Market

Plus many more...
Don't forget that Swanage Market is every Friday all year round.

Please refer to our website: visit-dorset.com/swanage for a full list of events throughout the year or contact the Swanage Information Centre 01929 766018 welcme@swanage.gov.uk



CHRISTMAS IN SWANAGE

If you would like to see our enchanting Victorian seaside town 'lit up', then please visit us at Christmas time and soak up the sparkly atmosphere whilst enjoying the entertainment or simply shopping for special bespoke gifts. Swanage has many unique independent shops and an array of cafes and eateries where you will find something to suit all requirements.



The main Christmas events start with the Christmas Lights Switch-On, and during December the town hosts the Rotary Christmas Market and Artisans on the Beach, as well as special events at Swanage Railway, Durlston Castle and the Pier. There is always an abundance of 'live' music and don't forget to look out for the elves!

