

EXPERIENCE

2020

Ashford & Tenterden

See Find Taste Try



experienceashfordandtenterden.co.uk



Contents

4	Experience Ashford & Tenterden
6	Delicious Destinations
10	Awe-inspiring
14	Location, Location, Location!
16	Hidden Gems
19	Sleepovers
20	New Experiences
24	So much to do...all year round
26	Find your way

Photo credits:

Lewis Brockway, Andy Clark, Daryl Churcher, Martin Fagg, Graham Gillson, Gusbourne Estate, Andrew Hardy, A. Harrison, Chris Kennedy, Ady Kerry ABIPP, Modus Film, National Trust Images/John Miller, Ros Orpin, PYO Sevington, The Big Cat Sanctuary, Mrs C Walters, Visit Kent.

Your personal invitation

Discover Ashford, a vibrant modern town with international connections, experience the delights of our country town of Tenterden and enjoy the rural charm of our historic villages. Vineyards abound, producing world-class wines, raise a glass and **taste** the wealth of our local produce, we're a must for foodies. Outdoor pursuits are plentiful, **try** walking, cycling and golf. **Find** hidden gems, **see** glorious gardens, heritage railways, amazing animals and experience designer shopping.

See you soon!

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Produced and published by Ashford Borough Council, 2020. Designed by The Design Practice.

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A large print copy of this guide is available.



Experience Ashford & Tenterden

With a location that's second to none, everything is right here on your doorstep. With London just 38 minutes away by rail, Eurostar services to Paris, Brussels and Lille and the sea and beaches just a few miles away there are memories to make and new experiences to **try**. And did we mention the countryside? Nestled in the heart of the Garden of England you're never far from stunning scenery and gloriously gorgeous villages.



Don't miss...

Europe's largest living wall installation at the Ashford Designer Outlet. Made up of approximately 120,000 plants, the 2,300 sq. ft. living wall creates a striking green space, with beautiful vertical gardens covering the walls of the entry promenade, walkways and stores.





Ashford

Ashford, a fusion of traditional market town and international gateway. **Try** seeking out a bargain whilst you browse at the Ashford Designer Outlet, **taste** amazing beers and wines at Curious Brewery, Ashford's newest attraction. **Find** glorious gardens and a splendid Jacobean house at Godinton House & Gardens and **see** corn being ground at Willesborough Windmill.

Tenterden

Tenterden – the 'Jewel of the Weald' is a typical English country town chock full of history and character. Browse quirky, independent stores, stroll along the tree-lined high street and **find** historic buildings containing mathematical tiles. **See** the world go by from one of the many delightful pubs, tea rooms and coffee shops. **Try** riding the footplate or being a driver for the day on the Kent & East Sussex Railway or take a tour at The Old Dairy Brewery. **Taste** delicious Chapel Down wines and lease a vine to enjoy your own custom labelled wine.



Rural Charm is right on our doorstep with dozens of perfectly formed villages set amongst the glorious Kent countryside. Wake up to the sound of birdsong and take in stunning views from your cosy cottage. Or stay overnight at one of our reserves and hear the roar of the big cats close by where you could **try** being a keeper for the day. **Taste** the only naturally red apple juice in the country at Biddenden Vineyard and **find** a quiet retreat where nightingales sing at Green Farm, Shadoxhurst. Chilham is a must-visit and is well known as a film location, so **see** where Miss Marple solved a crime.





Delicious destinations

*"Kent, sir—everybody knows
Kent—apples, cherries,
hops, and women"*

CHARLES DICKENS

If food and drink is your thing then you've certainly come to the right place. From leading wine makers and brewers to fresh-as-you-like local produce it's what the Garden of England is all about.

Restaurants, tempting tea rooms and traditional country pubs all jostle for attention alongside fine dining options including two Michelin 'Bib Gourmand' restaurants. Or experience luxury dining aboard the Wealden Belle on the Kent & East Sussex Railway. And if you want to take some of these delicious delights home with you make sure you visit one of our Farmers' Markets.

On its way

Taittinger, one of France's most prestigious champagne brands, has planted its first vines close to the beautiful village of Chilham, the first time a 'grande marque' champagne house has planted a vineyard in the UK. We're looking forward to 2023 when their first bottle of English sparkling wine is due to be uncorked!




WINE
GARDEN
OF ENGLAND
GROWERS OF DREAMS

Cheers!

With the county's south-facing slopes, chalk soils and warm climate it's not surprising that many leading wine makers such as Chapel Down, Biddenden, Gusbourne, Hush Heath and Woodchurch are located here. Every vineyard is unique, download our Cheers wine trail, nominate a driver and experience the **taste** of our first class wines.



Taste



Welcome to the
Wine Garden of England



Calling all foodies

We're excited to welcome Macknade Fine Foods to our ever-increasing food and drink offer – a must-do foodie experience! Highlights include meat from their award-winning butchers, plenty of seasonal Kentish produce, speciality coffee, local and international cheeses from the deli with a tasting or two thrown in.



Loving local

Juicy strawberries, orchards full of apples, wonderfully sweet Kent cherries and Kentish Cobsnuts grow in abundance. Romney Salt Marsh Lamb is highly prized, offering a unique flavour due to sheep grazing on the natural grasses and samphire of the salt marshes. Oysters, asparagus, hops and vines are also amongst our specialities.



Taste nature's bounty fresh from the source, there's nothing better than picking strawberries still warm from the sun and eating them on the spot! Perry Court Farm offers an amazing selection of Pick Your Own produce – the kids will love it!



Tea for two

Taste

What getaway is complete without the pleasure of indulging in a delicious Afternoon Tea? Warm scones served fresh from the oven accompanied by locally made jams and preserves and freshly picked strawberries are the things that memories are made of.



Top Tea Trips!

Try...Fraser's of Egerton – Quintessential afternoon tea in an award-winning restaurant
Miss Mollet's High Class Tea Room, Appledore – An English village tea time experience
Eastwell Manor – Classical yet cosy elegance in a former royal residence
Shelly's Tea Room – Traditional afternoon tea in historic Chilham



COACHWORKS

The Coachworks and the Yard Bar is the place to chill out and be seen with plenty of local ciders, wines and beers to sample – some days there's even the delicious aroma of beer brewing as Curious Brewery is just steps away.

One to try

Coffee aficionados will love the rich aroma of coffee beans being freshly roasted at Bloss coffee roasters in Kingsnorth. Pop in and enjoy superb coffee, **find** out more about their story and don't forget to take a bag of their special blend home with you!





Awe-inspiring!

Stumble upon stunning views across acres of countryside or stargaze under one of the darkest skies in the South East. Sleep overnight in a lodge where you wake up to the roar of lions and experience the wild herds at the watering hole. And enjoy distant views of the French coast too!

Try luxury glamping in the wide open expanse of the atmospheric Romney Marsh and walk or cycle along the Royal Military Canal, the third longest man-made structure in Britain – start at Appledore where the immaculately kept vines of the Gusbourne Estate sweep down to the water.





HOLE PARK



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Step inside

Smallhythe Place, a beautiful National Trust property, where you'll **see** an amazing collection of theatre memorabilia owned by acclaimed Victorian actress Ellen Terry.

Stroll through the village of Wye and head up to the Devil's Kneading Trough at the top of the North Downs where spectacular views await. Admire the commemorative crown carved into the hillside in 1902 to commemorate Edward VII's coronation.



Kent - the "Glorious Garden of England"

Kent certainly lives up to its reputation as the 'Garden of England'.

From the must-see internationally-acclaimed Sissinghurst Castle Garden, created by Vita Sackville-West and famous for its White Garden, to Great Dixter, the family home of Christopher Lloyd and now a place of pilgrimage for horticulturists from across the world. But there are also amazing, less well known hidden treasures such as Godinton House, Hole Park and Beech Court Gardens waiting to be discovered.



Gardener's notes

Godinton House & Gardens

For the delphiniums in June and inspirational sculpture in the gardens and open air theatre.

When to visit and what to see



Beech Court

For relaxing tranquil spots on a warm summer's day and an extensive tree collection.



Hole Park

For breath-taking carpets of bluebells and stunning wisteria in spring and amazing autumnal colours.

Check the bluebell barometer for the best time to visit!





CHILHAM

Step back in time

Meander through unspoilt villages and picture life from days gone by. Appledore, Biddenden and Smarden are wonderful places to start your adventure...



SMARDEN



Check out the latest line-up at Revelation Ashford

This intimate and inspirational performance venue is located within the beautiful parish church of St. Mary the Virgin. With exceptional acoustics it's the perfect place to **see** both international and local talent across all genres including music, comedy and theatre.



Location, Location, Location!

Getting about

What a base for exploring! With London just 38 minutes away and excellent road and rail connections, everything is within easy reach. Catch the Eurostar from Ashford International and be in Paris in under two hours. Brussels and Lille also have direct connections. Or drive the short distance to the Channel Tunnel and Europe is your oyster.



Jewel of the Weald

Experience Tenterden

It's just 12 miles west of Ashford but feels like a world away with its relaxed, country town atmosphere and traditional high street offer – it's known for its quality interiors, gifts and fashion yet still has an ironmongers, butchers and bakers!

Ashford is a diverse mix of fun and entertainment. **Find** the Ashford Borough Museum tucked away in the peaceful churchyard. The kids will have great fun following the museum's 'Wheels of Time' trail and can earn themselves rewards too!

See a movie at the Ashford Picturehouse in Elwick Place, a stunning venue that also hosts an array of eclectic restaurants. If you're thinking of staying over the Travelodge is right next door. Let your curiosity be rewarded as you take a tour around Chapel Down's new 'Cathedral of Brewing' – Curious Brewery – just a five minute stroll.



Don't miss...

We are proud to be the home of an original WW1 'female' Mark IV tank, presented in 1919 in recognition of the town's generous purchasing of war bonds. She's one of only seven left in the world and the only one on public outdoor display and we've just celebrated her 100th birthday. Find her in Ashford town centre.



The town's bandstand is home to numerous performances throughout the year. Close by, why not **try** ten pin bowling and trampolining too! Cafes and independent shops sit alongside high street names to cover all bases and the newly extended McArthurGlen Designer Outlet is just a stone's throw away.





Hidden gems

A delightful array of individual attractions are just waiting to be discovered, some off the beaten track.

Meet Viv, the head gardener at Godinton House & Gardens and take a course in topiary. Or **find** the eucryphia tree, thought to be the largest in Kent at Beech Court Gardens.



The Rare Breeds Centre is the spot for family fun, get close to the animals, take a trailer ride and **see** the pig racing!



Find our 'gentle giants'...

...Highland Cattle that roam freely throughout Hothfield Heathlands nature reserve.



Something special

Follow in the steps of royalty, and the rich and famous and see bespoke rocking horses being hand-crafted at Stevenson Brothers in Bethersden.

Teddys & chillies

Take your teddy abseiling at Willesborough Windmill and set the taste buds tingling at Chilli Fest in Challock.



Personal touch

Discover the quirky C.M. Booth Collection of Historic Vehicles where you might be lucky enough to meet Mr Booth the owner and share his love of Morgan cars.



Find the bronze statue of Queen Marie of Romania in Elwick Place and learn about Ashford's royal connections. It pays tribute to an English princess, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, who was born at Eastwell

Manor and later married Ferdinand 1 of Romania. Feel like royalty yourself and visit her former home, it's now a luxurious Champneys Spa Hotel where you can relax and be pampered.



Discover the area's rural heritage

Try guessing what some of the unusual farms implements would have been used for at Brook Agricultural Museum near Wye.

Find



Relax, unwind and **find** yourself at Green Farm Spa. Treat yourself to a yoga, pilates or art 'retreat' experience.



Walkies...



We know that your pet is a big part of the family and he wants a holiday too! As well as places to stay and visit that will happily welcome your dog, we are especially lucky to be surrounded by beautiful countryside.

So don your walking boots and discover many of the major waymarked routes through the county including the North Downs Way, a national trail, the Stour Valley Walk and the Saxon Shore Way.



Take a stroll



Learn to cook at the Kent Cookery School or book a place at the Chef's Table. Here you will be able to interact with the live theatre and skill of the chef as he creates a five course tasting menu using the best ingredients from Kent's larder.

Sleepovers



After a busy day out it's good to relax and unwind at your chosen spot. Luxury hotels, spas, beautiful B & Bs, gorgeous countryside cottages and oast houses all await. There's also an amazing array of camping and glamping to be found, for example...

Get close to nature

Wake up to breath taking views as far as the eye can see. Designed using original 1900s plans, Romney Marsh Shepherds Huts offer the perfect place for cosy comfort.



Holidays with all the family

Try a stay in a luxury Oast house – the Hop Pickers ticks all the boxes. There's room for 16 plus the family dog and even a boating lake, but remember to feed the fish!

Take a walk on the wild side...

...at the Big Cat Sanctuary, Smarden when you book an overnight Big Cat Safari Experience. You'll wake up to the roar of the lions and a not-to-be-missed opportunity to hand feed some of the big cats.



An outdoor experience with a luxury touch

Wheatfields Luxury Glamping offers the best of both worlds. And with some of the darkest skies in the South East, this is also the place for star-gazing.

experienceashfordandtenterden.co.uk is where to find plenty of ideas for great places to stay

New experiences



Now's the perfect time to do the things you always wanted to.

Hop on an electric bike and whizz along country lanes to discover picture postcard villages and vineyards.

For cyclists, National Route 18 is a glorious heritage ride through the Weald heading west out of Ashford, along quiet country roads to Tenterden and east to Wye.

Try your luck at ghost hunting in Pluckley, reportedly one of the most haunted villages in England with no less than 12 ghosts in residence. You may even spot the phantom coach and horses which has been seen in several locations around the village!



Or perhaps a new pastime beckons; fishing, golf, trampolining, bowling, cookery and paintballing are all on offer. And keen photographers can hone their skills and get up close and personal to lions, tigers, jaguars and more at the Big Cat Sanctuary.



Try



Book an exclusive 'meet the winemaker' experience at Biddenden Vineyard. The vineyard has just celebrated its 50th anniversary and Julian Barnes the second generation grower and winemaker and his winemaker son Tom will share their family knowledge and passion for what makes a great English wine.

Meet the winemakers



Experience the thrill of safari and **see** the sights of the Savannah at Port Lympne Reserve, meeting incredible animals along the way. Then seek out life-size dinosaurs in the Dinosaur Forest and hunt for fossils.



Try running your own railway!

Don't miss a pop-up model railway exhibition with three running layouts and the winning entry from the Great Model Railway Challenge. Free, but only open at the weekends and hopefully the prelude to a permanent exhibition in the future.



Our purrfect TV star

Meet Maya from the recent BBC hit series 'Big Cats About The House' at The Big Cat Sanctuary and **see** her transformation from a tiny cub with health issues into the magnificent healthy cat she is today.

Book a Big Cat Experience and become a ranger for the day and get to hand feed one of the residents!



'Til April
2020

Must do...

Be transported on a journey of discovery through the four seasons by light, sound and scent and let your senses be filled with bursts of blossom scents and delicate sounds. The Garden of Light installation, inspired by Kent's picturesque landscape, can be found at the Ashford Designer Outlet and is free to visitors.



Ride on the world's smallest railway, the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway across 13 miles of unique landscape of the Romney Marsh – here you'll **find** the largest expanse of shingle in the world. Your pet pooch is most welcome too!



Arrive in Style

The fun is in the journey. Hop on board the Kent & East Sussex Railway, a full size steam railway located in the pretty country town of Tenterden. Sit back and take in the rolling countryside on your way to visit Bodiam Castle, an archetypal 14th century moated castle.

Or if you're feeling active and like messing about on the river, **try** paddling from Bodiam Boating Station in a rowing boat, kayak, canoe or stand up paddle board. There's also the ferry boat for those who prefer the more leisurely approach.



One for the little 'uns

Ashford Museum is situated right in the heart of the town and is great for exploring. Kids will love the model railway and interactive exhibits. And there's even a 200 million year old dinosaur leg bone to be found!

So much to do...all year round

Festivals and fayres, steam rallies, family days out and an award-winning music and arts venue with a unique atmosphere featuring both international artists and home-grown talent.

Spring

Time to get out and about again as the Kent & East Sussex Railway resume their events with Mother's Day treats and steam galas. Celebrate National Mills Weekend at Willesborough Windmill and look out for Easter celebrations throughout with Easter egg hunts, lambs and chicks.



Tudor Festivities, 26-28 June

Henry VIII stayed in Charing 500 years ago en route to the Field of Cloth of Gold. Experience life in Tudor times, meet Henry VIII and his Court, bowmen, Tudor musicians, dancers and so much more as Charing celebrates this special anniversary in style.



The 149th Open, 12 - 19 July

Don't miss this world-famous golf championship which returns to nearby Royal St. George's in Sandwich for the first time since 2011.

Summer

It's festival time! And there's sure to be one that appeals, whatever your tastes. Music from all genres, food and live entertainment are all high on the agenda. Gardens show off their floral wonders and classic country fairs and vintage car shows are in abundance.

The Wealden Literary Festival takes place each June and Create, the South East's biggest free music festival is on in July.



Autumn

*"The season of mellow mists
and fruitfulness"* JOHN KEATS



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...perfectly describes us here in the Garden of England. It's harvest time for our vineyards and beer makers; celebrate this important time of year with a visit to the Hop Festival at the Kent & East Sussex Railway and Orchard Day at Smallhythe Place, Tenterden.

Tenterden buzzes with the sound of music and dance during the first week of October with the renowned Tenterden Folk Festival. **See** the streets come alive with four days of folk song, music, dance, crafts and traditions.

Ride the Fright Train on the Kent & East Sussex Railway, pick your own pumpkin at Sevington Pumpkin Farm or **try** a spot of ghost hunting in Pluckley.



Christmas Time in Tenterden

...is always really special with an amazing festive market showcasing local produce, crafts and seasonal foods – not to mention a magical light procession, great entertainment and sometimes even snow...

Winter

With the build up to Christmas well under way there is much to excite and entertain the whole family. Santa is busy putting in many appearances across the borough. Check our website for the latest sightings! experienceashfordandtenterden.co.uk





Visitor parking

Free tourist coach parking for up to three hours in Station Road, (east side), Tenterden

Free car parking at certain times in selected council car parks:

www.ashford.gov.uk/free-parking

Ashford Visitor Information

Ashford Gateway,
Church Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 1AS

01233 330316

tourism@ashford.gov.uk

experienceashfordandtenterden.co.uk



CURIOUS BREWERY

Curious? Find our latest attraction – Curious Brewery, situated in the heart of the town.

Your essential guide to the Ashford and Tenterden area, packed full of amazing, quirky and unusual experiences.

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