Itinerary

INTRODUCING THE NORMANS & THE STORY OF 1066

1066 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN · SUSSEX ·

www.visit1066country.com

1066country

@1066country

1066 Country

Itinerary

THE NORMANS & THE STORY OF 1066

DISCOVER THE PEOPLE, PLACES AND POWER STRUGGLES THAT RESHAPED ENGLAND FOREVER

- Few moments in history changed the course of English history as dramatically as the Norman Conquest.

- In 1066, a struggle for the crown reached its brutal climax at the Battle of Hastings – an event that transformed not only the monarchy but left a lasting impact on the nation's language, laws, architecture and sense of identity.

- Now, nearly 1,000 years on, there's no better place to explore the Norman legacy than 1066 Country. From the beaches where William's army first landed to the battlefield where England's fate was sealed, via ancient abbeys, mighty castles and spectacular landscapes, this remarkable region offers a rare opportunity to step inside one of Europe's most defining moments.

WHO WERE THE NORMANS?

- The Norman story is one of ambition, rivalry and conquest. Descended from Vikings who settled in northern France in the early 10th Century, this land of the Norsemen (north men) became known as Normandy. Whilst they adopted the French language and converted to Christianity, the Normans still held on to many of their ancestral Scandinavian traits – including a piratical passion for courageous conquests.

- With strong bloodlines to the Anglo-Saxon court, William the Duke of Normandy, believed he had been promised the English throne by King Edward the Confessor with whom he had formed close ties during a period of political exile. But, when Edward died without an heir in January 1066, his brother-in-law – a powerful English Earl named Harold Godwinson – was crowned. This perceived betrayal promptly set in motion one of the most dramatic chapters in English history.



Battle of Hastings Reenactment

© English Heritage Trust



Pevensey Castle

GETTING HERE

- Getting to 1066 Country is easy, with journey times of just 1 to 2 hours from London. Direct trains run from London Victoria and from Charing Cross, London Bridge and Waterloo East. Services are also available from London St Pancras International via Ashford, as well as from Brighton.

- Visitors travelling from Europe can easily reach 1066 Country via the main cross-Channel ferry ports and LeShuttle. Eurostar passengers can also connect from London St Pancras International, with onward journey times of just over an hour.

- London Gatwick is the nearest UK airport. London Heathrow, Stansted and Luton are all accessible via car or train. National Express and bus services are also available from other UK cities.

Itinerary

THE NORMANS & THE STORY OF 1066



View of Pevensey Bay and Pevensey Castle



© La Fabrique de patrimoines en Normandie / Antoine Cazin

1066: THE BATTLE THAT ALTERED ENGLISH HISTORY

Determined to follow through on his claim to the throne, William framed his invasion as a holy crusade against a perjured king and secured religious backing from Pope Alexander II.

To avenge the broken oath, he gathered an army of knights and mercenaries from across France and sailed across the Channel to Pevensey Bay. From there, on 14 October 1066 his troops advanced inland to confront Harold's army near Hastings, in what we now call the Battle of Hastings.

William's decision to bring heavy cavalry and archers proved pivotal. Facing an Anglo-Saxon army that fought entirely on foot, his combined forces gave him a tactical edge that Harold's infantry could not match. The two sides clashed fiercely for much of the day and, by nightfall, Harold lay dead, William had won, and the country would never be the same again.

- Pevensey Bay

HOW THE NORMAN LEGACY LIVES ON

This Norman victory marked the last successful invasion of England, ushering in a new era. With England and Normandy now united under one ruler, the nation's language, identity and politics were transformed, establishing new traditions that still shape our lives today.

The Norman Conquest therefore proved far wider-reaching than the ruling gentry. It is also the story of ordinary people whose very existence was transformed as a direct consequence of one ferocious battle which became a crucial turning point in English history.

TRACE THE TAPESTRY ACROSS 1066 COUNTRY

This epic embroidered tale is a mediaeval roadmap to the real places, castles, and battlefields of 1066 Country, many of which can still be explored today.

The world's best-known textile depicts the events leading up to the Norman Conquest, chronicling why William believed he had no choice but to invade England in 1066.

Driven by a powerful combination of personal ambition, divine sanction and feudal duty, the tapestry shows the transition from the peaceful oath of alliance with Harold to the preparation of William's invasion fleet and the carnage of its bloody climax. With the Bayeux Tapestry returning to British soil in September 2026, and celebrations on the Norman legacy planned as part of the 2027 European Year of the Normans (also known as Millenium), there's never been a better reason to plan a trip to explore this history-rich corner of England.

Over the next few years, 1066 Country will be bursting with opportunities to see where the stories behind the tapestry unfolded and discover the places where history was made. Keep an eye on our events page and sign up to our newsletter to ensure you're amongst the first to know about our cultural, historic and family-friendly events and activities.

- Events Page
- Sign up to our Newsletter
- European Year of the Normans

1066 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN · SUSSEX ·

Itinerary

THE NORMANS & THE STORY OF 1066

TO STEP BEYOND THE TAPESTRY AND INTO THE WORLD OF 1066, BELOW ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS DEPICTED IN THE HAND-STITCHED CHRONICLE OF WILLIAM'S JOURNEY FROM LANDING TO VICTORY, EACH STILL MERITING A MODERN-DAY VISIT.



Pevensey Bay



Hastings Castle

© Georgina Cook

THE LANDING AT PEVENSEY

On 28 September, the Norman fleet arrived on the South Coast of England ready to invade.

The Bayeux Tapestry shows the armada of ships crossing the English Channel to land at Pevensey Bay, horses being led ashore and soldiers unloading their arms and armour by cart.

Visitors can still walk around the dramatic ruins of Pevensey

Pevensey Castle

THE HASTINGS BASECAMP

From their initial safe haven, the army headed to Hastings on 29 September to establish their operational base and wait for Harold's arrival.

The Normans' march east to gather supplies and set up camp is depicted in the tapestry, with the hastily built wooden motte and bailey fortress rebuilt with stone after the Battle of Hastings victory.

Today, the remains of Hastings Castle offer the chance to explore one of England's earliest Norman strongholds.

Hastings Castle



Battle Abbey



© Historic England/English Heritage Trust

THE BATTLE SITE

Despite being named after the nearby port town, the Battle of Hastings actually took place 7 miles away at Senlac Hill. This is where Battle Abbey was built to commemorate William's triumph and atone for the bloodshed, with its high altar said to mark the spot where King Harold was killed.

The latter part of the tapestry shows the intense clash, and visitors can explore both the town of Battle – which took its name from the pivotal conflict – and the grounds of the infamous battlefield. To get even closer to the events of 1066, the Battle Museum of Local History is home to an ancient battle-axe believed to be the only relic recovered from the battlefield, while those heading to the area in October can witness the annual re-enactment of the Battle of Hastings.

Battle Abbey

Battle Museum of Local History

Itinerary

THE NORMANS & THE STORY OF 1066

WALK THROUGH HISTORY

The landscape of 1066 Country serves as a vast open-air museum, with many of the strategic topographical features that shaped the Norman Conquest still visible today.



Herstmonceux Castle Estate

For those keen to immerse themselves even further, the 1066 Country Walk offers a memorable way to follow ancient routes through beautiful countryside. Covering 31 miles (50km), the trail links many of the hills, high ridges, woodlands, coastline and settlements depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry, allowing you to follow the story of 1066 step by step.

Stretching from the landing site at Pevensey Castle, via the Battlefield, the imposing ruins of Herstmonceux Castle and medieval Winchelsea to the Cinque Port town of Rye, the well-signposted and wonderfully scenic route passes through locations forever linked to the Norman Conquest, taking in vineyards, historic estates and quaint villages along the way.

- Pevensey Castle
- Herstmonceux Castle
- Rye

A STORY CARVED IN WOOD

The route is also punctuated by 10 striking wooden sculptures and a series of hand-carved benches by local East Sussex sculptor Keith Pettit. Inspired by the tapestry and the heritage of 1066 Country, each symbolic artwork reflects a different chapter of the Norman story.



Observatory Science Centre

Among the sculptures, visitors will encounter an oak obelisk representing Halley's Comet near the Observatory Science Centre (formerly the Royal Observatory), and a towering, crowned figure, split down the middle by an arrow. Located close to Battle Abbey, where the two armies collided, the sculpture represents how William and Harold were divided by conflict yet united by their quest to become King – a title both achieved, but only one would keep.

- Observatory Science Centre
- Battle Abbey

EXPLORE AT YOUR OWN PACE

Typically completed over two to three days, this moderately-paced trail allows walkers to enjoy the rural charms of the High Weald National Landscape while tracing the historic route of the Norman invasion.



1066 Country Walk © Jim Holden

With five railway stations along the way (Pevensey, Battle, Three Oaks, Doleham and Rye), the route is equally well-suited to shorter day walks, allowing visitors the chance to explore individual sections or focus on specific sites without covering the entire trail.

Find out more about the 1066 Country Walk for your chance to follow in William's footsteps

- 1066 Country Walk

WHERE TO STAY

- **Pevensey**: From smugglers' hideouts to timber-framed castle views or peaceful beach retreats, you'll find unique accommodation in and around Pevensey. Choose from cosy cottages, characterful pubs and luxurious stays, each offering something a little different
- **Battle:** Whether you feel like an ivy-covered hotel, a thatched cottage, sleeping under canvas deep in the woodland, or a cosy shepherd's hut, Battle has it all. There's a perfect place to stay for every break and Battle makes a great base for exploring the rest of 1066 Country.
- **Rye:** After a day exploring Rye, unwind in unique accommodation that blends historic charm with modern comfort. From characterful centuries-old buildings and quirky boutique stays to luxury hideaways and secret rooms, there's something for romantic breaks, family escapes and solo getaways alike.

Itinerary

THE NORMANS & THE STORY OF 1066

WHERE TO STAY



The Yellow Room

THE LAINDONS

Hastings

Tucked into the heart of Hastings Old Town, The Laindons Guest House offers a distinctive blend of heritage, comfort, and thoughtful hospitality.

Set within a beautiful Georgian listed building, originally a coach house, The Laindons has long been a place where travellers arrive, pause, and feel genuinely looked after. That tradition continues today, with a warm, personal approach that defines every stay.

The Laindons



Strawberry Hole Barn

CLASSIC COTTAGES

Multiple Locations

Classic Cottages have a growing portfolio of gorgeous holidays homes waiting for you in East Sussex. From large cottages for all the family, to romantic boltholes for two, they have something for every holiday.

From scenic countryside walks with your four-legged friend to exploring charming towns with cobbled streets, there's plenty to discover at your own pace and plenty of opportunities to unwind in your own space.

Classic Cottages



Garden Room

THE GALLIVANT

Camber

Voted Small Hotel of the Year 2024 by Visit England, The Gallivant behind Camber Sands is one of the first hotels in the UK to be awarded a Michelin Key. The Gallivant is a Boutique Hotel across the road from the dunes and the beautiful beach of Camber Sands.

Guests can unwind in the Mini Spa or enjoy yoga and wellness classes throughout the year. Seasonal experiences, including foraging and wild swimming, add an extra touch of adventure.

The Gallivant, Camber



Lucy, Catherine and Matilda Cabins

STARCROFT FARM CABINS

Battle

Tucked away in a peaceful meadow in the heart of 1066 Country, Starcroft Farm Cabins is a haven for creativity with a rich sense of palce. Set in the High Weald National Landscape and near the historic town of Battle, these thoughtfully crafted cabins provide a unique base for exploring.

The three bespoke cabins are inspired by women connected to Battle Abbey, offering an alternative perspective on the 1066 story.

Starcroft Farm Cabins

Itinerary

THE NORMANS & THE STORY OF 1066

WHERE TO EAT



THE CROWN

Hastings

A an independent, family run freehouse, situated in the heart of Hastings Old Town at the foot of the clifftop country park, and a stone's throw away from the beach.

Reopened in July 2014, The Crown is a welcoming hub for the community and visitors, dogs and kids. Their menu is focused on British provenance, with ingredients sourced from the local fishing fleet, farms and producers. They are proud to champion the best produce Sussex and Kent have to offer.

The Crown, Hastings



THE BULL INN

Battle

Located in the heart of Battle, The Bull Inn is a historic former coaching inn dating back to the 1600s, originally built using stone from nearby Battle Abbey. Full of character, with cosy open fires, it has long been a favourite among locals and visitors alike.

Enjoy hearty, modern pub food, a carefully selected range of drinks and a soundtrack of blues, funk and soul, making it the perfect place to unwind after a day discovering the area.

The Bull Inn



THE BELL

Ticehurst

On the face of it The Bell is a quintessentially English pub – but poke your head through its welcoming doors and you will find much more.

The Bell is a truly independent public house, serving great local beers and splendid creative menu of essentially British cuisine with French influences. Pick the right night and you may stumble upon one of the many cultural events such as community film nights, world class comedy, talks and live jazz.

The Bell in Ticehurst



THE ALBION

Hastings

The Albion is a historic pub on the seafront in Hastings Old Town, known for its award-winning homemade pies, locally sourced ingredients and excellent selection of Sussex ales and ciders. With regular live music and a welcoming atmosphere, The Albion is full of character and community spirit.

Whether you're stopping for a meal, a pint or an afternoon by the sea, it's a great spot to soak up the unique charm of Hastings.

The Albion, Hastings

Find all the 1066 Country itineraries at
www.visit1066country.com/itineraries





1066 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN · SUSSEX ·

www.visit1066country.com
1066country
@1066country

1066 Country