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## HOURS IN

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## Littlehampton

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The charming seaside town of Littlehampton has long been a popular destination for day trips, thanks to its two award-winning beaches, winding river, large green spaces and lively amusement park.

The town owes most of its early prosperity to the River Arun, but began to transform into a holiday resort in the late 18th century. Today, a direct train from London Victoria means that tourists from the capital swell the population on sunny days. Littlehampton has differentiated itself from other seaside towns in the area with its dynamic range of contemporary architecture, including East Beach Café, The Longest Bench and the Stage by the Sea. Throughout the year the town also holds a host of events, including a Pancake Olympics, bonfire procession, outdoor cinema, Armed Forces Day, Waterfront Festival and river jump event.

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### IN THE MORNING

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO/MARTINPARRATT



Colourful beach huts hug the coast





Moody skies over  
West Beach



Nothing beats a walk on the beach – and at this time of year it's a great place to sense the promise of better weather on the horizon. In Littlehampton you have the choice of two beaches – West Beach for its wild sandy dunes or East Beach for its wide promenade, pier and vibrant architecture.

In recent years the seafront has enjoyed a bit of sprucing up, including the creation of spacious seating areas by the river. If you're feeling active, you could cycle or skate along the promenade or join the Parkrun that meets every Saturday morning. Littlehampton is also a great place for watersports, with windsurfers' sails a regular feature of the

horizon. If you're lucky you'll spot the odd paraglider too. A new waterports venue is set to be built on the beach this year and will be providing paddleboard and windsurfing lessons.

There are also two golf courses, mini golf, tennis courts, a skate park and The Wave, the town's new leisure centre. If you're feeling lazy, hop on the Safari Express, a mini steam train that runs from Mewsbrook Park to Norfolk Gardens. It is staffed and run entirely by volunteers from the Littlehampton Heritage Railway Association. At Mewsbrook Park you'll also find beautiful flower beds, a picnic area, boating lake, children's play area, and café. ▶

The Oyster Pond  
was once used to  
store oysters



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO/NICKOS



## AFTERNOON ONWARDS

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO/ NICKOS



The River Arun flows into the sea at Littlehampton

After lunch, head to Littlehampton Museum in the centre of town. Housed in a beautiful Grade II-listed building, the free-to-enter museum illuminates the town's history and features Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman archaeology, as well as fossils found in the region.

Next, head back towards the sea, stopping by Harbour Park to get rid of any shrapnel in your wallet at one of the two arcades. The park is still run by the family of the 1960s circus impresario, Billy Smart, and features a host of outdoor rides that start to open

again in late March.

Next to Harbour Park is the Oyster Pond, which was once used to store oysters, but is now a popular boating lake. If you make your way to the river, you'll find a great recipe for oysters on one of the town's sculptures. You may even be able to pick up the ingredients, as well as some other fresh fish, at Riverside Fish which is ideally situated by the pier. Finally, catch a film at the Windmill Cinema, an independent cinema and theatre that shows the latest releases and even has its own windmill sails.

## THE LOCAL VIEW



### JANE WOOD

*East Beach Café owner*

I came to Littlehampton 13 years ago on a day out with my father who had loved it here. Later, when I was at a property auction in London, a house facing the sea came up for sale and I bought it unseen. It was facing a small café kiosk which had planning for an unspectacular building, so I bought the kiosk and built East Beach Café. I love Littlehampton: my famous building designed by Thomas Heatherwick, the great local food producers, the beautiful Downs behind, the local shops, the cinema and the wonderful culture within easy reach of my house. I can see the sea every day, work with a great local team and chat to all the lovely people who visit my restaurant. I am very lucky to be here.

## DAY ON A PLATE



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/NASTYA\_PH

As you might expect Littlehampton is a great place to enjoy fresh fish. Fred's Fish & Chips is popular with locals and has a great fish selection or you can head to Fish Factory in the centre of the town.

East Beach Café has very good, simple dishes in a casual

atmosphere. There's world dining in the town too – head to Piccola Italia, Portuguese Grill, Raj Doot or Thai Kitchen.

If you fancy eating al fresco, make use of the town's free-to-use barbecue units on Littlehampton's seafront green. ♦



### HELEN RICE

*Chief executive, Age UK West Sussex*

The charity's main hub is in Littlehampton, so I spend a lot of my time there as well as at our centres across the county. When we moved to the coast our son, Isaac was born and we were happy that he could grow up in the fresh air and countryside while enjoying our close links to Brighton and London.