



## *The Pilgrim's Way*

If you've ever wanted a pilgrimage route through England that combines history, countryside and quiet reflection, the *Pilgrims' Way* might be just what you're looking for. Following in the footsteps of medieval pilgrims who journeyed to the shrine of St Thomas Becket in Canterbury, the route winds ancient woodlands and pastoral farmland, passing historic churches, market towns and quiet villages along the way, offering walkers a journey that is both scenic and steeped in centuries of heritage. Here's what you need to know.

### **WHERE** does the *Pilgrims' Way* start and end?

There are two traditional starting points for the *Pilgrims' Way*. The classic route begins at **Winchester Cathedral** in Hampshire, where pilgrims set out from what was once England's ancient capital.

An alternative start is from **Southwark Cathedral** in London, following the route many medieval pilgrims would have taken from the capital. Both routes end at **Canterbury Cathedral** in Kent, one of the most important pilgrimage destinations in medieval Europe and still a place of reflection and welcome today.

### **HOW LONG** is the route?

From **Winchester to Canterbury** the Pilgrims' Way covers roughly **138 miles (222km)**.

The **London to Canterbury** option is a little shorter at about **90 miles (145 kilometres)**. The path follows the ancient trackways that pilgrims are thought to have used.

### **HOW MANY DAYS** does it take to walk?

Most walkers allow **two weeks** to complete the full route from Winchester. From London, around a week to ten days is typical.

## WHEN IS THE BEST TIME of year to walk?

The *Pilgrims' Way* can be walked **year-round**, but **spring through early autumn** (April to October) offers the most comfortable conditions. Spring brings wildflowers and blossom in the orchards, summer has long days and drier paths, and autumn adds colour to the woods and harvest scenes in the fields. Winter walking is possible, but expect mud, short days and limited accommodation availability in some places.

## HOW DO YOU GET to the start?

Both starting points are easy to reach by public transport.

- **Winchester** is well connected by train from London Waterloo (about one hour). The cathedral is a short walk from the station.
- **Southwark Cathedral** is next to London Bridge station, served by mainline trains, the Underground and local buses.

Canterbury, at the end of the walk, also has regular train services to London and the South East, so it is simple to return after finishing your pilgrimage.

## WHAT ACCOMMODATION is available?

There is a wide variety of accommodation along the route, from **B&Bs and guesthouses** to **small hotels** and **traditional inns**. Some walkers also use **hostels, campsites** particularly in rural areas.

Many towns and villages have welcoming places to stay, often with strong connections to pilgrimage. Booking ahead is advisable, especially in summer or near popular visitor spots.

## Can you GET A PILGRIM PASSPORT?

The pilgrim passport is called a pilgrim record and is available from the **Winchester, Southwark and Rochester cathedral shops**. It can be stamped at churches, pubs, hostels and hotels on the route. Some places will have their own local Pilgrims' Way stamp.

Admission to Southwark and Rochester cathedrals is free. At Winchester any pilgrims wishing to start at St Swithun's shrine are asked to give advance notice to obtain free admission. At Canterbury Cathedral free admission is normally available on presentation of a stamped pilgrim record