

Hikers looking to explore south of England get helping hand from leading train company

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With a summer of staycations on the cards and Brits looking for new places to explore, Southern is launching a timely new partnership with outdoor walking and hiking app, [AllTrails](#).

Lockdowns and restrictions across the country over the past year have led to more people walking and discovering the beauty of their local area. It comes as no surprise that 2020 recorded a surge in those taking up hiking as a hobby, with a quarter of the British public now ramblers (1).

Although restrictions are now easing, research suggests that the popularity of walking and hiking is here to stay. With the Southern train network covering some of the best walking routes in the country, there is no better time to share these routes with customers.

Chris Fowler, Customer Service Director at Southern, says: "Walking is everyone's new favourite hobby and it's been the one consistent thing we've been able to do since the pandemic began. This is the perfect time to partner with AllTrails and show customers the wealth of opportunity there is when it comes to walks across Sussex, the South Downs and the South Coast – which are all easily accessible by train."

With around 200,000 AllTrails users searching for walks in Sussex since the start of this year, Southern has worked closely with the app to develop **bespoke lists** which highlight walks that start within a mile of a Southern station. These include: Family Friendly Walks in West Sussex, Walks for Experienced Walkers in East Sussex and Walks to Discover the South Downs. These can all be found on Southern's **website**.

In addition, a selection of station-specific lists have been created for extra spontaneity. All customers need to do is turn up at one of the selected 17 Southern stations*, scan the QR code on the poster and pick one of the three walks in the immediate area.

"There's a lot to adjust to in this new normal, but what hasn't changed are the mental and physical health benefits that we can all achieve by simply spending time outdoors. Time spent outside and on the trail has always been an easily accessible yet powerful catalyst to foster healthy and resilient communities," said Ron Schneidermann, CEO of AllTrails. "We are thrilled to partner with Southern and help more walkers connect with nature and explore the beautiful trails that England has to offer," he added.

All of the walks highlighted are easily accessible by train, but Southern encourages eager hikers to always check before travelling to be aware of any disruption or busy services. **The 17 stations are: London Bridge, Horsham, Haywards Heath, Eastbourne, Lewes, Seaford, Hastings, Rye, Bexhill, Pevensey, Chichester, Littlehampton, Southampton, Portsmouth, Brighton, Worthing, Arundel.*

[1] Mintel research, November 2020

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