

In and around Morecambe



Welcome to Morecambe, a seafood haven for birds and visitors alike

The massive panorama of vast shimmering sands with a backdrop of Lakeland fells is as mesmerising today as it was when tourists first visited in the 19th Century. The fantastic food, heritage, and nature of Morecambe are indebted to the vast intertidal sands teeming with sea creatures.

Don't Miss...

There's so much to see and many hidden corners to explore, but these top 3 highlights are not to be missed!

- 1 Strolling along Morecambe Promenade, sampling seaside treats, and watching wonderful waders**
- 2 Discovering atmospheric heritage sites, hidden beaches and magical mosses at Heysham**
- 3 A hidden oasis at Heysham Nature Reserve where butterflies and dragonflies abound**



red shank
© Andy Hay rspb images

In this guide you will find...

- **Seasonal highlights**
- **Three great days out**
- **How to get around**

On a rainy day...

Visit Heysham Heritage Centre (everyday except Mon in Summer, weekends in winter, call 01524 853465), or book a tour of the famous Winter Gardens Theatre (01524 422180).

Fascinating fact

Half Moon Bay is one of the few places you'll find Honeycomb Worm Reefs around the Bay – built by *Sabellaria alveolata* worms from shells and sand. The worms build their homes on hard rock, but need sand to create the tubes they live in.

Seasonal Highlights

This area is full of wildlife, with something spectacular and different to see whatever the time of year:

Look out for:

SPRING

Noisy flocks of migrating pink footed geese at Heysham Head and greenshank, whimbrels and ringed plover.

SUMMER

Heysham Nature Reserve comes alive with bees, dragonflies, and 21 species of butterfly.

AUTUMN

The spectacle of massive flocks of knot all moving in unison, known as murmurations at Morecambe and Hest Bank.

WINTER

Oystercatchers meet in large numbers during winter. See them on groynes, jetties and piers as the tide rises.



cormorant and Midland Hotel
© Zoe Dawes

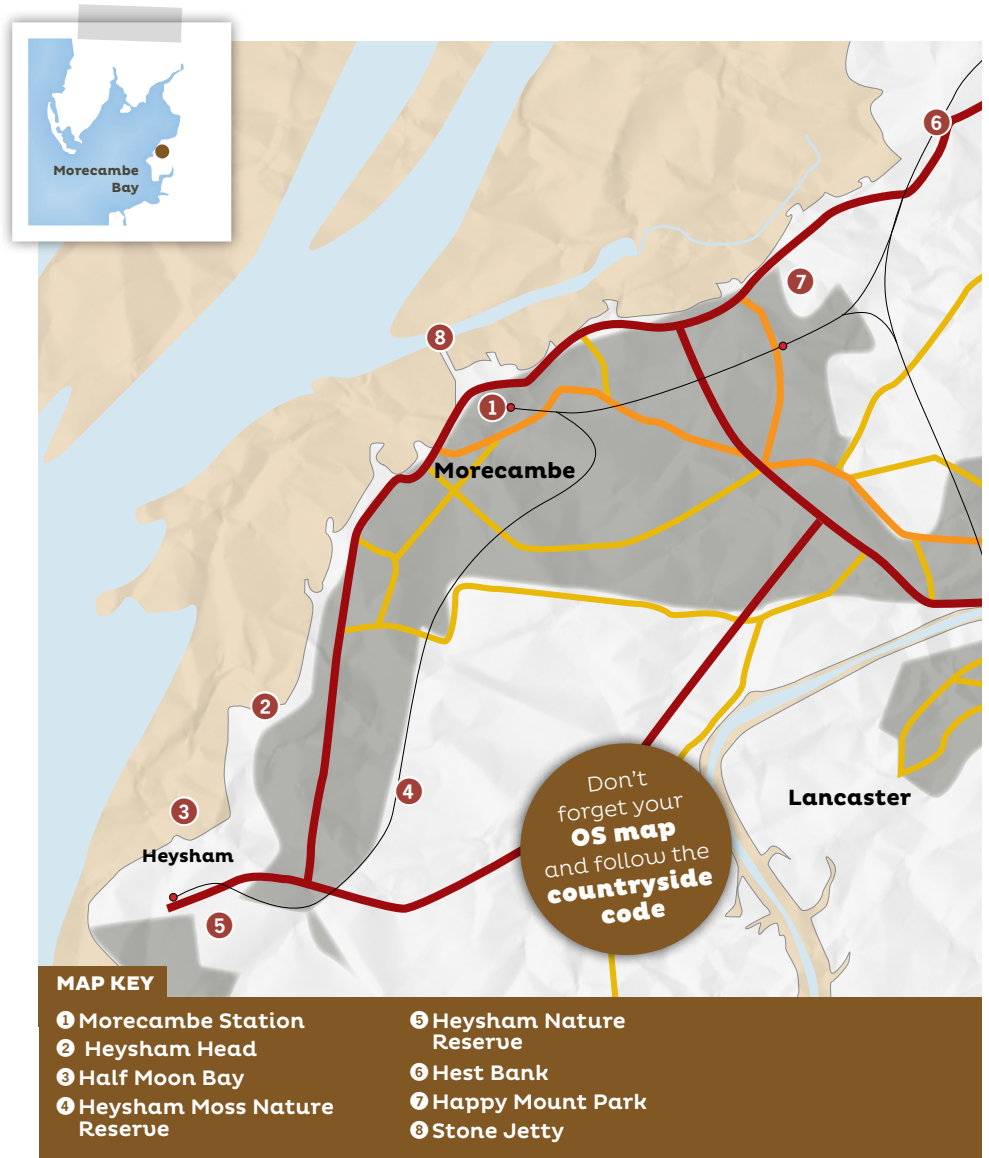
Morecambe Promenade

Morecambe's popularity as a holiday resort dates from the 1850s when the railways arrived, connecting the town to the industrial centres of northern England, with visitors drawn to the clean air, beautiful scenery and the sea.

Today Morecambe Promenade connects Hest Bank with Heysham Head and is still a favourite place of locals and visitors for gazing across the immense bay to the lakeland fells beyond and watching the many birds that flock here for food and shelter.

- In Morecambe town the stone jetty, promenade, sea groynes and sea wall are all great places to view birds as they feed in the sands and roost as the tide comes in. Oystercatchers love Morecambe because they can find their favourite food, cockles and mussels, in abundance. You'll see them all year round but the spring and autumn spectacles around 2 hours before and after a high tide are the best times to see them.
- Admire the marine-inspired artwork around the town and the Tern Project installed art works along the promenade and stone jetty. These celebrate the birdlife of this special bay. The iconic Art Deco Midland Hotel was built in the 1930's by the London Midland & Scottish Railway and included works by Eric Gill, Marion Dorn and Eric Ravilious. Outside the hotel Eric Gill designed two seahorses modelled as Morecambe shrimps. Walk east from the hotel to discover the statue of Eric Morecambe complete with binoculars as Morecambe was a favourite place to watch the birds of the bay.

Enjoy fresh fish at Atkinson's fish and chips, the Waterfront Restaurant in the Clarendon Hotel, and Edmondson's fish shop. Ray Edmondson has been shrimping in Morecambe Bay for fifty years and together with



MAP KEY

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Morecambe Station | 5 Heysham Nature Reserve |
| 2 Heysham Head | 6 Hest Bank |
| 3 Half Moon Bay | 7 Happy Mount Park |
| 4 Heysham Moss Nature Reserve | 8 Stone Jetty |

wife Pat runs Edmondson's Fish Shop where you can buy their own recipe potted shrimps as well as fresh fish. For more famous Morecambe Bay potted shrimp try Baxters.

- Morecambe has always been a hub of entertainment, and is the birthplace of Eric Bartholomew (better known as Eric Morecambe). Get into the seaside spirit at the Morecambe Variety Festival (May), and other seaside festivals and events held each year. In summer a brass band plays in Happy Mount Park on Sundays.
- Don't forget to pop into Brucciani's iconic ice cream parlour for a favourite seaside treat, or take afternoon tea at the Midland Hotel.



Eric Morecambe statue

© Zoe Dawes

Heysham Head

It's hard to imagine this stretch of coastline before the seaside visitors arrived, but there has been some kind of settlement in here since the Stone Age, and consequently the whole area is dotted with ancient sites, including one of the finest Anglo-Viking sites in the North West.

It's also a great place for watching wildfowl, waders and passing seabirds using the East Atlantic Flyway – a major migratory route for birds that fly between Scandinavia, Europe and Africa to breed in spring and over winter in warmer climes.

- **Follow the promenade from Morecambe south on a 1 hour stroll (2 miles / 3.5 km) to Heysham village. Here the limestone cliffs meet the sand and are topped with the atmospheric ruins of St Patrick's Chapel (National Trust) and 8 rock cut graves, believed to be unique. Explore the headland and discover the nature in the grasslands and woodlands of the Barrows. It's a great place for kids to play and explore.**
- **Heysham harbour is an excellent place to view sea birds like fulmars, guillemots, kittiwakes, leeches petrel, and storm petrels as they pass by to breeding grounds elsewhere. Head here 2 hours either side of high tide to see oystercatchers, dunlin, wigeon and curlew (July to February). Look out for flocks of knot in autumn when thousands of birds move and dance as one – known as murmurations.**
- **Explore the beach at Half Moon Bay and see if you can find cockles and shore crabs. You might find jellyfish washed up – the favourite food of the leatherback turtle that migrates from the Caribbean to the Irish Sea.**
- **Just inland from the coast you'll find Lancashire Wildlife Trust's Heysham Moss Nature Reserve. Mosses and bogs are acidic**



St Patrick's Chapel

© David Morris

and very low in nutrients and plants have had to adapt to life here. The sundew has a clever way to get nutrients – they trap insects like ants and flies in their sticky hairs! The unique plants that grow here attract different birds like lapwing, shelduck, grasshopper warbler, reedbunting, and skylark.

There are cafes and pubs where you can refuel and relax in Heysham village and at Half Moon Bay.

A Hidden Oasis

You'll find Lancashire Wildlife Trust's Heysham Nature Reserve tucked between the industrious Heysham Port and the golf course. This hidden oasis has an abundance of butterflies and dragonflies.

The reserve is a mosaic of a ponds, reedbed, marsh, grasslands, heath and woodlands.

- **The variety of habitats supports lots of different flowering plants: there are over 200 species. Look out for bee orchid (it looks like a bumble bee) and yellow-wort.**
- **The flowers provide nectar for over 20 species of butterflies**

and its home to day-flying moths. The butterflies are a summertime spectacle on the reserve. Look out for small skipper, grayling and small copper. The biggest spectacles are the masses of common blue butterfly.

- **Linger by the ponds and reedbeds to watch dragonflies and damselflies dart around. Look out for some less common species such as ruddy darter, emerald damselfly and emperor dragonfly.**

The reserve has a small car park and is accessible by wheelchairs, pushchairs and trampers.



Bee orchid

© Rob Pocklington National Trust



Getting here

We believe that a car free journey is a care free journey.

- **By rail, change from the main line at Lancaster for the short journey to Morecambe**
- **By bike, take the Lancashire Coastal Way from Lancaster or National Cycle Route 6 from Carnforth**
- **Buses run frequently from Lancaster**

Getting Around

The promenades and flat coastal lanes are great for exploring by boot and bike.

- **Take a compass and a map (OS Explorer Map OL7) and wear appropriate clothing.**
- **Walk or cycle along the car free promenades and routes that connect Heysham, Morecambe and Hest Bank.**
- **No bikes? No worries! Sunshine Cycle Hire rent bikes and tandems (at Coopers Amusements, 01524 414709)**
- **Enjoy a unique side of Morecambe by boat with a fun sail or 2 day course with Bay Sea School (call 07721 891615).**
- **Don't forget the fantastic train route around the whole of the bay.**

Staying Longer

Morecambe is a great base for a long weekend or a short break.

- **Choose to stay at the heart of the town or in the surrounding village inns, hotels and guesthouses. Find out more at www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk**
- **Call Morecambe Visitor Information Centre on 01524 582808**

Moving on

Look out for other itineraries in this series at www.morecambebaynature.org.uk/discover

- **Visit the quaint ports of Sunderland and Glasson on the mouth of the River Lune**
- **Explore the unusual limestone landscape on Warton Crag near Carnforth**
- **Take the train around the Bay to Grange and Humphrey Head nature reserve**



Useful contacts: call or search online

- **Morecambe Visitor Information Centre** **01524 582808**
- **Sunshine Cycle Hire** **01524 414709**
- **Bay Sea School** **07721 891615**
- **Heysham Heritage Centre** **01524 853465**
- **Winter Gardens Theatre** **01524 422180**
- **National Trust St Patrick's Chapel** **01524 701178**
- **www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk**

This leaflet is brought to you by Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership's Nature Improvement Area and Morecambe Bay Partnership's 700 Days to Transform the Bay scheme. It is funded by Defra, DCLG, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Coastal Communities Fund and RSPB Futurescapes EU Life Comms +.

The routes described are for guidance only. Please use an up to date map when exploring this area. It's a good idea to plan your route in more detail before you set off, and to check the weather forecast and tide tables. Wear appropriate clothing and don't forget to take food and water. The Partnerships above cannot be held responsible in the unlikely event of injury or accident whilst exploring this area. For more information on the exploring the nature of Morecambe Bay visit www.morecambebaynature.org.uk