

Guide for Groups

Bargate

Discover, explore and enjoy Southampton!

The historic city of Southampton is much more than just a cruise stop or shopping destination. This buzzing port city with a blend of maritime heritage, modern attractions, and a vibrant cultural scene is bursting with experiences for visitors to explore.

From its medieval walls, rich maritime heritage and important historical assets to its thriving cultural scene offering art, theatre and music in abundance, plus fantastic choice of shops and places to eat and drink, Southampton offers something for all tastes and interests.

This guide outlines just a few of the many attractions, places to stay and reasons to choose Southampton for your next group trip. For further inspiration see visitsouthampton.co.uk

Top attractions



SeaCity Museum

Discover Southampton's Titanic story from 1912. Experience a 1:25 scale interactive model, hear powerful stories from survivors of the disaster and more. You can also find out about Southampton's fascinating ancient and maritime past in Gateway to the World and Southampton Stories exhibitions. The SeaCity Café has a wide range of fresh locally sourced food available.

For the driver: free ticket and meal for coach drivers (T&Cs apply)

■ www.seacitymuseum.co.uk



Southampton City Art Gallery

Southampton City Art Gallery holds one of the finest collections of art in the south of England, currently comprising over 5,000 works and spanning eight centuries. Regularly rotating displays feature works from the collection, national touring exhibitions and work by local artists.

■ www.southamptoncityartgallery.com



Tudor House and Garden

Southampton's most important historic building, Tudor House reveals over 800 years of history in one fascinating location in the heart of the Old Town. Tudor House gives a unique and atmospheric insight into the lives and times of both its residents through the years, and of Southampton itself. It appeals to visitors of all ages and interests, who find the family-friendly activities, interactive technology, fascinating displays and onsite café a winning combination.

For the driver: free ticket and meal for coach drivers (T&Cs apply)

■ www.tudorhouseandgarden.com

Group bookings

Guided tours and self-guided tours can be pre-booked on 023 8083 4536. There's also a range of creative workshops, talks and tours at each venue all year round. Check websites for more details and venue opening times.

SS Shieldhall

Step aboard a Flagship of the National Historic Fleet!



Groups are welcome aboard the Steamship Shieldhall, a seagoing heritage steam power vessel celebrating its 70th birthday in 2025! Regularly sailing the Solent in summer, Shieldhall delights passengers who wish to experience the magic of 'steam at sea' and offers a chance to explore the Engine Room and Boiler Room and meet the captain on the Bridge. There's a 10% discount for parties of 10 or more on excursion tickets. Food and drink is available on board, and free parking for coaches close to the ship.

Shieldhall also offers a series of all-day packages in Southampton on its 2hr, 3hr and 3 1/2 hr sailings, incorporating a visit to one of Southampton's Museums, a guided walk with a local guide and an afternoon cruise on Shieldhall.

New for 2025

Shieldhall will celebrate the 70th anniversary of its launch, along with significant events including the 85th anniversary of Dunkirk and the 250th anniversary of the birth of Jane Austen.

Back due to popular demand will be return trips to Portsmouth Harbour and The River Medina on the Isle of Wight. In addition to the naval ships, Portsmouth trips give an exciting opportunity to view the dramatic skyline of Portsmouth, including Southsea; Clarence Pier; Spice Island and The Spinnaker Tower from the water.



Jamie Shadbolt

Get a picture-perfect moment on the Shieldhall

Photography enthusiasts can enjoy Shieldhall's smooth sailing while capturing moments during events like the Round the Island Race on June 6 and the Fastnet Race on July 27. Shieldhall will also stage trips to view the Solent Forts; Nab Tower and The Needles.

Music and sea shanties for 2025

Shieldhall's volunteers will welcome The Selsey Shantymen, The Southampton Salty Sea Dogs, Tuto Tribe and Jim Splice and The Main Brace for performances in 2025.

For more information, prices and to book tickets or alongside visits, please visit www.ss-shieldhall.co.uk or call the Ticket Manager on **023 8155 0242/** email tickets@ss-shieldhall.co.uk.
Berth 110, Western Docks SO15 0HH **0242.**

Visit God's House Tower...

award-winning arts and heritage venue at the entrance to Southampton's historic Old Town.

Discover GHT's dark history in our heritage exhibition 'Stories Behind the Stones', where each floor takes you on a journey through time, from the 14th Century sacking of Southampton to its 17th Century use as a dismal debtors prisons, and taking in stunning views over the modern-day city.

This major refurbishment of one of Southampton's most iconic historic buildings also features two galleries showing contemporary art, as well as our welcoming cafe bar and courtyard.



Benefits for groups of up to 20 people:

- 10% cafe discount
- 10% discount on ticketed exhibitions
- free hot drink and snack for the driver and group organiser
- bespoke group catering options in our cosy cafe or galleries, serving everything from afternoon tea to a buffet lunch

Group options:

- Self guided tour of the Stories Behind the Stones permanent exhibition, as well as entry to the changing contemporary art exhibition: £5 per person; duration c. 45 minutes
- Guided tour of the Stories Behind the Stones permanent exhibition and art galleries, as well as a cafe reservation so that you can relax and stay for lunch in the GHT cafe after your visit: £8 per person: c. 90 minutes
- Guided tour of the Stories Behind the Stones permanent exhibition and art galleries, followed by lunch in the galleries with exclusive use of the charming and historic Crawford Room: £15 per person, duration c.2 hours. Please note that any catering will carry a separate charge.

To book email info@godshousetower.org.uk and include 'group visit' in the subject line or call **07733 092 291**
www.godshousetower.org.uk

Enjoy inspiring theatre experiences...

A vibrant, bustling entertainment destination. From concert venues and theatres to live music nights, comedy and a packed events and festivals programme, groups will be spoilt for choice. All performance venues will offer discounts to groups so please contact them direct for further information.

Mayflower Theatre

Absorb the limelight and visit the South Coast's largest theatre presenting the very best in live entertainment. Coming in 2025 is a full variety of showstopping theatre from West End smash hits including *Only Fools and Horses The Musical*, *Kinky Boots* starring *Strictly Come Dancing's* Johannes Radebe, and the cultural phenomenon, *Hamilton*, to an eclectic variety of dance, opera, drama, plays and family shows. Topping the year off is the magical pantomime adventure, *Peter Pan*, with star casting to be announced.
mayflower.org.uk



MAST Mayflower Studios

Explore Southampton's leading creative producing theatre! MAST Mayflower Studios is open to all, whether it's getting involved with our community events, business networking, or just popping in for a coffee in our café/bar. Spectacular shows this year include our co-production of new drama, *Spitfire Girls*, family favourites like *Room on the Broom*, tribute such as *The Mersey Beatles*, comedy legend Julian Clary and a special Jane Austen themed dance project to commemorate the 250th city-wide celebrations. As a festive ending to the year, we're bringing back two of our most successful seasonal specials, *Counting Down to Christmas* and *A Christmas Carol* for a yuletide family treat. mayflower.org.uk



Jane Austen 250

2025 will be a year like no other in Southampton!

Discover a year-long programme of events revealing Jane Austen's unique Southampton story and her life and work in Hampshire.

Less well-known is the writer's connections with Southampton, in 2025 a line-up of celebratory events is about to set the record straight! Austen is a former resident of Southampton; she attended boarding school here briefly with her sister and celebrated her 18th birthday dancing at a ball in the

upstairs rooms of The Dolphin. Many of the historic streets and walkways of the old town would have been only too familiar to her.

A free, downloadable Jane Austen Heritage Walking Trail Map has been specially created pinpointing eight key locations, each marked by a plaque explaining Austen's Southampton story. For information about events, workshops and exhibitions go to www.visitsouthampton.co.uk.



Food for thought

Southampton has a vast range of restaurants and eateries with culinary options from across the globe and everything from popular food chains to award-winning independents. So, whatever their taste, there is something for everyone.



When it comes to independents, you are spoilt for choice. Home grown and family-run places to eat and drink are all over the city including Carlton Place, Oxford Street, Ocean Village, Westquay and Old Town.

And relax...

After a busy day exploring, your group won't be short of ways to spend their downtime. Those seeking some retail therapy are spoilt for choice with two major shopping centre's—Westquay and The Marlands.



For those seeking evening entertainment, Southampton provides a diverse array of activities, including music venues, entertainment spots, escape rooms, and indoor sports such as bowling, baseball, axe throwing, and cricket. There's plenty available to keep your group busy.

Guided tours

See Southampton are Southampton's top award-winning tour guides and provide a variety of interesting and enjoyable Hidden History public walking tours around Southampton's Old Town each weekend, starting by the lions at the Bargate. Private tours with a fully qualified tour guide can be quickly arranged for groups and designed to cover topics of particular interest.

The most popular walks include:

- The city's important Norman history
- The Blitz and preparations for D-Day
- The story of the Spitfire
- The Titanic and the city's great loss
- The Mayflower
- Jane Austen and her time in Southampton
- Southampton's historic wine vaults and the wine trade
- Parks Walk, an award-winning accessible work

Tours available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and German.

See Southampton volunteers also open the Westgate with a dedicated display on the Mayflower, open on Sundays between 10am–3.15pm approx, and man cruise welcome desks, providing a welcome first contact for guests to the city.

 @seesouthampton  seesouthampton.co.uk
 info@seesouthampton.co.uk  07770 842728

Coach parking

There are designated areas in Southampton city centre where coaches can be parked for a maximum of 10 hours free of charge and two areas for picking up and setting down passengers. Visit the website to download a map of the locations.



Southampton Tourist Guides Association is the longest established tour guiding group in Southampton. Their highly regarded walks receive 5 star reviews on TripAdvisor. All guides have Institute of Tourist Guiding qualifications and/or Southampton specific training and qualification.

Their most popular tours run each Saturday and Sunday. These focus on medieval Southampton, showcasing the walls, treasured buildings and underground vaults.

Other themed walks are available, including Jane Austen, the Mayflower Pilgrims, World War II, the Titanic, Parks Walk and Victorian Southampton.

In addition to guided walks, they offer talks, meet and greet services at cruise terminals and provide coach escorts to central London and Heathrow Airport. German speaking guides are also available.

To book on a tour, visit the link below, or simply turn up at the historic Bargate, in the city centre.

 www.southamptontouristguides.co.uk
 @TourGuides1976
 southamptontouristguides76@gmail.com

Group friendly accommodation

Southampton offers a range of accommodation options from convenient city centre bases to retreats on the outskirts of the city, trusted chains to independent and boutique options.

In a central location is the Leonardo Royal Hotel Southampton Grand Harbour, boasting fantastic views of the Solent. With 173 bedrooms, great leisure and spa facilities and a Marco Pierre White restaurant there's no shortage of on-site amenities. Further in the city centre options include The Star Hotel, Moxy Hotel, Travelodge and Premier Inn.

On the outskirts is the stunning New Place hotel, offering a blend of traditional and modern spaces over 32 acres of landscaped gardens, including our Grade I listed manor house which houses a restaurant, a bar and meeting rooms.

Small groups may wish to consider more boutique options such as THE PIG-in the wall, Ennio's or The White Star Tavern.

For full details on accommodation options and left luggage facilities see visitsouthampton.co.uk

