



Southbourne to Chichester walk

The inlets of Chichester Harbour (best at high tide) and the historic Cathedral town.

A Chichester Harbour walk

Length 18.5km (11.5 miles), 5 hours. For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 11 hours.

Toughness 3 out of 10.

OS Maps Explorer OL8 (was 120) or Landranger 197. Southbourne, map reference SU 770 060, is in **West Sussex**, 9km west of Chichester.

Features This is a walk around the shoreline of Chichester's tidal harbour, finishing in Chichester itself - there are no hills at all. On a clear day you can enjoy marvellous views for miles – inland to Chichester Cathedral and south across the harbour. Birdwatchers should bring binoculars. This walk has a very different feel depending upon the tides. At low tides, there are mudflats and birds. At high tide, its like walking around a lake.

The lunchtime stop is the popular old village of Bosham (pronounced 'Bozzum'), which appears deceptively close quite early on, except that there is a long detour around the water to get to it.

In the afternoon, the walk goes via Fishbourne (there is a Roman palace nearby) and approaches Chichester Cathedral through the lovely Bishop's Palace Gardens. The suggested tea place is the cathedral cafe. Then its a short walk through the pedestrianised centre of the old town, past pubs and cafes to the station.

Walk Options A 2km walk north along the road out of Bosham after lunch will take you to Bosham Station, which is on the line back into Chichester, and thence to London. Or you could end the walk in Fishbourne, visit the Roman Palace there, have a cup of tea and take a bus into Chichester to see the cathedral.

History The **Parish Church of St Mary, Chidham**, which dates from the twelfth century, was built on the site of a wooden Saxon church. The Saxon font once had a locked cover (obligatory in the thirteenth century), to prevent witches from stealing the holy water. In 1847, the vicar destroyed a sixteenth-century tomb within the church because no descendant was willing to pay for its repair. Note the home-made puppets along the frieze to the north wall of the nave, depicting individuals and events of historic interest over the centuries.

Bosham is traditionally the site of a villa belonging to the Roman Emperor Vespasian, and was an important port in the medieval period. **Holy Trinity Church**, Bosham, is the oldest site of Christianity in Sussex. According to tradition, King Canute's daughter was buried in the church, which also appears in the Bayeux tapestry, where King Harold is shown entering Bosham Church prior to sailing to Normandy in 1064. There are cross marks on the inner porch where crusaders, returning from the holy land, ritualistically blunted their swords.

Fishbourne Roman Palace and Gardens in Salthill Road, Fishbourne (tel [01243 785 859](tel:01243785859)) is the largest Roman building to have been found in Britain – the remains include mosaic floors and underfloor heating systems. In summer it is open daily till 5pm; in winter on Saturdays and Sundays only till 4pm; and there is a cafeteria. Admission (2019) is £9.80. There are buses from here into Chichester.

Chichester Cathedral (tel [01243 782 595](tel:01243782595)), dedicated in 1108, contains many ancient and modern wonders: a stained-glass window designed by Chagall; a painting by Graham Sutherland; a tomb with the Earl of Arundel hand in hand with his wife (the tomb inspired a poem by Philip Larkin 'What will survive them is love'); a shrine of St Richard, Bishop of Chichester; a twelfth-century carving of the raising of Lazarus; and a Roman mosaic from the second century (Chichester was previously the Roman town of Noviomagus). The cathedral has friendly and welcoming helpers and there is no entrance fee (although donations of £5 per person are "suggested". It is open daily until 7pm in summer, till 5pm in winter; evensong is at 5.30pm Monday to Saturday, 3.30pm Sunday.

Five minutes south-east of the cathedral is **Pallant House Gallery**, 9 North Pallant (tel [01243 774 557](tel:01243774557)), a Queen Anne townhouse which is open to visitors Tuesday to Sunday, and Bank Holiday Mondays; last entry 4.45pm. Admission (2019) is £12.50 (£6.50 for all on Tuesdays, and Arts Fund Members £6.50 any day). Chichester is also famous for its **Festival Theatre** (tel [01243 781 315](tel:01243781315)), for those wanting to see a show after the walk; there is normally a late-night train back to London afterwards.

Travel Take the train nearest to **9.30am** from **Victoria** Station to **Southbourne**. Journey time 1 hour 40 minutes (longer on Sunday). Trains back from Chichester run about twice an hour. Journey time 1 hour 35 minutes (again, longer on Sunday). Buy a day return to Southbourne.

Lunch If you start an hour later, **The Old House at Home** (tel [01243 572 477](tel:01243572477)) in Cot Lane, Chidham, is a gastro pub/restaurant offering excellent food at reasonable prices. It is essential to book on Sundays.

The suggested lunch place is the **Anchor Bleu** (tel [01243 573 956](tel:01243573956)) in Bosham, serving food daily from midday to 2pm or 2.30pm, and with snacks available all afternoon. The pub is in a superb location and is busy all year.

Two alternative places in the village, both open all day every day, are the **Bosham Walk Arts & Crafts Centre** café (tel [01243 572 475](tel:01243572475)) and the **Cumberland Gallery** coffee shop (tel [01243 572 960](tel:01243572960)).

Tea The suggested tea place, if you get there in time, is **Cloisters Café** (tel [01243 813590](tel:01243813590)) in the grounds of the Cathedral serves teas, coffees, home-made cakes and more substantial meals until 5pm (4pm on Sunday).

There are several other tea places in the town centre, though most close at 5.30pm. A reliable late option is **Starbucks** at 13 North Street, which is open until 7pm Monday to Friday, 7.30pm on Saturday and 6.30pm on Sunday.

Updates No major changes. This edition September 2017.

Help Us! After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

You can upload photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#), and [videos to Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:



By Car **Start** PO10 8LE **Finish** PO19 8DL

Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

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Walk Directions

The [numbers] and sketch map they refer to, is only in the book.

1. **[1]** At **Southbourne Station**, walk down the platform to the road and *turn left*, going south.
2. 350 metres brings you down to a junction with the A259, where you cross over the road and *turn left*, following the signs for Bosham and Chichester. On the corner, on your right-hand side, is the **Parish Church of St John the Evangelist**. In 50 metres *turn right* off the road, following the public footpath sign, with the Southbourne Farm Shop and, soon, a tall hedge on your left-hand side, then close boarded fences and a ditch on your right-hand side, your direction 205°.

3. In 225 metres you come to the end of the hedgerows and out into an open field. At the three-armed footpath sign to your right, ignore the way to the left. Carry on straight ahead and in 30 metres follow the footpath as it curves around to the right, with the edge of the field on your right-hand side. In another 60 metres, there is another three-armed footpath sign on your right-hand side and a stile facing you.
4. *Turn left* , 5 metres before the stile, and continue in a southerly direction. 260 metres brings you to the far right-hand corner of the field and you follow the path as it continues on through some bushes between fences, carrying on south.
5. In another 60 metres, **[2]** you come to another public footpath sign, and out on to the edge of the harbour. *Turn left* and take the path on the raised bank and follow the water's edge, your direction 170° initially.
6. In 600 metres pass through wooden posts, ignore steps down on your right to the shore and continue walking along the water's edge, in the same direction.
7. In 270 metres pass through another set of wooden posts with a metal fieldgate to their left (and another metal fieldgate down below on the left) and continue along the raised bank beside the water's edge. Soon afterwards the path on the raised bank swings to the left then the right.
8. In another 300 metres, there is three-armed footpath sign with a footpath going off to the left, but you continue straight on along the water's edge.
9. In another 270 metres, there is another three-armed footpath sign, on the left-hand side of the path. Ignore this path and continue straight on along the water's edge, your direction 170° initially.
10. In 220 metres **[3]** there are some earthen steps going down off the track to the left, by a three-armed footpath sign. **[!]** *Go down these steps* and, at the bottom, follow the path as it parallels your original course, continuing in a southerly direction along the edge of the field. There is a drainage ditch on your left-hand side.
11. In 120 metres you come to the corner of the field where you *turn left* , along the right-hand edge of the field, going inland away from the harbour, your direction 85° initially.
12. In 300 metres the path takes you over a wooden footbridge across a drainage ditch and you continue straight on across the next field, in the same direction as before.
13. In 170 metres the path comes up to a line of Lombardy poplar trees and you carry straight on with the trees and a barbed-wire fence on your left-hand side and a hedgerow on your right.
14. In 250 metres the path brings you out on to the road where you *turn right* , your direction 185°. In 35 metres you pass the entrance to Chedeham House on your left-hand side. **[!]** Watch out for a path 20 metres beyond that, where you *turn left* off the road, following the direction of a single-armed footpath sign. Follow the path along the edge of the field as it parallels the road. In 30 metres there is a short three-armed public footpath sign on your right, pointing to the left and ahead, but you continue *straight ahead* , along the right-hand side of the field, your direction 190° initially. You can see the steeple of Bosham Church off to the left across the fields and creek.
15. After 380 metres of walking around the edge of the field, the path brings you out on a roadway, at a bend in the road, and you continue walking straight ahead along the road, past the high brick wall to the Manor House on your right-hand side. In 90 metres the road curves around to the right, past the Old Rectory dead ahead. 35 metres further on, you come on your right to the **Parish Church of St Mary, Chidham**, well worth a visit and a look inside.
16. 30 metres past the church, there is a road going off to the left. **[4]** *Turn left* off the road just before this turning, down a broad grassy path marked by a public footpath sign, your direction 145° initially.
17. If you are going to the early pub/restaurant **The Old House at Home** follow the road round to the right. The pub is on the left after 200 metres. Coming out of the pub turn right to retrace your route towards the church and turn right down the broad grassy path.
18. The path takes you around the back of the houses and in 125 metres it curves around to the right, due south initially.
19. In 240 metres stay on the same path as it takes you through some trees and then around to the left, your direction 105° initially. In another 25 metres, you come up on to the edge of a field and continue along this edge, in the same direction. Through the bushes on your left-hand side you can catch glimpses of a lake.
20. In 270 metres **[!]** your path goes *down to the left* away from the field, through some trees and in another 40 metres brings you out on to a narrow country lane.
21. *Turn right* and walk along the road, with an orchard on your left-hand side. In 90 metres ignore a turning off to the right, signposted to 'Cobnor House and Farm. Private road'. In a further 10 metres *turn right* through a small car parking area. In 60 metres go up

steps and *turn left* in front of a hedge onto a permissive path, your direction 100°. Follow the edge of the field with the hedge on your right-hand side, heading towards water in the distance.

22. To your half-left across the field, and across the water, you can see Bosham Church, your lunchtime destination.
23. **[5]** In 400 metres the path takes you to the water's edge. *Turn left here* , onto a raised bank, heading for Bosham Church, with the shore below on your right-hand side.
24. In 700 metres follow the path along the edge of a fence - which can be a bit tight if the tide is in. In 50 metres you come to a two-armed public footpath sign where you *turn left* along the side of the garden of the large thatched house to the right of the path, due west.
25. In 70 metres this brings you out by a grass roundabout, outside the entrance to Grey Thatch. Walk across to the other side of the roundabout and down the road opposite, in the same direction as before. In 90 metres you pass the thatched Rithe Cottage on your right-hand side.
26. **[6]** 300 metres further on, by a three-armed footpath sign, you come out on to a road. *Turn right* here, and in 35 metres **[!]** you follow the narrow, unmarked track *going up the bank* on the *right-hand side of the road* , up to the water's edge. Walk along a gravel path with the water on your right-hand side, parallel to the road on your left.
27. In 140 metres you come down to the corner of a field and *turn right*, following the public footpath sign, continuing along the water's edge, your direction 50° initially.
28. Follow the water's edge for the next 1.3km until it brings you out on to the main road, the busy A259.
29. The next directions take you inland for a while before returning to the harbourside. But there is a path (but not a public right-of-way) that keeps to the harbourside, which is navigable at low tide, which starts in front of the white house you see 60 metres or so to the right at this point. There is a single-armed white sign here, which you follow over a brook and along a clear path beside a brick wall. At the end of this wall *turn left* up a steep bank and then *turn right* along a grassy field boundary, with the water inlet on the right below you until you rejoin the main route at the three-armed footpath sign.
30. Assuming you are not taking the harbourside path, cross the main road with care and *turn right* along its far side. In 30 metres *slant left* up the old course of the main road, now cut off from through traffic. Brookside Cottage is on your left-hand side. After 200 metres you pass the entrance gate to Newells House on your left-hand side and 30 metres further on you go straight over the crossroads into the dead end.
31. In 150 metres you go past a metal barrier in the road and past Colnor House. **[!]** 250 metres further on, just before the old road comes back up to the main road there is a small clump of trees on your right-hand side, at the edge of the field. *Turn right here* , cutting across the end of the field, back to the A259. 15 metres brings you up to this A road, where you cross straight over.
32. **[7]** On the far side of the road, you will see some stone steps which you follow down past a public footpath sign. Cross a small wooden bridge out into the field and follow the footpath sign, taking you straight across the field towards the water on the far side, your direction 190° initially.
33. 150 metres brings you across to the other side of the field and over the stile, up to the edge of the water. *Turn left*, following the path around the water's edge. 150 metres brings you past a footpath sign and you continue along the path as it heads off right along the right-hand edge of a field. You are still following the water's edge on your right-hand side but there is now a hedge between you and the water. 550 metres brings you to a three-armed footpath sign. Take the *right-hand fork* continuing along the water's edge. (At very high tides this path may be awash, in which case take the left fork and rejoin the route at ******* below.)
34. In 200 metres – some of the route is right along the very edge of the water – you come to a three-armed footpath sign. Turn left here up a steep concrete ramp and then immediately right to continue along the car-wide track which is parallel to your previous waterfront path.
35. In 150 metres you walk through a rusted metal fieldgate into the derelict remains of a boatyard and go straight across to its far side. *Turn left* up the car-wide gravel track going into the village. In 100 metres you come out on to a residential street. In another 80 metres, at a T-junction, *turn right*.
36. **[***]** In 40 metres you pass the entrance to the **Mill Stream Hotel** on the left. 35 metres further on you come out on to the main road (Bosham Lane) through **Bosham**.
37. *Turn right* in 25 metres passing the United Reformed Church on your right-hand side. 200 metres brings you down past **Bosham Walk Arts & Crafts Centre**, with its cafe, on your right-hand side. 90 metres beyond that, *turn right* by **Mariners Coffee Shop** and you pass the **Cumberland Gallery**, with its coffee shop. 70 metres down here, on the left, is the **Anchor Bleu** pub, which is the suggested lunch place. If you continue on up the road, you can visit Bosham's **Holy Trinity Church** .
38. To continue the walk after lunch, *turn right* out of the pub and retrace your steps back to the junction with Bosham Lane. Go straight across the road into the alleyway opposite. Walk all the way along this footpath. This is raised above the roadway on your

right-hand side, along the water's edge (an area that floods at high tide).

39. In 550 metres you come to the end of the path, with the long, white 1834 National School building ahead of you and you *turn sharp left* into The Drive (underneath the dead end sign, it says 'public footpath'). 35 metres down this cul-de-sac, *turn right* off the road, following the public footpath sign along a path between hedgerows and fencing, your direction 110° initially.
40. In 200 metres the path brings you out through the driveway of a cottage (Byways) and you cross straight over the road, up concrete steps and into a large open field.
41. **[8]** You follow this path over fields going east for the next 1km until you come to another road. In more detail: from the road, go straight across the field ahead of you. In about 300 metres, the path bends right and then left over a couple of small footbridges, returning to its original course along a car-wide track, following the two-armed footpath sign. When the track leads up to a house on the left, you follow the footpath to the right of the house.
42. Another 500 metres brings you out through barriers on to a road. Just before this, on your left-hand side, there is a metal public footpath sign pointing straight over the road.
43. Cross the road and carry on along the path on the other side, in the same direction as before, with a hedgerow on your right. In 650 metres you come to a T-junction with a three-armed public footpath sign. Here you *turn right* on a grassy way between fields, your direction 185°.
44. In 270 metres, you come to another three-armed public footpath sign where **[9]** you *turn left* walking along the next side of the field, with a hedgerow on your right-hand side, your direction 80° initially.
45. After 220 metres going straight along this path you come to a two-armed public footpath sign and you keep ahead between bushes. In a further 180 metres some planks take you across a small creek, which makes its way out into the channel on your right-hand side. Once over the planks, follow the path as it wends through light woodland around to the left, following the distant edge of the water. From here, you can see Chichester Cathedral across the water on your right-hand side.
46. In 200 metres you climb up a short slope with a step, and then the path proceeds along a ridge which becomes the sea wall ahead. In 60 metres you get to the sea wall and continue on along its top. The sea wall has been rebuilt in places and can be very muddy.
47. In 700 metres you come to a two-armed public footpath sign and some steps down, immediately after which you cross a small creek on a wooden footbridge. (Between this footbridge and the next one is where you may need your gumboots at very high tides.) Continuing along the path for another 40 metres, you then cross a delightfully clear stream on a larger wooden footbridge going through reeds. 50 metres further on, go across another wooden footbridge.
48. 80 metres further on, the path brings you out besides a picturesque duck pond with weeping willows and a thatched cottage on its far side. This is the village of **Fishbourne**. Another 30 metres brings you out by the entrance to The Mill on the right, and a road going off to the left. Go straight across the road and follow the sign for the public footpath through a metal kissing gate. Follow the path along the bank of a stream to your left, and in 80 metres go through a metal kissing gate and continue along the path. 20 metres further on, to your left, there is a sign giving information about Chichester Harbour and Fishbourne Meadows.
49. Cross over a stream on the wooden planks and **[!]** immediately *turn left* off the boardwalk to follow a grass path as it heads around to the left. Do not be tempted to stay on the boardwalk straight ahead, but keep close to the hedgerow on your left-hand side, your direction 110° initially, over grass. In 20 metres you go over another wooden bridge and *walk straight ahead*, keeping the stream on your left-hand side.
50. In another 100 metres, cross a narrow concrete bridge with a metal railing. Walk straight ahead for 25 metres and then *turn left* through a wooden fieldgate going initially along the right-hand edge of the field, and then straight across the field.
51. In 35 metres the path forks and you take the *left-hand fork* continuing straight ahead towards the far left-hand corner and a four-armed metal footpath sign. Then take the *left-hand path* going through a wooden kissing gate, and into the trees which in summer form a canopy overhead, your direction 355° initially. In 75 metres a concrete bridge with metal railings takes you over a small brook. 100 metres further on, you come out through another wooden kissing gate onto a main road. Cross the road carefully. On the far side and *turn right* along the pavement.
52. However, if you want to detour to visit the **Roman Palace** (allow an hour for the visit) go straight ahead through a wooden gate to the left of a metal fieldgate by a footpath signpost. You soon join a tarmac cycle path in the same direction and in 50 metres you have the **Roman Palace Museum** on the left across a ditch and a grassy area. In another 150 metres *turn left* with the path, ignoring a stile and a two-armed signpost on your right. In a further 100 metres *turn left* through a metal gate to the right of a metal fieldgate and continue a little to the right along a pavement to the right of a line of trees and to the left of a car park. In 50 metres pass the Palace Cafe and in another 50 metres you reach the **Museum Entrance**. After your visit retrace your steps back to the main road.

53. In 100 metres, keep to the pavement. It leads into a footpath to Fishbourne Road East through an underpass under the A27 Chichester bypass, next to a cycle path. On the other side of the underpass, continue walking straight ahead down Fishbourne Road East.
54. You now follow roads for the next 1.75km, straight into the heart of Chichester. In more detail: 500 metres after the underpass, where the road curves around to the right cross the railway line ahead on a modern footbridge with steps and ramps.
55. On the other side of the railway bridge *turn right* down a tarmac path. In 100 metres *turn left* onto the former main road again.
56. 200 metres further on you come to a crossroads with a mini-roundabout and you go straight over into Westgate, in the same direction as before.
57. Keep straight on down this road, passing the offices of West Sussex County Council on your right-hand side, until you come to Westgate roundabout. *Turn right* here into Avenue de Chartres, cross straight over the road and go right past the Old Cottage Indian Restaurant on your left-hand side. 40 metres down the road, there is a tall brick-and-flint wall with a small black plaque pointing off to the left (to Bishop's Palace Gardens). *Turn left* down the footpath by the side of the wall and then right through the gate into the gardens. If the gardens have closed for the day, retrace your steps to the roundabout and turn right to get to the cathedral along the roadside.
58. Once through the gate into the garden, walk straight ahead, your direction 150°, along the path taking you through the gardens, with the Cathedral away on your left-hand side. Keep to the path ahead for 150 metres, as it curves around to the left between low hedges and go through the doorway in the stone wall ahead. Follow the path around to the left and then in 10 metres follow it around to the right. In another 20 metres there is a view of the **Bishop's Palace** through the wrought-iron gate on your left and 20 metres further on *you go left* through the wooden gate into the grounds of the Palace. *Go immediately right* through a stone archway, and walk straight down the street, your direction 105°, with the Cathedral on your left-hand side. 50 metres down here, you will see the Deanery on your right-hand side. *Turn left* down St Richard's Walk, which leads you into the **Cathedral Cloisters**. Once in the Cloisters, if you intend visiting the **Cloisters Cafe** *turn right* for 15 metres: the Cafe's entrance is on your right-hand side. Otherwise, turn *left* and walk through the Cloisters, passing public WCs on your left, then outside to go around to the West Door, where you can enter **Chichester Cathedral** itself.
59. Out of the West Door, continue on up to the road, past the Bell Tower on your right. *Turn right* into West Street and walk along the north side of the Cathedral.
60. **The Dolphin & Anchor Pub** (in part of what was once the Dolphin & Anchor Hotel) is in 70 metres on the left-hand side of the street. 80 metres further on is the **Market Cross** at the centre of Chichester's shopping streets. For Starbucks (and other cafes that shut earlier) *turn left* here into North Street: it is in 100 metres on the left.
61. The station is eight minutes away, and is reached by going down South Street (ie *turning right* at the Market Cross if coming from the Cathedral). In 100 metres the second turning on the left (West Pallant) takes you to **Pallant House**, should you fancy a slight detour. 70 metres further on down South Street, still on the left, is **Trents**, a possible pub stop.
62. Otherwise, keep on down South Street, in 250 metres crossing over a busy road using a pedestrian crossing. Continuing in the same direction, in 100 metres you come to the Station Approach road on your right-hand side and so to **Chichester Railway Station**.

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