

CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE



TRIP NOTES

**BELIEVE
ACHIEVE
INSPIRE**

**SOUTH DOWNS AT NIGHT
UK**

Sat 26 Oct - Sun 27 Oct 2024





In aid of your choice of charity

26 Oct - 27 Oct 2024

2 DAYS | UK | TOUGH

Push yourself to the limit on this unique night time trek through the South Downs National Park. Following part of the famous South Downs Way, you'll battle fatigue, the elements and the demanding terrain of one of southern England's newest national parks. You'll negotiate the rolling chalk hills and cliff tops that lie between Firle Beacon and Beachy Head.

Walking until morning, you'll cover a marathon distance of 42km, including the famous white cliffs of the Seven Sisters, before ending your gruelling hike on top of England's highest chalk cliffs. In 2016 the National Park was granted International Dark Sky Reserve status, making it one of the best places in the country to view the night sky. As dawn breaks, your hard work will be rewarded with breath-taking views across the South Downs.

- Trek the South Downs National Park overnight
- Negotiate rolling chalk hills and cliff tops
- A marathon distance trek.....at night!
- Watch the sunrise over the white cliffs of the Seven Sisters
- Enjoy a celebration breakfast after your challenge

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 Sat 26 Oct

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Saturday evening: Arrival and preparation

The adventure begins this evening at approximately 7:30pm near Brighton where you will meet your challenge leaders and crew for registration and a pre-trek safety briefing, before beginning the trek.

DAY 2 Sun 27 Oct

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Through the Night

As darkness falls, we set off in a south-easterly direction across the ancient Long Burgh towards the village of Alfriston. Easing in with a long downhill section, the route is lit by torchlight and stars. For many, trekking through the night will be one of the most challenging aspects of the journey as our senses become more attuned to the enveloping darkness.

The terrain becomes more challenging and fatigue sets in as we follow the course of the Cuckmere River towards the coast. We'll draw on hidden reserves of energy to battle through the tiredness.

Crossing the rolling chalk hills of the Seven Sisters we then enter the most spectacular, and most challenging part of the walk, past the Belle Tout Lighthouse and on to our journey's end at the top of Beachy Head.

A new day dawns on the spectacular vista of chalky white hills and sea views. All being well, we will arrive at the finishing line in time for sunrise and a well-earned breakfast!

NB

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group, or other unforeseen circumstances. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary, however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that may occur. In all such circumstances though, your challenge leader will have the final say.

HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.
The costs below are per person.

SELF FUNDER

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*Pay a registration fee of £40.00 when you book
Then a balance of £169.00
(5 weeks before your challenge)
Raise as much as you can for your charity.*

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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*Registration fee of £40.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £345.00 for your charity.*

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- 12.5% off Cotswold Outdoor, Snow + Rock, and Runners Need
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Fitness training notes
- Sponsorship forms (online and hard copy)
- A-Z of fundraising ideas
- Fundraising advice
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance

On your challenge

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- Checkpoint snacks and drinks
- Hot breakfast at the end of your challenge
- All challenge management before, during and post event
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Any covid tests required for entry to any countries or places of interest on your challenge itinerary
- Travel to and from the challenge start/finish point
- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List

On your challenge

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- Personal spending money
- Any other specific items listed as not included in your Trip Notes

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines

You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 7 weeks before departure (by 07/09/2024), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 24/11/2024). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.

Typical group size

The typical group size is 20 - 50 participants

Why book with Charity Challenge

- The very best walking leaders, who are fully qualified, highly experienced, knowledgeable and fun. They will do everything to help you complete the challenge and have a great time doing it.
- For every participant we donate money to a local conservation charity in order to protect the beautiful route that we use.
- Celebration breakfast at the finish.
- The highest quality night-time charity trekking experience on the market!

Level of Difficulty

The South Downs at Night challenge is graded as **tough**. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, who have taken part in other trekking challenges and now wish to test themselves in a slightly more challenging environment and with the added challenge of trekking at night.

You can tell your supporters that on your South Downs at Night Challenge you will be:

- Trekking for around 10-12 hours, starting in the evening and finishing the following morning.
- Covering overing a marathon distance (42km) of demanding terrain across the South Downs.
- Testing yourself with the steep ascents and descents along the stunning cliff tops of the Seven Sisters. A section made all the tougher as it arrives in the last few miles of your trek.
- Tackling the unique challenge of trekking at night. A test for both your physical and mental resolve.

Training

The South Downs at Night Challenge is a long, sustained, overnight event covering varied terrain with steep ascents and descents when following the cliff tops. Therefore it requires a good level of fitness. The ideal training for this challenge is, naturally, walking in the outdoors. However, if you do not have the luxury of living near the great outdoors, then the stairs at home (or an office block) are a great place to start. Try building in a walk to work if possible, or perhaps at lunch. Most training should be part of an ongoing lifestyle, but if this is not the case then you should begin training 2-4 months prior to the challenge and gradually build up as suggested. Remember to use the walking boots that you will be wearing on the challenge in order to get them worn in, and take the daysack that you will be using during the challenge.

There is no substitute for walking in the outdoors, over similar terrain that you will face on the challenge, so try if possible to get out on a weekend and train in an appropriate area. It can be a great way to discover nearby places that you never knew existed! If it is possible for you to practice walking at night with your headtorch then this is also useful. You should progress to training with your boots on from week 4 at the latest, but preferably from week 1. The more you exercise before the challenge, the more you will get out of it. Also see your Charity Challenge Fitness Training notes.

Group Size

Our minimum group size is 20 and groups are typically made up of between 20-40 people. There will be one challenge leader for approximately every 10-15 participants.

On occasion, we may be able to run a challenge with less than 20 people. This may incur a small group supplement. If this happens, it will be communicated before your invoice or fundraising deadline.

Group Management

This is a leader-led challenge and you will be accompanied by our challenge leaders at all times.

We employ experienced and fully qualified walking leaders to accompany and lead you. The leaders are first aid qualified and have extensive experience in leading expeditions throughout Britain and overseas. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. They will be carrying full safety equipment and first aid kits with them at all times.

Weather

As you know, the weather in the UK can be highly unpredictable and at times erratic, so being prepared is the key! As this challenge takes place at night the temperature can often reach freezing point. Please check the weather forecasts up to ensure that you bring clothing suitable for warm sunny walking weather and also sudden wind and downpours should they occur.

Terrain

Despite its location in the UK, the difficulty of this trek should not be underestimated as it includes one long night of hiking, with tough ascents and descents. The route is predominantly on good paths, but it's the variation of boggy footpaths or loose limestone gravel along the cliffs that make this challenge even more demanding. You should also consider that all terrain becomes a little bit more difficult when walking at night as your field of vision is significantly reduced.

Challenge Timings

Please note: Precise details and timings will be made available in your Final Details that are sent out 1 month prior to the challenge.

Your challenge begins in the evening (usually around 7:30pm) with registration near Brighton. Here you will get to

meet your leaders and listen to the all-important safety briefing.

Having trekked through the night we will finish our trek as the sun rises over Beachy Head before we then reach Eastbourne for a celebration breakfast before departing.

You will be walking for approximately 10-12 hours, which makes your trek a very long night. You can expect to arrive at the finish at around 8-9am. Delays can happen, and the return time will all depend on the speed of your group, so please do try and book flexible return arrangements. At the finish there will be a hot breakfast available before you depart.

Getting to and from the Challenge

We will confirm the exact event registration location no later than 1 month prior to the start of the challenge. Registration will be just outside of the town of Brighton.

The challenge will finish in Eastbourne. There are easy bus routes from Eastbourne to the start point should you need to return to the start to collect your car.

Accommodation

No accommodation is provided for this challenge. We would like to encourage all participants whenever possible to book a few extra nights in the local area to fully enjoy their challenge and to put money back into the local communities. There are lots of excellent accommodation options to suit all budgets in Eastbourne. For a full list of accommodation choices in Eastbourne please check out the [Visit Eastbourne website](#).

Food & Drink

You should ensure that you have eaten a hearty dinner and filled up your water bottles before arriving at registration in the evening.

Snacks and water will be available at checkpoints throughout the night.

We would encourage you to bring your own sweets, snacks etc to get you through your challenge according to your own tastes.

At the finish line there will be a hot breakfast to help you celebrate.

The drinking of alcohol the night before the challenge is strongly discouraged for your own health and safety during this tough challenge.

Clothing and Equipment

Equipment of good quality and durability could make the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, a good quality headtorch with spare batteries is vital. A headtorch is much better than a handheld torch as it allows you to keep your hands free. If you do not wish to buy an expensive headtorch just for this challenge then very good quality ones can be hired for the weekend from our partners at [Outdoor Hire](#).

Waterproof and well-worn in boots will be indispensable. The terrain is uneven and can be very rough, so it is vital that you use a strong pair of canvas or leather boots with good ankle support for this challenge, coupled with a pair of good quality walking socks. Sports trainers are not suitable. As this is a night time challenge the temperatures will be significantly colder. Enough warm layers are vital as are hats and gloves. If possible, try to bring two pairs of gloves and two hats as these can very often get wet. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated - so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are high quality gore-tex waterproof and windproof jackets and trousers, as well as technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. We would like to emphasize that jeans should not be worn on this challenge.

A full kit list for this challenge can be found [here](#). Once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners The Outdoor Shop, Outdoor Hire and Cotswold Outdoor.

The importance of a good head torch.

A head torch is a vital piece of kit for this challenge, along with enough spare batteries. A hand-held torch is not really suitable as it does not allow you to keep your hands free. Your head torch should also be bright enough to light your way and for you to view the terrain a good distance in front of you. We would recommend a head torch with a beam strong enough to reach 40m in front of you (approximately 80 Lumens). If you do not wish to buy an expensive head torch then very good quality head torches can be hired for the weekend from our partners at Outdoor Hire (click [here](#) for details)

Toilets

There will be no toilets available at the registration point at this time of night. There will be no toilet facilities during the challenge and such facilities will be limited to the great outdoors!

Money

During the trek there are no opportunities to spend any money. At the end of the trek, Eastbourne does have several nice cafes, pubs and restaurants that you may wish to relax in before travelling home. We would advise you should need no more than £20.00, excluding your joining and returning home travel costs.

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up 'Challenge Safe', one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. 'Challenge Safe' formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount!

Here are a few important points that you should be aware of:

- The terrain on the challenge is often rocky and in wet conditions can be extremely slippery. Please make sure that your walking boots have good grip. Trainers are not appropriate as they lack grip.
- Trekking at night is by its nature a hazardous activity. A powerful, good quality headtorch is absolutely vital.
- Due to extra risks posed by trekking at night we always use a higher ratio of leaders to maximise safety. It is very important that you always listen to your leaders at all points and obey any decisions they make.
- The weather at night can be very different to during the day. Please make sure you carry an additional warm layer, waterproof jacket and trousers and a hat and gloves.
- 10-12 hours is a long time to be out on a trek, especially overnight. Ensure that you eat lots throughout the night and keep yourself hydrated by drinking lots of fluids.
- Trekking along cliff tops in the dark requires an extra level of care. Whilst the footpath is set away from the cliff tops you should be aware of where the path is going at all times.

Emergencies

Your leadership team is trained to deal with emergency situations in remote areas and will be carrying mobile phones and radios in case the emergency services need to be contacted. The event is not run as a race and you will never be encouraged to walk at a pace 'beyond your ability'. There will always be a wide variety in people's walking abilities which will be carefully managed by the leader team. This team will keep the group together for maximum safety and set a sensible pace for all to achieve this challenge within the planned time frame. Should you find yourself unable to continue for any reason, then our support team, including our support vehicle, will be able to assist you coming off the challenge.

Pre-Existing Medical Conditions

We do not professionally vet your medical details. Please assess for yourself whether you are fit and able to take on the challenge. Please review the detailed Trip Notes and itinerary to get a better idea of what is involved. Please

speak to your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns about taking part. If you think that there are things we can do to make the challenge more accessible/comfortable for you, it is your responsibility to let us know, and we will then let you know if we can accommodate your request.

Medical Support

First Aid qualified staff will be provided with the medical details that you give on your booking form but please note that they are on the challenge to support with medical matters related to the challenge environment and terrain itself, i.e. heat/cold and so on. They will deal with any incidents and accidents (cuts, sprains, breaks and so on). They are not intended to continue any ongoing specialist medical care that you receive in the UK for pre-existing medical conditions, and should not be assumed to have any professional experience of your specific medical condition.

If you have any specific needs around pre-existing medical conditions, you should discuss these with your family doctor or specialist in advance and then discuss any advice given by them with the challenge leader.

Insurance

We don't offer insurance for our UK trips, as any medical emergencies would naturally be covered through the NHS. Therefore, the main thing that you will not be covered for is cancellation. You can see our cancellation policy within our terms and conditions [here](#). If you wish, you could look into your own policy that covers cancellation for travel within the UK.

Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism. On this challenge in particular, we always liaise with the rangers of the South Downs National Park to make sure that we minimise our impact on the local environment. Our leaders care passionately for the environment and will be keen to talk to you about how you can do your bit to conserve the local area and enhance your experience. We believe that acting responsibly should add to your enjoyment of the challenge so we won't lecture you about not dropping litter. Instead we'd like to encourage you to support the South Downs National Park who maintain the excellent footpaths we will be walking on. The South Downs National Park have an excellent website that provides information on their fantastic work and allows you to donate to them directly. Their website can be viewed [here](#). We would also like to encourage all our participants to spend a little extra time in the local area. Why not consider booking an extra night in a local B&B, and go out for a meal in one of the excellent local pubs after the challenge? Not only will you be able to celebrate your achievements but you will also be putting more money back into the local area. For extra information, please visit our [Responsible Tourism](#) pages, where you will be able to view a list of the other projects that we currently support.

Plan ahead to avoid travelling home tired

We would encourage everyone to plan ahead and think about how you will travel home after the challenge. You will have just completed an energy sapping trek and you will have been awake throughout the night. We would therefore encourage that everyone consider either using public transport to travel home, arrange for a friend or relative to give you a lift, or to book accommodation nearby so that you can get some sleep before travelling home.

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Any more questions?

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