

Tourism

Kent's tourism industry and its coastal attractions

Tourism makes a significant contribution to the Kent economy and day trippers and holiday makers are a vital source of income for many of Kent's coastal towns. In 2002, 4.64 million trips to the county injected £637 million into the Kent economy.



Kent is a popular destination for both domestic and overseas visitors and its 350 miles of coastline not only offers traditional seaside holiday resorts but also many of Kent's best natural and historic attractions.

Of particular note are:

- North Kent Marshes.
- Thanet chalk coast.
- Heritage Coast at White Cliffs of Dover and Folkestone.
- Castles, including those at Dover, Deal, Upnor and Walmer.
- Roman forts at Richborough and Reculver.
- Historic Dockyard at Chatham.
- Amenity beaches, including those at Thanet, Whitstable, Isle of Sheppey and Hythe.
- A wide variety of recreational opportunities, including coastal walks, horse riding, cycle routes and water sports.

Facts and figures

- Kent's tourism industry is worth over £6million to the county's economy.
- Kent's coastal towns contribute over 70% of this tourism income.
- Kent has over 30,000 bed spaces available.
- 70% of accommodation is in coastal districts.
- The majority of overnight stays are in coastal districts - over 71%.
- In 2002 over 32 million passengers crossed the Channel by either rail or ferry.

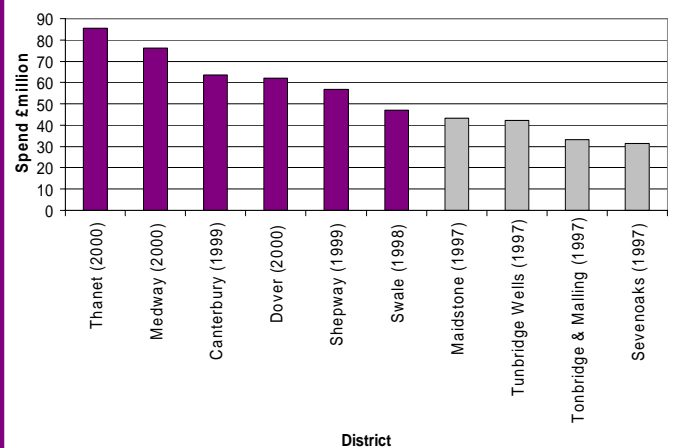
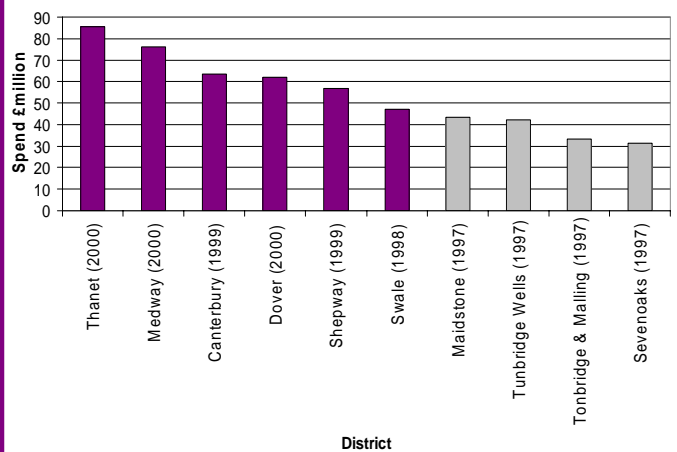


Importance of the coast to Kent's tourism industry

The coast plays an important part in Kent's tourism industry and it is no coincidence that the districts with greatest spend from tourism are those with coastal resorts.



The two charts below demonstrate, respectively, the spend by staying visitors and day trippers (taken from four different years). Assuming the spend remains at a stable level, 72% of staying visitors and 79% of day trippers expenditure was spent in the coastal districts. The highest for spend by staying visitors was in Thanet at £85.6 million in 2000, whereas Medway had the highest spend for day trippers at £93.35 million in 2000.



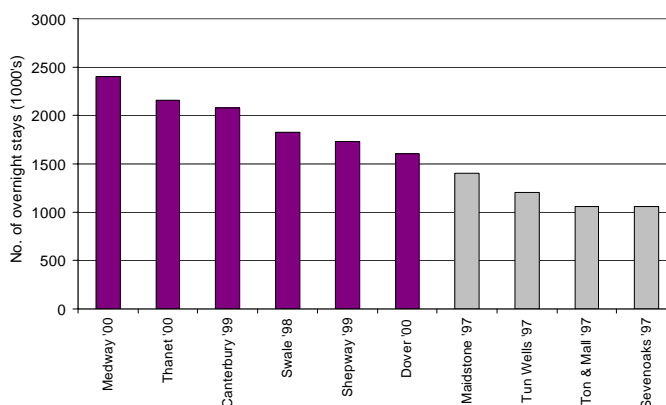
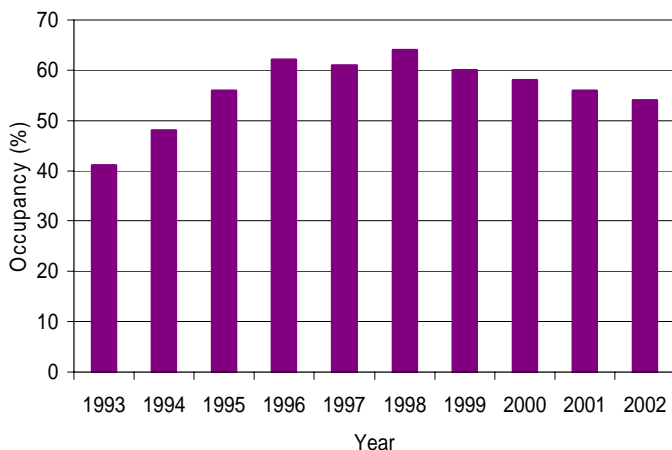
Accommodation and occupancy

In 2002 Kent had over 30,000 bed spaces through serviced and non-serviced accommodation (excluding holiday parks). The occupancy rate throughout Kent for accommodation was 54%, down on the ten year average of 56% (as shown by the top chart opposite). The occupancy rate is very seasonal, which means that there is a high number of empty beds throughout the year.



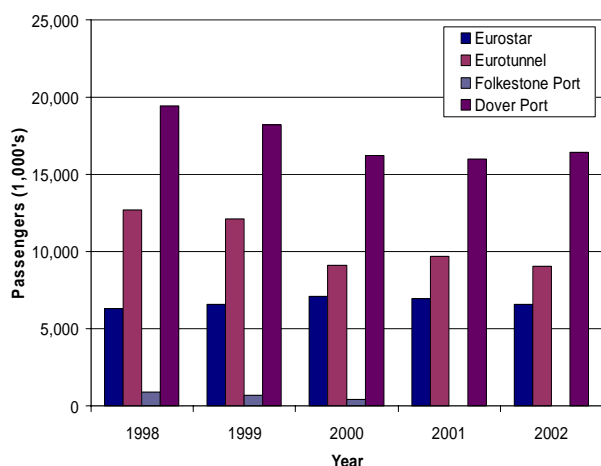
Of the bed spaces available throughout Kent, the majority can be found in Canterbury (5,024), closely followed by Thanet (4,935) and then Shepway (3,543). In fact bed spaces in the coastal districts account for over 70% of those available throughout Kent.

The coastal districts also account for the majority of overnight stays in Kent. The chart across shows the number of overnight stays in each of the districts (taken from four different years). Assuming the number of stays remains at a stable level, 71% of overnight stays can be shown to be taken within in coastal district.



International transport links to Kent

Kent's vicinity to the Channel, means the tourism industry is boosted by strong international transport links provided through the Port of Dover, Eurotunnel and Eurostar. The chart across demonstrates the volume of passengers (excluding freight) across the Channel by ferry and rail. As the chart shows, Dover Port continues to hold the majority of the cross Channel market share and in 2002 held over 50%, with 54,100 ferry crossings and over 16 million passengers.



Sources of information:

- Kent Tourism Facts 2002/2003 (Kent County Council)
- www.kenttourism.co.uk
- www.vliz.be/projects/SAIL/

