

## Days Out in Essex

The Orchards Holiday Park is the perfect location from which to explore some of the highlights of coastal Essex. In this article we're highlighting ten family days out in Essex, including activities, beauty spots and a few surprises.

### [Clacton Pier](#)

Clacton-on-Sea is the nearest coastal town to The Orchards, and it's one of England's most iconic, with a Victorian pier dating back to 1871. While strolling along the 150m long boardwalk there's no need to worry about the kids becoming bored. With ten pin bowling, rides, crazy golf and a big wheel, there's plenty to do. The Clacton [Seaquarium](#) is located here too, featuring marine life in all its weird and wonderful glory.

No seaside day out would be complete without locally caught fish and chips and a wander along the adjacent beach. After dark, from spring through summer, there are weekly free firework displays.

Distance from The Orchard: 7 Miles.

### [PUSH Kiting](#)

If you fancy something a bit more active, you can try out kitesurfing at the PUSH kiting school, which is open all year round and has been in business for over twenty-five years. In 2012 Sir [Richard Branson](#), became the oldest person to kite surf from England to France courtesy of PUSH. His Son Sam had made the crossing in a record 2 hours and 18 minutes the day before.

Don't expect to try anything that crazy on your first attempt. However, if you have a decent sense of balance and follow instructions, there's no reason why this high-octane sport can't be within anyone's reach. Expect to emerge from the water exhausted but with a big grin on your face.

Distance from The Orchard: 13 Miles.

### [Frinton-on-Sea Beach](#)

If you're looking for a golden sandy beach which is a little more genteel than the bustling Clacton, nearby Frinton-on-Sea might be worth a visit. Just thirty-five minutes away by train, Frinton is relatively unspoilt, and has won a coveted Blue Flag award for its cleanliness.

There's a promenade with colourful beach huts, and the sand is perfect for sandcastle-making. The water quality is excellent and there are toilets, free parking, and dog-friendly facilities. Don't expect a lot of other amenities but for a day on the sands, it's often regarded as the best beach in Essex.

Distance from The Orchard: 13 Miles.

### [Curve Water Sports Aqua Park](#)

Curve is a great place to attempt those water-based activities you've always yearned to try but never dared! Situated just east of The Orchard at St Osyth, Curve is based on the kilometre-long Mill Dam Lake. Its peaceful waters become a lot livelier with kayakers, wakeboarders, tubers and other daredevils tearing across it.

You'll want to try the inflatable obstacle course, which means you'll inevitably end up in the lake – but that's just part of the fun! There are cable-propelled wakeboarding lessons with multiple ramps and obstacles for more advanced boarders.

Distance from The Orchard: 2 Miles.

### [Cudmore Grove Country Park](#)

On the eastern edge of Mersea Island, across the Estuary from The Orchard, you'll find Cudmore Grove Country Park. A beautiful picnic spot with a remote and quiet beach, the park covers 102 acres of quiet walking and cycling trails, with an adventure playground where the kids can run wild.

There is paid parking, a refreshment kiosk and bird hides for those keen to photograph the rare species that visit this nature reserve, including great crested grebes, egrets, and peregrine falcons.

For history enthusiasts, there's much to see here including a 17<sup>th</sup> century blockhouse built to blockade the River Colne during the English Civil War. There are also second world war pillboxes and gun emplacements, with a dedicated WWII heritage trail for visitors to follow.

Distance from The Orchard: 23 Miles.

### [Temple of Claudius / Colchester Castle](#)

While you're in Colchester, you can visit a Norman castle and Roman temple at the same time since the Temple of Claudius (AD49) was later incorporated as part of the base of Colchester Castle (11<sup>th</sup> century). The Castle boasts the largest Norman keep in Europe.

Guides will take you down into the Roman vaults or up onto the castle walls and there's a fantastic museum including a mosaic floor and hordes of Roman treasure. There's even an evening escape experience called The Serpent's Curse if you really want to awaken your imagination.

Distance from The Orchard: 13 Miles.

### [Brightlingsea Lido](#)

For those who enjoy their swimming with fewer waves and less saltwater, there's Brightlingsea Lido. This is a classic 1930s facility with a massive 50 metre pool (and a smaller one for toddlers). Open spring to autumn, it's a stone's throw from the coast and there are sunbeds and inflatables to hire.

There's also a café – with indoor seating for non-swimmers and takeaways for those who've taken a dip. The community-run Lido was a finalist for Experience of the Year in the 2020-21 East of England Tourism Awards.

Distance from The Orchard: 10 Miles.

### [Wildlife Boat Trips, Walton](#)

Essex has almost fifty nature reserves, including some sizable estuary wetlands. One of the largest is situated at Hamford, just north of Walton-on-the-Naze. Before you check out the plentiful wildlife trails, however, why not hop into a boat and go seal-spotting with a local naturalist.

Two-hour trips begin at Walton and explore the backwaters of the Hamford Water Nature Reserve in search of marine mammals and rare birds. Tony Haggis will be your boatman and knowledgeable guide to the common and grey seals and waterfowl which are plentiful here.

Distance from The Orchard: 13 Miles.

### [Naze Nature Discovery Centre](#) and [Naze Tower](#)

Once you're toured the area by sea, you might visit the Naze Nature Discovery Centre. Combine birdwatching for rare species including dark bellied brent geese and sedge warblers with a wildlife walk on one of the many signposted trails.

Nearby you can visit Naze Tower, an 86ft high grade II listed structure built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Within its eight storeys you'll find exhibitions, a café, art gallery and of course, spectacular coastal views. Learn about how the Tower was an important radar facility during WWII and look out for pillbox fortifications dotted around the coast.

Distance from The Orchard: 15 Miles.

### [Monty's Equestrian Centre](#)

If you've ever wanted to try horse or pony riding, pop along the coast from Clacton to nearby Holland-on-Sea and you'll find Monty's. This licensed riding school and stud yard holds children's and adults' lessons. These range from beginners' lessons to specialist classes in dressage, bareback and stunt riding.

As well as onsite classes there are beach and country park hacks. Monty's even host birthday parties including lessons in grooming, riding and a chance to get close to the farm's other animals including miniature ponies and a pair of rare pigs called Pearl and Pig Floyd.

Distance from The Orchard: 7 Miles.

