

# 10 BEST COASTAL RUNS



## 1 FOR ISLAND LOVERS

**Tresco, Isles of Scilly**  
Each year, on the same day as the London Marathon, the island of Tresco holds an alternative 26-mile, 385-yard run (below). If you'd prefer a shorter jog, you can run round the car-free island in about 25 minutes. Afterwards, pop in to the Flying Boat Club. There's great food, a collection of original art and a spa with sauna, steam room and swimming pool ([tresco.co.uk](http://tresco.co.uk)).



## 2 FOR A CHALLENGE

**The Pembrokeshire Half Marathon**  
The route for this testing half-marathon starts in the unspoilt village of Dale in the heart of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Before long, you'll be sweating your way over St Ann's Head, enjoying views across to Milford Haven, before returning inland. The coast is never far away, and soon you will see Skomer Island, a vital breeding ground for the Manx shearwater. For those who'd prefer a gentler challenge, there's a six-mile race on the same day ([pembrokeshire-tri.org.uk](http://pembrokeshire-tri.org.uk); [dalevillage.co.uk](http://dalevillage.co.uk)).

## 3 FOR MARITIME HISTORY

**Plymouth Hoe, Devon**  
It may be apocryphal, but who can resist the thought of Sir Francis Drake playing a game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe, before sailing to do battle with the Spanish Armada? Run along the Hoe today and you'll encounter Smeaton's Tower, with its views of Plymouth Sound, and the Royal Citadel, which, for more than 100 years after its construction in the late 17th century, was England's most important defensive outpost. Beneath the Hoe is the Tinside Pool, an Art-Deco lido – just the spot, from May to September, to cool off after running this stretch of the coastline ([plymouthbarbican.com](http://plymouthbarbican.com)).



## 4 FOR THE INTREPID

**The Viking Coastal Trail, Kent**

This popular peninsula route, at 27 miles, takes in the historic seaside towns of Broadstairs, Ramsgate and Margate, and offers runners miles of clear seashore track along England's most easterly coastal point. It encompasses 15 sandy bays, nature reserves and the panoramic Joss Bay (above), a popular surfing beach. Better still, you can take on the Viking Trail in bite-sized chunks. The Broadstairs route is three-and-a-quarter miles, while the path of St Augustine, taking in Minster Abbey, is four-and-a-half miles ([vikingcoastaltrail.co.uk](http://vikingcoastaltrail.co.uk)).

## 5 FOR BEACH RUNNING

**Gwithian, Cornwall**  
Kicking off your shoes and running along Gwithian Sands has to be one of the most romantic activities in coastal Britain. Not far out to sea is Godrevy Lighthouse, which inspired Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, and there's a fair chance you'll see seals and dolphins. Once you've worked up an appetite, try the all-day menu at the Sunset Surf Shop and Café, opposite the car park at Gwithian Towans ([sunsetsurfshop.co.uk](http://sunsetsurfshop.co.uk); [visitcornwall.com](http://visitcornwall.com)).

## 6 FOR RUNNING PEDIGREE

**The Great North Run, Tyne & Wear**  
If you want to enter the world's biggest half-marathon (this year on 20 September), put your name down for the Great North Run. It attracts more than 50,000 entrants and comprises a gruelling circuit starting in Newcastle before crossing the famous Tyne Bridge. Competitors then run through Gateshead and South Tyneside before finishing on the dramatic South Shields coast ([greatrun.org](http://greatrun.org)).



## 7 FOR FAMILIES

**Orcombe Point to Exmouth Marina, Devon**  
Exmouth (above) has two miles of golden sand, and families who love a gentle run should head along the promenade from Orcombe Point to the Marina. It's flat all the way and, if you need refreshments, there are cafés and ice-cream kiosks. The Grove – a family-friendly pub – is perfect for a post-run lunch ([exmouth-guide.co.uk](http://exmouth-guide.co.uk)).

## 8 FOR SERIOUS RUNNERS

**The Coastal Ultra Series 'Classic Quarter' – from the Lizard to Land's End in a day, Cornwall**

First held in 2007, this hardcore marathon (it's 44 miles) takes in some of the most dramatic scenery in Britain (left). The route stretches from the Lizard, Cornwall's southernmost point, to its westernmost point at Land's End. Participants must be very fit – think calf-crunching climbs and knee-jarring descents – but the views of Longships Lighthouse at Land's End are worth the pain ([endurance4life.com](http://endurance4life.com)).

## 9 FOR SPECTACULAR VIEWS

**The Isle of Barra, Outer Hebrides**

The Hebridean island of Barra is widely regarded as one of the most beautiful in the world. What's not so well known is that it plays host to the annual Barrathon, a half-marathon, and its sister races – a fun run and a junior fun run. Space is limited, but if you miss out, you can just take yourself to Barra and sample its heavenly running terrain anyway ([barrathon.org.uk](http://barrathon.org.uk); [barra-accommodation.co.uk](http://barra-accommodation.co.uk)).

## 10 FOR SPLENDID ISOLATION

**Holkham Beach, Norfolk**  
The ten-mile stretch of Holkham sands, known locally as the Holkham Meals, seems to go on for ever. In summer, the beach – graced by Gwyneth Paltrow in *Shakespeare in Love* – is popular with families and tourists, but even then it's so expansive that you can enjoy the delicious loneliness of the long-distance runner. Part of a coastal nature reserve, Holkham and its rolling dunes, saltflats and pine woods are inhabited by a wide variety of birds and wildlife ([holkham.co.uk](http://holkham.co.uk)).

