



Seahouses Hostel – Dark Sky Friendly Check List

Stargazing is a magical way to bring science alive and to experience the beauty of our natural world. Looking up at the great canopy of space is a powerful experience, which everyone can enjoy. Seahouses Hostel is perfectly located in this official Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where the dark expanse of sky over the sea and very little street lighting means that it is possible to enjoy Northumberland's night skies and even see the dazzling Aurora Borealis if you're lucky!

So wrap up warm, find a comfy spot on one of our beautiful beaches, listen to nothing but the sound of crashing waves and look up at the sky. The longer you look up, the more stars you'll discover. If you've got a star spotter guide with you, you could try to connect the dots of constellations like 'orion' and 'the bull', but it can be just as much fun to find your own shapes.

Stargazing tips

- Stargazing is best done before the moon is full, so check the phase of the moon before you start.
- Turn off all the lights in the Hostel to reduce light pollution.
- The night sky is constantly changing, depending on the time of year and the time of night. Try stargazing at different times in the year to spot seasonal constellations.
- Download an app like Star Walk (iPhone) or Google Sky (android) to your mobile device, and they will tell you what stars you can see from your current location.

What to bring

- Something to lie on - a blanket or camping mat will do.
- Food, drink and warm clothes to keep everyone happy and warm as you wait for the stars to come out. Hot chocolate is a perfect choice to keep cosy.
- A star spotter guide and a compass to help you find a particular constellation or star.
- A red torch so that you can still read your star guide without affecting your night vision.
- Binoculars/telescope to help you get a better view of objects in the night sky, although many stars in your guide can be seen without them.
- Your camera to capture the wonder on the faces of stargazers or the stars above.

What to look out for

- The Sun

This is our nearest star, and if you hollowed out the Sun you could fit nearly one million Earths inside it. But never look directly at the sun through a camera, telescope or binoculars. You will damage your eyes and may even suffer permanent blindness if you do. You can make a simple pinhole viewer to project the image of the sun.

- The Moon

All of the world's oceans are controlled by the moon. The moon is the reason we have high and low tides. Only 12 people have ever set foot there. But because there is no wind, if you visited the moon today you would still see their footprints. It wasn't until people saw the moon through binoculars that they realised it isn't a perfect sphere. On a clear night, it's easy to see its craters and bumpy edges.

- Stars

When you see the stars, you are looking into the past. Because light takes time to travel, and stars are many light years away from us, you could be seeing a star that doesn't even exist anymore.

To find out more check out the following books in our Quiet Lounge:

Collins "Moongazing - Beginner's Guide to Exploring the Moon"

Collins "Stargazing – Beginner's Guide to Astronomy"

Philip's "2021 Stargazing – Month by Month Guide to the Night Sky"

Or check out the following links:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/tv/guides/bbc_stargazing_live_star_guide.pdf

<https://www.visitnorthumberland.com/inspire-me/blogs/where-to-stargaze-in-northumberland>