



Ventnor... "Sunshine on Sea"

Welcome to Ventnor! In this location, you will study:

- ✓ The **physical** geography of Ventnor; beach and microclimate
- ✓ The **human** geography of Ventnor - the function of the town.

Ventnor, located on the south coast of the Isle of Wight, has a reputation for being one of the warmest, sunniest and loveliest seaside locations in the UK. Indeed, Sir Charles Dickens himself said *"it is the prettiest place I ever saw in my life"*.

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But why is it like this? You are going to gradually follow the 'recipe' below which will tell you how and why Ventnor's physical and human geography make it so special. Let's start with the physical geography!

A Recipe for Ventnor

1. Build the Beach



Ventnor beach is made up of a mixture of sand and fine shingle. Waves have **eroded** (broken away) the **cliffs** on the nearby coastline. The dislodged material is then **transported** (carried along) in the water and gradually worn down and rounded into smaller and smaller pieces. Pebbles, shingle and eventually sand are formed. In sheltered areas, where the waves lose energy, material is **deposited** (laid down) and beaches are formed.

The sand and shingle you see on Ventnor beach is seriously shifty. By this we don't mean it's up to no good, but instead that it is constantly shifting about! Waves moving up and down the beach are continuously moving the material around on the beach.

The process is called **longshore drift** and here's how it works! From a safe place, watch the waves for a moment or two, and you will see how they approach the beach at an angle, move the sediment as they come up the beach (called the **swash**) and then as they move back down the beach again (called the **backwash**). The swash and backwash gradually move the material along the coastline from one place to another in a zig-zag pattern, and this is known as **longshore drift**.

Based on what you have learned from the previous page, annotate the following diagram to explain the process of longshore drift.

Use the following terms. Tick them off as you use them:

Land

Beach

Sea

Shoreline

Prevailing Wind

Swash

Backwash

Sediment Movement

Direction of Longshore Drift



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2. Add a Sprinkle of Sunshine

*"Ventnor is a sun-box
- north winds would
have to confess that
they have not even a
visiting acquaintance
with her"*

Ward Lock Guide, 1931

As the quote (left) suggests, Ventnor has a unique microclimate. It faces south, and therefore benefits from direct sunlight for long hours during the day.

The steep St Boniface Down rises to almost 250m to the north of the town and protects it from the coldest and harshest winds. This has created a unique Mediterranean-like microclimate, with more hours of sunshine and fewer frosts than much of the British Isles.

The land rises steeply either side of the beach, making it popular with holidaymakers and locals alike.

In Ventnor, you will find species of plants and animals that aren't usually found outside the Mediterranean. Look carefully along the walls and you may well spot a wall lizard - these are usually found in southern Europe!

microclimate

noun [C] **UK** /maɪ.krəʊ.klaɪ.mɪt/ **US** /-kroʊ-/

an area in which the weather is usually different from the areas around it



Based on what you have learned from the previous page, annotate the image below:



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3. Mix in a little Human Activity...

Not surprisingly, human beings rather like Ventnor too, and it has grown from its humble roots as a small fishing hamlet. In the mid 19th Century, the warm climate and fresh channel air was considered beneficial to health and several sanitoriums were established, taking patients from all over the country. By the middle of the 20th Century, Ventnor was thriving as a seaside resort, and is still popular today with holidaymakers.

What **human activities** can you spot? Make a list, and then put them into suitable categories, e.g. leisure/recreation, shops, food and drink ... look out for the following features as a start and then find many more of your own. Record them in the table on the next page.



... and Hey Presto! We have a recipe for Ventnor!

Category	Examples of Human Activity in Ventnor
Leisure / Recreation	
Shops	

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Food & Drink

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How does the physical and human geography of Ventnor interact?
