[Southampton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southampton" \o "Southampton) is a city in [Hampshire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hampshire), England. The area has been settled since the Stone Age. Its history has been affected by its geographical location, on a major estuary on the[English Channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Channel) coast with an unusual double high-tide, and by its proximity to [Winchester](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winchester) and London; the ancient and modern capitals of England. Having been an important regional centre for centuries, Southampton was awarded City status by The Queen in 1964.

Southampton became an important port in medieval times, experiencing several hundred years of fluctuating fortunes until it was expanded by the Victorians.

As a centre of commerce, an industrial town and an important military embarkation point, Southampton was a strategic target for the [Luftwaffe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luftwaffe) and was severely damaged in [World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Southampton#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBrown2004-1)[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Southampton#cite_note-FOOTNOTERance1986-2)

Post-war re-development and the need to accommodate 20th century innovations such as the [motor car](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motor_car) has significantly altered the character of Southampton.