

## England: Bath & the Cotswolds

### Air Package Itinerary

Every great walk deserves a digestif. Yours this afternoon on your Cotswolds walking tour is a scrumptious cream tea by the riverside in Bourton-on-the-Water. Settling in for scones, jam, and clotted cream, you exchange smiles with local families and picnicking visitors lounging on the grassy banks of the Windrush. From Chipping Campden to Stow-on-the-Wold, your guides have shown you the Cotswolds' loveliest corners on daily walks along England's national trails. Honey-colored villages of thatch-roofed limestone cottages draped with climbing roses. Lambs gamboling in meadows crisscrossed by hedgerows. Bath's elegant Georgian architecture. It's genteel and harmonious—a remarkably preserved stretch of English countryside awaiting your discovery.



### Highlights

- Stroll the footpaths of Kiftsgate Court Gardens, one of England's most beloved gardens, tended by three generations of women.
- Marvel at breathtaking vistas along the famed Cotswold Way and Monarch's Way, traversing bucolic pastureland dotted with sheep and small wooded glens.
- Explore the fine 16th-century stone buildings of the village of Broadway, the "Jewel of the Cotswolds."
- Walk into 17th-century market towns, where wool, yarn, and farm produce were traded and sold for centuries.
- Explore the UNESCO World Heritage city of Bath, with its stunningly well-preserved Roman

bathhouses and grand Georgian architecture.

## On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

## Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate with an average of 3.5 to 7 miles of walking daily. The walks feature a combination of paved roads and easy terrain, mixed with moderate hills, moorland, and uneven footpaths. Due to England's climate, the footpaths can often be wet and muddy. On this route, we will also encounter several stiles, which are typically steps that allow

humans, but not livestock, to cross over a fence or wall.

## **FLIGHT DAY**

### **Depart from the United States or Canada**

Your vacation is about to begin! Spend your first night aloft and arrive ready for an unforgettable trip.

## **ARRIVAL DAY**

### **Arrive in London, England. Travel to Stratford-upon-Avon**

A Country Walkers representative will greet you at the airport to start your adventure off right. A complimentary car service will whisk you to your centrally located hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon. From here, you are perfectly positioned to explore this charming city at your leisure.

## **DAY 1**

### **Join your England: Bath & the Cotswolds tour**

Kiftsgate Court Gardens to Chipping Campden; 3.5 miles, easy. Optional afternoon loop walk; 2.5 miles, easy to moderate

After enjoying an included breakfast meet your guides at 10:00 a.m. in the main lobby of The Arden Hotel where you will gather for a welcome orientation. Embark your private motorcoach and travel about 20 minutes to Kiftsgate Court Gardens. Please be dressed for walking.

Upon arrival at Kiftsgate, enjoy lunch in the Gardens' Tearoom. Later, there'll be time to explore its hedge-lined pathways that lead to pretty topiaries and rare trees. Tended by three generations of the Chambers family, the colorful and intricately designed outdoor "rooms" are always full of surprises.

This afternoon, you'll set off on your walk along the Monarch's Way footpath toward Chipping Campden.

We will only follow a fraction of this historical 615-mile footpath. As you start your walk, you'll pass by Hidcote Bartim, a small hamlet of traditional thatched-roof stone cottages that were once home to Johnston's gardeners. Admire them as you pass through and continue into the open Cotswolds countryside. Later, arrive in the small market town of Chipping Campden (*chipping* is a derivation of "market" in Old English). Enter into town on High Street, which is lined with limestone buildings the color of honey. The stone used to create these masterful structures—an oolitic limestone called Cotswold stone—was quarried locally. At the town center, admire the Market Hall with its splendid arches, built in 1627 by Sir Baptist Hicks to provide shelter for local farmers selling cheese, butter, and poultry.

Check in to the Noel Arms Hotel, one of the Cotswolds' oldest inns. Charles II is thought to have stayed here during the English Civil War in the mid-1600s.

Tonight, enjoy a welcome dinner in the hotel's restaurant.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 2

### Walk to Broadway Tower. Independent exploration of Broadway and Chipping Campden

6 miles, easy to moderate

After breakfast, step onto the Cotswold Way, a 102-mile UK National Trail that links Chipping Campden and the city of Bath. Your tranquil route, first envisioned by England's Ramblers, the largest walking group in Great Britain, passes quaint houses as it makes its way into the countryside and up the Cotswold Edge escarpment to Dovers Hill. Here, enjoy extensive views of the Malvern Hills to the west. Around 1612, Robert Dover instituted annual games here, giving them the grand title of the "Olimpick Games," and they continue to this day.

Your walk continues through bucolic pastureland dotted with sheep, through small wooded glens, into a lateral valley, and up a gentle slope to Broadway Tower. Built in 1799, it is a typical example of an 18th-century Gothic folly, a structure built by the nobility simply for pleasure. This one was erected for Lady Coventry of Worcester, who wondered whether a torch lit here upon a tower could be seen from her home 22 miles away. (It turns out that it could, much to her delight.) At 1,024 feet above sea level, Broadway

Tower offers an extensive view across the Worcestershire countryside. Take time to ponder the folly of Lady Coventry during a cream tea break in a converted barn nearby.

After, continue downhill to the village of Broadway, often referred to as the “Jewel of the Cotswolds” for its fine 16th-century buildings made from the local stone. High Street is particularly inviting with its many shops, cafés, and other amenities. There’ll be time for you to explore this delightful town on your own.

An ideal base for exploring the area, Broadway’s location on the Cotswold escarpment is convenient to many of the area’s walks. The village’s wide, main street lined with shops, galleries, and restaurants, is a relaxing place for a stroll. In fact, the village’s name comes from the “broad way” known today as High Street.

Upon returning to Chipping Campden, consider an optional visit to local vineyard (a one-mile walk from Noel Arms Hotel) to learn about how the farm’s and vintner owner has found success growing Siegerrebe grapes. Sample the crisp white wine produced in his limestone-rich soil. Alternatively, wander through the fields surrounding Chipping Campden to the nearby village of Broad Campden and consider picking up on the local flavor with a visit to a classic English pub, or enjoy a relaxing massage at Noel Arms’ sister property, Cotswold House Hotel & Spa.

Dinner is on your own tonight. Chipping Campden has several options for a fine meal.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 3

### Walk from Buckland to Snowhill

Buckland to Stanway House; 3 miles, easy. Stanway House to Snowhill; 3 miles, moderate

A 20-minute morning shuttle delivers you to the small rural village of Buckland, the starting point for today’s ramble. You traverse open country to the hamlet of Laverton, where a cluster of stone cottages evokes scenes of rural Old England. Later, arrive in Stanton, an idyllic village where little has changed in 300 years. Walk past 16th- and 17th-century houses built in typical Cotswolds-style with steeply pitched gables, mullioned windows, and glowing honey-colored limestone. Stanton takes its name from the *stan* (or stone) from which it is built.

Upon arrival, visit the grand Stanway House, an outstandingly beautiful example of a Jacobean manor house. Owned by Tewkesbury Abbey for 800 years, it changed hands to the Tracy family for the next 500 years and is still the home of their descendants, the Earls of Wemyss and March. Enjoy a private guided tour of the house, with time to explore the gardens. Savor a ploughman's lunch of local produce on the outdoor terrace before getting underway.

Your walk continues through the village of Stanway, then ascends slightly through a mixed forest. Leaving the woodland, follow the footpath through gently sloping pastures before arriving at Snowhill, a tiny village resting atop the Cotswold escarpment. As its name implies, and as locals are fond of saying, if there is any snow about, then you will find it here first. After time to explore, shuttle back to your hotel.

Dinner is on your own tonight.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 4

### Walk from Stow-on-the-Wold, Lower Slaughter to Bourton-on-the-Water

5.5 miles, easy to moderate

After breakfast today, check out of the hotel and shuttle to Stow-on-the-Wold, a small market town in Gloucestershire. Founded by Normans where two busy trade routes converged, this pretty town is situated on an 800-foot hill. This area was a major center of the Cotswold wool industry. Enormous annual fairs attracted farmers from all reaches, some with as many as 20,000 sheep to sell. Today's walk starts in the Market Square, flanked by an ancient cross on one end and the town stocks on the other. You will walk in the footsteps of the 21-year-old King Charles II who, in 1651, was defeated in the Battle of Worcester and hotly pursued by Parliamentary troops down the aptly named Monarch's Way. Rejoin this footpath that you left behind a couple of days ago.

Descend from the escarpment through timeless pastureland. This is the Cotswolds of dreams, with wide green fields edged with limestone walls and dotted with sheep. Your walk brings you to the idyllic small village of Lower Slaughter, straddling the River Eye. The town's name is derived from the Old English word *slothre*, meaning "muddy place." Admire the charming stone bridges spanning the river and the 16th- and 17th-century limestone cottages built in the traditional Cotswolds style. Leave this lovely hamlet and

continue through a small wooded area before traversing more pastures down to the Windrush River, which leads you into Bourton-on-the-Water. This pretty village is known as the “Venice of the Cotswolds” for the bridges that span its river.

There'll be time here for lunch and to explore the village and its many craft shops before shuttling approximately 50 minutes to your home for the next three nights, the Hare & Hounds at Westonbirt, near Tetbury.

Dinner is at the hotel tonight.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 5

### Circular walk to Tetbury. Independent exploration of Tetbury or Westonbirt

7-miles easy

After breakfast, stroll directly from the hotel along a meandering trail through tree-dotted pastureland. Your route traverses Highgrove House, the family residence of Prince Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. Gatcombe Park, home of Charles' sister Princess Anne, is also nearby. Shortly after these grand homes, you walk into Tetbury, developed on the site of an ancient hill fort. Tetbury is home to several impressive churches and is said to be the location of Abbess Tetta's Monastery, which was first mentioned in a charter by King Ethelred of Mercia in 681. In medieval days, Tetbury was an important market town for the Cotswolds wool and yarn trade. The town center is still dominated by the splendid pillared Market House, built in 1655. Many of the wool merchant houses look exactly as they did 300 years ago.

During your free time in Tetbury, visit one of its inviting cafés, lovely churches, or one of its many antique shops, for which the town is known. Browse the renowned Highgrove Shop for the finest, thoughtfully curated English gifts and goods. All profits from the sale of Highgrove products are donated to the Prince of Wales Charitable Fund, supporting environmental initiatives and responsible business practices. You're sure to find a pleasing spot for lunch on your own.

This afternoon, take an optional self-guided walk around the Westonbirt Arboretum, just steps from the Hare & Hounds. Stroll its extensive network of walking trails admiring 2,500 different species of trees from around the globe and five national tree collections. After time to relax back at the hotel, dinner is on your own. You may wish to eat in the hotel's restaurant or return to Tetbury by taxi.

Home to historical architecture and charming independent boutiques, Tetbury's streets are a delight to explore. Surrounded by rolling countryside, there is a multitude of ways to enjoy the town's surroundings.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 6

### Bath

7 miles, easy to moderate

After breakfast, board your shuttle to Bath (approximately 50 minutes), a popular traveler's destination for 2,000 years. This UNESCO World Heritage site is home to some of England's grandest Georgian architecture, as well as one of the world's best-preserved Roman bathhouses.

Today's walk starts just outside Bath and follows the final leg of the Cotswold Way, the path you followed to Broadway a few days ago. Begin by traversing Lansdown Hill, site of the bloody Battle of Lansdown during the English Civil War. From here, you will cross a plateau, passing the famous Bath Horse Racecourse. Shortly afterward, you will have your first views of Bath in the valley below. Walk through expanses of fertile farmland before emerging into the suburban environs of Weston. As your walk draws to a close, you will have glimpses of finely landscaped parks and grand Regency architecture, including the famous Royal Crescent. Designed by John Wood the Younger in 1767, the Royal Crescent is a collection of 30 terraced houses that form a sweeping crescent. Conclude your walk at Bath Abbey, where a round, carved stone set into the pavement outside the ornate west doors marks the end of the Cotswold Way.

You will have free time to explore Bath and have lunch on your own before returning to the hotel. This evening, recount your memorable journey over a festive farewell dinner.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 7

## Travel to Woodstock. Your England: Bath & the Cotswolds tour concludes

After breakfast, check out of the hotel, say goodbye to your guides, and travel to The Bear Hotel in Woodstock, approximately 1.5 hours away. Woodstock is a picturesque, historical market town, but it's different from all the towns you've visited thus far. Woodstock is home to Blenheim Palace, the birthplace of Winston Churchill and a veritable paradise for walkers.

Upon check-in you will be given an entrance ticket to Blenheim Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Palace is the principal residence of the Dukes of Marlborough, and the only non-royal, non-episcopal country house in England designated a palace. Completed in 1722, it is one of England's largest houses. Its 2,000 acres were designed by the most renowned landscape architect of his day, Capability Brown. It is pure pleasure to stroll along Blenheim's great lake, browse the beautiful formal gardens, and take off-the-beaten-track rambles. You may even stumble upon the Temple of Diana, where Churchill proposed to his future wife, Clementine. All well worth exploring.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DEPARTURE DAY

### Departure

After an included breakfast early this morning, complimentary transportation is provided to London Heathrow Airport for your departing flight.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## What's Included

### Air Package

### Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓	✓
11 on-tour meals: 6 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 3 dinners	✓	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓	✓
Telescopic walking sticks provided on tour	✓	✓
Roundtrip airfare	✓	
One extra night in Stratford-upon-Avon and one extra night in Oxford	✓	
Airport car service for arrival and departure	✓	
Pre- and post-tour breakfasts	✓	
Business-class upgrades available	✓	