

ENGLAND – THE COTSWOLD WAY

13-days / 12-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn walking holiday



The lush green Cotswolds rise from the upper Thames valley to an escarpment or 'edge' above the Severn valley, with the highest point, Cleeve Hill, just over 300 metres above sea level. It is a quintessentially English landscape – rolling, verdant hills dotted with picturesque villages, medieval churches, stately country homes and ancient ruins. The Cotswold Way National Trail, 102 miles (164km) long, follows the escarpment through the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty from the beautiful market town of Chipping Campden to the World Heritage-listed city of Bath. The walking is delightful, on well-maintained and waymarked footpaths, bridleways and quiet country lanes.

The cottages, farmhouses, villages, and small towns of the Cotswolds are particularly attractive as they are mostly built from weathered honey-coloured limestone. You stay in carefully selected guesthouses and B&Bs in unspoilt, quiet hamlets and larger market towns with restaurants, cafés and traditional English pubs. The route takes you past many historic places, including the Tudor-era Sudeley Castle, Neolithic burial chambers and Iron Age hill forts and civil war battle sites. Nearly every village has a medieval church worth visiting.

Book early, especially if travelling in the popular months of June and July, to avoid disappointment. Bank holidays and the Badminton horse trials (early May) can affect accommodation availability.

Departs: Daily departures year-round – April to October recommended

Starts: Chipping Campden **Ends:** Bath

Cost from: \$1890 per person twin share Single room supplement from \$885

Supplement for Friday/Saturday night stay in Bath from \$40 per person

Includes: 12 nights' twin-share ensuite accommodation in carefully selected guesthouses or B&Bs; breakfast daily; inn-to-inn luggage transfers (1 bag per person, maximum weight 20kg); detailed route notes, maps and information pack; emergency assistance.

Not included: Lunches or dinners, drinks, entry fees, personal expenses, taxis/transfers used during the trip, travel to/from the start/end of the tour.

Grading: Easy to moderate. Daily distances of up to 13 miles (21km), average of 4 to 6 hours' walking each day, over undulating terrain, with some steep ascents/descents (average daily ascent/descent 220 metres) and many traditional stiles (little ladders) to climb over farm fences. The weather in the Cotswolds is typically milder than other areas of England; however it is still unpredictable and changeable so be prepared for inclement weather. You can shorten most days by using public transport or taxis (at own expense).

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details and reservations



Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive in Chipping Campden

Make your way to Chipping Campden by mid-afternoon. From London or Birmingham, take the train to Stratford-upon-Avon, Cheltenham or Moreton-in-Marsh, then local bus or taxi to Chipping Campden. Our usual hotel in Chipping Campden is a historic inn built of Cotswold stone, located on the high street.

Day 2: Chipping Campden to Stanton

walking @ 11 miles (17km)

From Chipping Campden follow the Way up onto the escarpment for views from Dover's Hill. Continue across fields to Broadway Tower (an 18th Century folly in the form of a mock Saxon castle) and then down into the village of Broadway with its historic connections to the Arts and Crafts movement. From Broadway, you head back onto the escarpment, following broad tracks to the Iron Age hill fort of Shenberrow, then drop into Stanton, one of the hidden gems of the Cotswolds.

Day 3: Stanton to Winchcombe

walking @ 7½ miles (12km)

Easier walking to start the day across the level parkland of the Stanway estate, with its Jacobean manor, followed by a steep climb up from Wood Stanway onto the escarpment, rewarded by views across the Vale of Evesham towards the Malverns. You pass another Iron Age hill fort then descend to Hailes Abbey, the ruins of a 13th Century Cistercian monastery. Continue through farmland into Winchcombe, a delightful town nestled in a deep valley with an interesting medieval church.

Day 4: Winchcombe to Dowdeswell

walking @ 11 miles (18km)

The Cotswold Way leaves Winchcombe through the Sudeley estate, climbing steadily along field paths up to the Neolithic long barrow of Belas Knap. You then walk over undulating terrain to Cleeve Hill, the highest point on the trail, with extensive views over Cheltenham and beyond. Pass through a butterfly reserve and on to quiet lanes, before descending through Dowdeswell Wood to Dowdeswell reservoir and the hamlet of Lower Dowdeswell. On occasion this night's accommodation may be in Cheltenham.

Day 5: Dowdeswell to Birdlip

walking @ 10 miles (16km)

Leaving Dowdeswell, you pass through Lineover Wood, a mixture of ancient woodland, including enormous 'heritage' beech, and more recent plantings aimed at restoring it to its native state. You pass close to Seven Springs (believed by some to be the source of the Thames) before climbing again for views across Cheltenham and the Severn Vale. The route then 'roller coasters' on quiet tracks and lanes, with excellent viewpoints throughout the day. Look out for the distinctive rock pillar known as the Devil's Chimney on Leckhampton Hill. Pass Neolithic and Iron Age archaeological sites and burial grounds before walking through forest to Birdlip.

Day 6: Birdlip to Painswick

walking @ 7 miles (12km)

A shaded walk through magnificent beech forest, then on to Coopers Hill, the site of the annual cheese-rolling event. The route then emerges onto the common land and golf course of Painswick Beacon, where the ramparts of an Iron Age hill fort can be clearly seen. Painswick, your destination for the night, is the mid-point of the Cotswold Way. This historic wool town has timber-framed buildings dating back to the 15th Century, as well as many later buildings of Cotswold stone, and hosts an art festival in July & August each year.

Day 7: Painswick to Kings Stanley

walking @ 9 miles (15km)

A delightful walk over open grassland and through forest to Haresfield Beacon, an Iron Age hill fort with views of the escarpment and River Severn. The route then descends gently through Standish Woods, which has beautiful displays of bluebell and wood anemone in the spring. Enter the Stroud valley through grass pastures and pass Stanley Mill en route to Kings Stanley.

Day 8: Kings Stanley to Dursley

walking @ 8 miles (13km)

Walk through woodland up to Coaley Peak picnic area for marvelous views at the edge of the escarpment. Pass an old quarry (the rock face clearly showing the underlying strata) before following another woodland path that eventually emerges into a valley with Cam Long Down ahead. The climb up is steep, but the reward is 360° views on a clear day over the Severn estuary, Gloucester, the Cotswold Edge and the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains of Wales. Descend into the valley and walk through farmland into the market town of Dursley.

Day 9: Dursley to Wotton-under-Edge

walking @ 7 miles (12km)

Start the day with a steep ascent of Stinchcombe Hill. The best views are from the longer route on the flanks of the hill, not the shortcut. Descend on woodland and farmland paths into the village of North Nibley, where you may like to have lunch or refreshments at the traditional pub. Ascend to the Tyndale Monument, a memorial to William Tyndale, who translated the New Testament into English – he was condemned as a heretic for this and burned at the stake in Flanders in 1536. The route levels out across grassland and through forest onto Wotton Hill, it then descends into the market town of Wotton-under-Edge.

Day 10: Wotton-under-Edge to Old Sodbury

walking @ 13 miles (21km)

Leave Wotton-under-Edge walking alongside a stream before ascending once again onto the escarpment. Walk on a delightful sunken woodland track to Alderley village. From Alderley, pass through a peaceful valley with remainders of medieval ridge-and-furrow. Follow a quiet road alongside a clear millstream, then climb gently towards Hawkesbury Upton. Pass an ancient drover's pond, then follow Bath Lane towards Horton. Ascend onto Horton Fort with extensive views over the Severn Vale. You reach the National Trust property of Horton Court, perhaps the oldest vicarage in England, then cross farmland to Old Sodbury.

Day 11: Old Sodbury to Cold Ashton

walking @ 8½ miles (14km)

Pass through the 'Capability' Brown-designed grounds of stately Dodington Park (currently owned by British inventor James Dyson). Walk across fields and farmland and through villages to the perimeter of Dyrham Park – an elegant 17th Century mansion nestled in an ancient deer park. From Dyrham village, ascend through Dyrham Woods before continuing through farmland into Cold Ashton.

Day 12: Cold Ashton to Bath

walking @ 10 miles (16km)

A day of contrasts; walk from the rural Cotswolds into the urban environs of the city of Bath. Descend into a beautiful secluded valley, then to the site of the bloody civil war battle of Lansdown. Walk across a plateau, passing the promontory hill fort at Little Down and the famous Bath Racecourse. At Prospect Stile (now a kissing gate) you get your first views of Bath in the valley below. At Weston – once an independent village, now a suburb of Bath – you leave the Cotswold Hills behind and the trail becomes more urban in character. Walk through fine parks and past impressive Georgian architecture on your way to Bath Abbey, the end of the Cotswold Way.

Day 13: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast. Perhaps stay an extra night or two in Bath (at additional cost) with more time to visit the Roman baths or Jane Austen Centre, see the elegant Regency-era buildings, climb the tower of Bath Abbey, or take high tea at the Pump Room. From Bath there are frequent train services to London (1½ hours).



Other walking holidays, guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers and meals, are available in many parts of the UK and Europe through **Outdoor Travel** including the spectacular English **Coast to Coast** trail, the **West Highland Way** in Scotland, the **Way of St James** or **Camino de Santiago** from Le Puy in France to Santiago de Compostela in Spain or the **Via Francigena**, the pilgrim's '*road to Rome*' in Italy.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations:

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