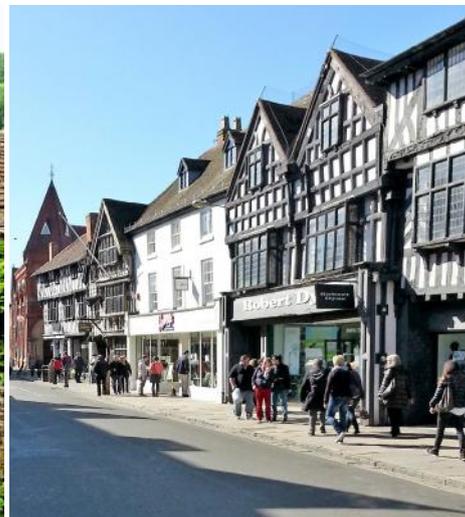


ENGLAND – THE BEST OF THE COTSWOLDS

8-days/ 7-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn walking in the heart of England from Stratford to Winchcombe



The lush green Cotswolds provide an ideal introduction to walking in England. These gently undulating hills rise from the upper Thames valley to an escarpment above the Severn valley, with the highest point just over 300 metres above sea level. The landscape is iconically English – rolling, verdant green hills dotted with picturesque villages, medieval churches, stately country homes and ancient ruins. Opportunities for easy rambles, peaceful strolls, and hillside walks abound.

The cottages, farmhouses, villages, and small towns of the Cotswolds are largely built from limestone, weathered over centuries to a beautiful honey or golden colour. Pastures are partitioned by dry-stone walls, many from the 18th and 19th Centuries, taking considerable skill to build without mortar. They represent an important historical landscape and a major conservation feature – and are of course still used today to enclose sheep and cattle.

You start your walk in Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon. Larger market towns like Stow-on-the-Wold and Bourton-on-the-Water have many restaurants, shops, cafés and traditional English pubs. Not all villages are well known, and many such as Guiting Power or Winchcombe still hold their many secrets. Those with an interest in history can make time to visit Sudeley Castle, whilst Hidcote and Batsford Arboretum are nearly irresistible to garden enthusiasts. Easily reached from London, Oxford or Bristol, there is something for everyone in the Cotswolds.

Departs: Daily except Tuesday/Wednesday year-round – April to October recommended
Tuesday or Wednesday departures may be available at additional cost with a slightly modified itinerary

Cost from: **\$1340** per person twin share Single room supplement from **\$735** Solo traveller supplement **\$65**
Supplement for Saturday night stay in Winchcombe from \$125 per person

Starts: Stratford-upon-Avon **Ends:** Winchcombe

Includes: 7 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 14 miles (22km), 4 to 6 hours' walking each day, over gently undulating terrain, with 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 walks 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 Stratford

Make your way to Stratford-upon-Avon by mid-afternoon. Stratford-upon-Avon has a train station with frequent connections from Birmingham or London Marylebone station. Our usual guesthouse is just a short walk from the train station and Shakespeare's birthplace. The Royal Shakespeare Company often performs at the riverside theatre – plan well in advance to book tickets for a performance.

Day 2: Stratford to Mickleton

walking @ 12 miles (19km)

Leave Stratford on the Avon Valley footpath alongside the river, then walk along part of the Monarch's Way, a long distance footpath tracing the route taken by Charles II in 1651 to elude capture by Cromwell's Parliamentary troops. If time permits we suggest you visit the Arts and Crafts-influenced Hidcote Garden. Mickleton is a charming village with honey-coloured Cotswolds stone buildings as well as whitewashed, thatch-roofed houses.

Day 3: Mickleton to Broadway

walking @ 9 miles (19km)

This day's walk takes you into the Cotswolds AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) protected landscape, via rural countryside and the attractive town of Chipping Campden. Detour to Broadway Tower, a mock Saxon castle atop the second highest point in the Cotswolds, for views of Buckinghamshire and the mountains of Wales. Broadway is a popular market town with many antique shops, cafés and restaurants.

Day 4: Broadway to Blockley

walking @ 12 miles (19km)

A meandering walk through rolling green landscapes and typical Cotswolds villages to Blockley. Blockley was a silk producing town in the 18th and 19th Centuries, its silk mills powered by the stream running through the town. Its narrow streets are lined with traditional golden stone-built cottages.

Day 5: Blockley to Bourton-on-the-Water

walking @ 14 miles (22km)

A walk through some of the prettiest villages of the Cotswolds. From Blockley walk via field paths to Batsford village. Perhaps visit Batsford Arboretum, known particularly for its collection of Japanese and Chinese trees. Continue on to Stow-on-the-Wold, from where it's a leisurely downhill walk across meadows to Lower Slaughter with its working mill then a short stroll to Bourton. A popular town, Bourton is very photogenic with its low footbridges across the river Windrush, framed by weeping willows.

Day 6: Bourton to Guiting Power

walking @ 7 miles (11km)

Follow the River Windrush to the village of Naunton with its medieval dovecote and welcoming pub. Continue on through fields and over stiles to lovely Guiting Power. Its parish church dates back to the 12th Century and retains some Norman-era features including a superb arched doorway.

Day 7: Guiting to Winchcombe

walking @ 7 miles (11km)

Walk through woods and fields before the descent to the ancient Saxon capital of Winchcombe, close to Sudeley Castle, where Henry VIII's last wife Katherine Parr lived. Winchcombe is a delightful town in a deep valley with a medieval church – its altar cloth is believed to have been stitched by Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife.

Day 8: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast, take a local bus or taxi to nearby Cheltenham for onward connections to London.

Outdoor Travel offer walking holidays, guided in small groups or self-guided, in many parts of the UK and Europe including the spectacular English **Coast to Coast** trail, the **West Highland Way** in Scotland, the **Way of St James** from Le Puy in France to Santiago 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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