

ENGLAND – THE COTSWOLD WAY

12-days / 11-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn walking holiday



The Cotswolds is a region in the South West of England, that offers the quintessential English countryside. Prolific with hills, quaint villages, old traditional pubs, and a stepping stone through time with history. The Cotswolds Way takes in the best of this landscape, from Chipping Campden to Bath. Walk past a treasure trove of ancient Neolithic burial mounds, Iron Age hillforts, Roman villas, Norman churches, and of course houses and buildings built from the wealth of the wool trade. The trail mostly follows an escarpment which is called the Cotswold Edge, or Scarp and views from the top reach out in all directions, as far as the Brecon Beacons in Wales.

The route offers a mix of parkland, cultivated fields with dry-stone walls of Jurassic limestone, and patches of unspoiled woodland. With many of the cottages, farmhouses and villages passed on the trail made of stone, the scenery blends with the structures creating a delightful fusion of natural and man-made beauty. Staying in a selection of B&B's and guesthouses, this is a perfect introduction to walking in the English countryside.

Departs: Daily from late-March to mid-October

Starts: Chipping Campden **Ends:** Bath

Cost from: \$2815 per person twin share Single room supplement from **\$1655**,
Solo supplement on request

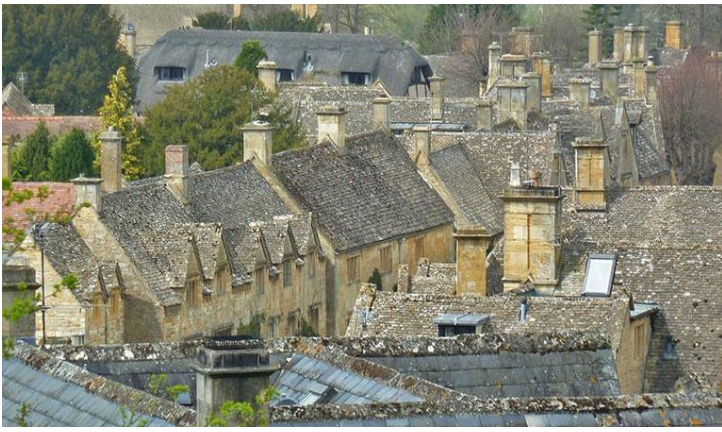
Book early, especially if travelling in the popular months of June and July, to avoid disappointment. Bank holidays and the Badminton horse trials (early May) can affect accommodation availability. Accommodation in Bath is always at a premium, especially on Friday and Saturday nights, so perhaps plan your walking holiday to avoid weekend supplements.

Includes: 11 nights' twin-share accommodation with ensuite or private facilities in carefully selected guesthouses, B&Bs, pubs or small hotels; breakfast daily; inn-to-inn luggage transfers (1 bag per person, maximum weight 20kg); digital map, tracking app 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. Upgraded accommodation is available on request.

Grading: Moderate walking with daily distances from 7 to 14 miles (10km to 23km), average of 4 to 6 hours' each day, with one longer 7-hour day. Terrain is undulating, with some steep ascents/descents (average daily ascent/descent 310 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. This village is a small market town, first settled in the 7th century, that sets the bar high as its one of the prettiest villages that you will stay in along the way. A fitting start to the trail, surrounded by rich, honey-coloured houses and buildings which are so much a part of the Cotswolds landscape.

Day 2: Chipping Campden to Broadway

walking @ 6 miles (11km)

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, which as its name suggests, dominated by a wide tree-lined street packed with independent shops, restaurants, and museums.

Day 3: Broadway to Winchcombe

walking @ 12 miles (19km)

From Broadway, head back onto the escarpment, following broad tracks to Hailes Abbey to see the ruins of a 13th Century Cistercian monastery destroyed under Henry VIII. Continue onto the still inhabited Sudeley Castle, where Henry VIII's last wife Katherine Parr lived. Walking through farmland into Winchcombe, a delightful town nestled in a deep valley, once the capital of Mercia and now regarded as the walker's capital of the Cotswolds.

Day 4: Winchcombe to Charlton Kings

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. Walk over rolling hills to Cleeve Hill, the highest point on the trail, with extensive views over Cheltenham and beyond. Pass through a nature reserve and onto quiet lanes, before descending through Dowdeswell Wood to Dowdeswell reservoir. Tonight's accommodation is about one kilometer off the trail towards Cheltenham, in the village of Charlton Kings.

Day 5: Charlton Kings to Birdlip

walking @ 12 miles (19km)

Climb back up to the Cotswolds Scarp via Lineover Wood, a mixture of ancient woodland (including enormous 'heritage' beech), and more recently 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)

Begin with a shaded walk through magnificent beech forest. After about 3.5km you will come to a sign towards the Great Witcombe Roman Villa. It is only a few hundred metres diversion, and well worth seeing. 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.

Day 7: Painswick to Stroud

walking @ 9 miles (15km)

A delightful walk 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 displays of bluebell and wood anemone in Spring. Exiting the forest, head downhill through a vineyard towards Stroud, crossing the main road to reach the Stroud canal, where there are two walking options into the town. Stroud sits at the bottom of five valleys and was a center for the wool industry from the 15th Century, with 150 water-powered mills at its height in the 18th Century.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details and reservations

Day 8: Stroud to Wotton-Under-Edge

walking @ 14 miles (23km)

Today is the longest walking day, with many ups and downs and of course, many spectacular views! Walk through to Selsley which is the heart of the Arts and Crafts movement, where the local church's stained-glass windows were the first commission for William Morris. Ascend onto Selsley Common, for the first of many superb views, down through ancient woodland before gradually ascending again to Coaley Peak, another site of an Iron Age hillfort, and Nymphsfield Long Barrow - a 2500 BC Neolithic burial ground. There follows a sharp ascent to Cam Long Down Reserve and along towards Dursley, where lunch at the Old Spot Inn is recommended. In the afternoon, the trail splits for an alternative option: a longer walk adding another 3 miles/4.5km to visit the Tynedale Monument, a memorial to William Tyndale who translated the New Testament into English, before a descent into the market town of Wotton-under-Edge.

Day 9: Wotton-under-Edge to Old Sodbury

walking @ 13 miles (21km)

Leave Wotton-under-Edge walking alongside a stream before ascending to the escarpment. Walk on a woodland track to the quaint Alderley village, from where you pass through a peaceful valley with remains of medieval ridge-and-furrow. Follow a quiet road alongside a millstream, then climb gently towards Hawkesbury Upton, a good spot for lunch, as there is a great little pub and farm shop. 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 10: Old Sodbury to Cold Ashton

walking @ 10 miles (16km)

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. There is a National Trust Café within the estate. From Dyrham village, ascend through Dyrham Woods before continuing through farmland into Cold Ashton.

Day 11: Cold Ashton to Bath

walking @ 9 miles (15km)

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, which was once an independent village, now a suburb of Bath, you leave the Cotswold Hills behind. Walk through fine parks and past impressive Georgian architecture on your way to Bath Abbey, the end of the Cotswold Way.

Day 12: 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:

- Call toll free on 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020
- Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: www.outdoortravel.com.au
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741, Australia