

Your Guide To

Cirencester



‘The capital of the Cotswolds’

Cirencester is a beautiful market town full of Roman history, stunning architecture, honey-coloured streets, independent shops and galleries and award-winning restaurants. It was once the second largest town in the country when only London was larger. This status earned it the title of Capital of the Cotswolds.

With a rich history, Cirencester’s market square was mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086 when it had an important position in the trade of wool. Like many towns across the Cotswolds it was a successful wool town in the medieval period which led to its prosperity. Today you can still visit the many markets of Cirencester, a Charter Market is held every Friday and Monday and twice a month you can browse the Farmer’s Market. It is a bustling environment looked over by the intricate and cathedral-esque church of St John Baptist. You can meet the local sellers and pick up some unique gifts and produce while you browse the stalls.

Within the streets of Cotswold stone buildings, you can visit the Corinium museum which tells the story of the town’s Roman past. To walk in the footsteps of history, just outside the centre of town the Roman Amphitheatre is clearly visible. For history buffs, Cirencester is a must. There is also a large choice of restaurants, tea shops and traditional pubs to keep the food-lovers content.

We hope you enjoy your stay in this much-loved part of the Cotswolds!

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Quintessentially Cotswolds:

Corinium Museum, Cirencester

Step back in time to uncover 200,000 years of history at the Corinium Museum. Many significant artefacts are housed here which tell the history of Cirencester during Roman rule. The town was then known as Corinium and you follow the story of the growth of the Cotswolds from prehistoric times to today. Amongst the ancient artefacts and modern displays are interactive installations and immersive experiences.

Bathurst Estate & Cirencester Park, Cirencester

Designed by Alexander Pope, this 19th century parkland is owned by the Bathurst family. Open to the public you can walk through the historic 3,000-acre estate and dogs are also welcome. Get a coffee from the quirky van, enjoy a picnic and let little ones stretch their legs. Follow the footpaths and bridleways to explore this wonderful landscape.

Roman Amphitheatre, Cirencester

The Roman amphitheatre at Cirencester was built in the 2nd century. A town walking route takes you out to the amphitheatre and on to Querns Wood. It would once have hosted 8,000 spectators but today the remains create impressive grassed over banks. These would have supported the tiered seats. It was one of the largest amphitheatres in Britain and it is an impressive site.

Westonbirt Arboretum, Tetbury

Westonbirt Arboretum is a spectacular display of over 15,000 trees from around the world. It spreads across 600-acres and is a lovely day out where you can follow the guided walking routes through the trees. An award-winning STIHL Treetop Walkway gives you a different viewpoint with your head amongst the trees looking across through the greenery. In autumn it is a wonderful feast of colour but it is a glorious place at any time of year.

Chedworth Roman Villa, Chedworth

This area is abundant in Roman history and the villa at Chedworth was once one of the grandest in Britain. The remains show exquisite mosaics and this active archeological site is forever uncovering more history. See the old central heating systems and smaller artefacts in the museum. The peaceful grounds are home to local wildlife and plants making this a lovely spot for a picnic.

National Trust Lodge Park and Sherborne Estate, Aldsworth

There is plenty to do at these National Trust locations. Discover England's last 17th century grandstand where you can enjoy the views from the balcony at Lodge Park. You will see across the deer park with possible sightings of roe deer, fallow deer, badgers and foxes. From here head to the Sherborne Estate and village which has a shop and tea room. Walking routes ranging from 30 minute to 2.5 hours can be followed as you spot the wildlife. Keep an eye out for kingfishers and the occasional osprey.

Cerney House Gardens, North Cerney

Once described by Country Living Magazines as "What most people aspire to in their gardens, and few achieve", the Cerney house gardens are an inspirational vision. 40-acres of garden estate can be strolled through and you will find a Victorian walled garden, kitchen vegetable garden with a hidden knot garden, an orchard, stunning bluebell roads, a colourful rose walk and a rockery.

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Connect with Culture:

Barn Theatre, Cirencester

The spectacular Barn Theatre in Cirencester is a former Nissen hut which has been beautifully transformed. Now a hub for the local community, the theatre is state of the art and seats up to 200 in the audience. The Barn Theatre was established as a charity and supports budding actors with a performing arts education programme and many local outreach initiatives.

Cotswold Sculpture Park, Somerford Keynes

Become part of the artwork at Cotswold Sculpture Park as you discover the Elemental exhibition. Set outdoors you can meander through the park finding new contemporary sculptures along the way. With over 170 artworks from more than 70 artists there are many different styles on display here. The grounds have beautiful woodlands, gardens, ponds and shaded areas. Each piece is also available for sale if you'd like to add some art at home.

Jubilee Galleries, Cirencester

The extensive selection of art at the Jubilee Galleries in Cirencester is forever changing due to how popular its pieces are. They focus on 20th century art and only feature original pieces, prints and reproductions are not welcome here. There are three showrooms displaying over 120 paintings at a time in this charming gallery. They pride themselves on supplying good quality artwork for reasonable prices.

New Brewery Arts Centre, Cirencester

The New Brewery Arts Centre is a destination for art enthusiasts, crafters and makers. In the main gallery showcases changing displays which reflect the seasons and feature well-known artists. In the maker's studios you can meet local crafters and buy beautiful pieces from them directly. You can attend one-off workshops in their classes which cover stone carving, jewellery making, sewing, calligraphy, wreath making and many more disciplines. When you visit you can also pop into the shop.

Phoenix Festival, Cirencester

This fantastic free festival held in August each year brings two days of music, dance and family fun to Cirencester. Set in the Abbey Grounds, the line up includes tribute acts and local performers across two stages. Craft and gift stalls, activities for children run by clubs and charities and lots of options for food and drink are on site.

Royal International Air Tattoo, Fairford

This three-day event draws in over 185,000 visitors every July. It is one of the best and most well-known air shows in the world with over 300 aircraft and 30 nations getting involved. You will see extraordinary stunts and feel the rush of adrenaline as the aircraft fly by. On land you can see vintage aircraft, shop, watch the music and dancing and enjoy some great street food.

Did you know?

The 300-year old yew hedge at Bathurst Estate is the tallest hedge in the country.

Wine and Dine:

Abbey Home Farm Café, Cirencester

Perfect for: organic food, vegetarian meals

The café at Abbey Home Farm serves delicious vegetarian dishes of soups, salads, tarts, and gratins, all inspired by the 10-acre vegetable garden that surrounds the farm shop. There is always at least one vegan option available too. It has previously won 'Best Café in the South West of England'. Lunch is served between 12 and 2.30 with tea, coffee and cakes and cold drinks available throughout the day.

Amore Mio, Cirencester

Perfect for: lunch, dinner, takeaway

Amore Mio is a delightful Italian offering a wide range of soft dough pizzas, pasta and homemade gelato. Dine in or order online and pick up a pizza to go.

Bathurst Arms, North Cerney

Perfect for: lunch, dinner, small meals

In the pretty village of North Cerney, the Bathurst Arms is a welcoming, traditional inn, distinctive by its pale pink exterior. The menu covers all meals from bar snacks to light lunches, cheeseboards and main meals with a dessert.

The Bell at Sapperton, Sapperton

Perfect for: lunch, dinner

The Bell at Sapperton is a quintessentially Cotswolds family-owned pub offering consistently good pub food and great service. This dog-friendly pub is also renowned for their Sunday lunches, and the fact that you can turn up and park your horse.

Café Mosaic, Cirencester

Perfect for: breakfast, lunch, cakes and scones

This independent, family-run café is in the heart of Cirencester and offers great, home-cooked food. Whether you are in the mood for a breakfast sandwich, coffee and cake or soup and sandwich, this is a wonderful place to refuel.

He Says She Waffles, Cirencester

Perfect for: breakfast, brunch

He Says She Waffles is a sweet and savoury waffle house with toppings to suit every occasion. Whether you're in a breakfast waffle frame of mind or a decadently topped sweet indulgence, there will be something here for you.

Jack's, Cirencester

Perfect for: breakfast, brunch, lunch

Tucked away on Black Jack Street, Jack's is a wonderful spot for breakfast, brunch, and lunch and then once a month there is a fabulous supper club dinner, which pre-booking is essential for.

Knead, Cirencester

Perfect for: cakes and fresh bread

Whilst you can't dine in, this bakery is a must-do for exceptional fresh baked bread, savoury, and sweet pastries. It's the perfect place to call in for yummy snacks and lunch items to take with you as you explore. The range of cakes from the patisserie is equally gorgeous.

Malt & Anchor, Cirencester

Perfect for: fish and chips, pies, takeaway

This award-winning restaurant and takeaway is in the heart of Cirencester and offers an extensive menu of traditional chip shop dishes as well as a dine-in menu. Enjoy delicious options such as king prawn tacos, salt and pepper squid, wild boar and chorizo pie or bangers and mash with a glass of wine or a cool beer.

MBB Brasserie, Cirencester

Perfect for: lunch, dinner

MBB Brasserie is a Cirencester institution known for great service and good food. The social, open-plan kitchen space is all part of the experience, creating a vibrant and buzzy atmosphere. The menu is filled with yummy bistro dishes made from local ingredients.

Téatro Bar & Restaurant, Cirencester

Perfect for: dinner

This contemporary restaurant offers a unique dining experience in a stylish setting. From drinks at the bar, delicious meals, to being serenaded in the piano bar it is a fantastic place to get together.

Piazza Fontana, Cirencester

Perfect for: pasta, pizza, takeaway

An authentic and family run Italian restaurant with a hidden garden in their covered courtyard. Their menu is full of pasta and pizza delights with side dishes and cocktails. Piazza Fontana's Napoli chefs add specials to the menu and deliver delicious traditional Italian meals.

Igloo, Cirencester

Perfect for: breakfast, lunch, dinner, Sunday roast, takeaway

Igloo have a fantastic offering for every meal. From breakfasts through to Sunday roasts and bottomless prosecco offers there is something to suit everybody in your group. The owners are passionate about food and travel, and this is reflected in their menu which uses locally sourced produce.

The Falcon Inn, Poulton

Perfect for: pizza, pasta, takeaway

The owners of the Falcon Inn wanted to create a great village pub serving a good pint, interesting wine and excellent food at a great price and they do just that. Their seasonal menu covers all tastes from steaks to seafood, burgers to fish and chips.

The Jolly Nice Farm Shop, Frampton Mansell

Perfect for: breakfast, lunch

The Jolly Nice Farm Shop is jolly by name and jolly by nature. The menu includes breakfast items, sandwiches, pastries, and their toasties are exceptional. If you want to grab and go you can do a drive-through and, it's one of the prettiest farm shops that we've ever seen.

The Potager, Barnsley

Perfect for: afternoon tea, Sunday lunch, dinner

The Potager Restaurant is a fine dining destination offering superb, local ingredients to create elegant and refined dishes, many of the vegetables, salad leaves, and herbs come from their kitchen garden. It's a beautiful spot for a special occasion and their afternoon tea offering is rather delightful too.

The Potting Shed Pub, Crudwell

Perfect for: lunch, dinner

Less potting shed and more gastro pub, this charming, characterful pub with low beams and a huge fireplace serves beautiful food, using fabulous local ingredients. Expect a menu of stylish classics including burgers, fish and chips plus steaks and seasonally changing dishes.

The Boot, Barnsley

Perfect for: breakfast, lunch, dinner

The Boot lies on the main street in the village of Barnsley and looks traditional but offers food that is definitely a step above your average pub grub with seasonal food using the best local produce they can find. Enjoy their terrace on sunny days or a Sunday dinner in front of the roaring fire.

Cotswold Explorers:

Blenheim Palace, Woodstock

The town of Woodstock is often missed when visiting nearby Blenheim Palace. It is worth popping in for drinks and a meal at one of the cafes or historic coaching inns. The UNESCO world heritage site of Blenheim Palace was the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill and is walking distance from the marketplace. Dating back to the 1700s explore the palace and the beautiful parklands.

Bampton Village

Another village noted for its wool trade and market, Bampton may not sound familiar but may look it. St Mary's Church, the old grammar school and the pretty streets were used as a filming location for Downton Abbey. Outside the church you'll find a map of the 'Downton Abbey Mile', a walk which will take you past the locations used. You can also pick up a copy from inside the church.

St Mary's Church, Fairford

This impressive church dates back to 1497 but there has been a church on this site for 1000 years. The stained glass windows draw visitors in their thousands as St Mary's Church has the only complete set of medieval glass in the country. You can arrange a private tour or guide yourselves with guidebooks or an audio guide.

Kelmscott Manor, Lechlade

Visit the country getaway where William Morris and his family spent time away from London. The beautiful house is inspiring and is filled with collections of unique furniture made for the Morris house, needlework completed by the women in the family and significant art completed by Rossetti and more. There is a gift shop and tearoom on site, and William Morris' grave lies in the nearby churchyard.

Bourton-on-the-Water

This picture-postcard village offers a wealth of attractions including Birdland Park and Gardens, the Model Village, Dragonfly Maze, and the Cotswold Motoring Museum. Wander alongside the riverside walk, as the River Windrush flows through the centre of the village, before refuelling with a cream tea in one of the lovely independent cafes.

Faringdon Folly and Woodland, Faringdon

The last major folly to be built in England, the 100ft Faringdon Folly sits on top of Folly Hill surrounded by four acres of mixed woodland with walking and sculpture trails to explore. The breath-taking view from the top extends over five counties.

Arlington Row Cottages, Bibury

When you picture the Cotswolds it is probably images like the row of cottages at Arlington that spring to mind. It is one of the most iconic sights and also now one of the most photographed. This perfectly picturesque street in Bibury was famously described by William Morris as the 'most beautiful village in England'.

Faringdon Folly Tower was built for absolutely no purpose at all. Lord Berners commissioned the tower purely to annoy local residents who objected when they overheard his suggestion that 'this hill needs a tower'.

Ultimate Days Out for the Family:

Birdland Park & Gardens, Bourton-on-the-Water

With more than 50 aviaries housing over 500 birds, Birdland is a fantastic day out for the whole family. Meet familiar species with flamingos, pelicans and penguins, owls, and ones you may have never seen before like the cassowary. Attend the feedings and talks to learn more about some species. Special events are held throughout the year, especially during school holidays and bank holidays.

Cotswold Motoring and Toy Museum, Bourton-on-the-Water

Home of Brum from where he would start his daily adventures, the Cotswold Motoring and Toy Museum is like taking a step back in time. Classic bikes, vintage caravans and over 40 cars are on display delighting petrol heads. The toy museum features a fantastic collection of some familiar-looking games and miniatures that will take you right back to your childhood and make younger family members ask, 'what's that?'

Cotswold Water Park, Cirencester

Though the Cotswolds might not be on the coast, we do have the Cotswold Water Park. It is a haven of watersports, cycling, walking, and a whole host of other outdoor activities. There is even a beach where you can hire a private BBQ pitch.

Cotswold Wildlife Park & Garden, Burford

The Wildlife Park & Gardens at Burford sit in 160 acres of beautiful, landscaped parkland and gardens. With more than 260 species of animals, many of which are endangered, it is one of the largest zoological collections in the UK. There are daily penguin and lemur talks, a Madagascan walk through, mini railway, play area and children's farmyard to keep everybody entertained.

Outdoor Swimming Pool, Cirencester

Normally open from May to September the pool is heated to an average of 27° C (80° F). Filled with natural spring water you can enjoy a pleasant dip in one of the oldest swimming pools in the country. Built in 1869 there is a main pool and a paddling pool for children.

Cotswold Driving Experiences, Down Ampney

Get behind the wheel and experience the thrill of rally driving or off-roading in a 4x4. Push the limits of yourself and the car as you hurtle at speed along purpose-built tracks, descend vertical drops and power slide on the gravel. There are options for children over 10 and those with disabilities, and if you don't fancy getting behind the wheel just yet you can also have a rollercoaster of a ride with an experienced driver.

Adam Henson's Cotswold Farm Park, Guiting Power

The welcoming and friendly Cotswold Farm Park is a delight for every age and is a much-loved local attraction. Spend the whole day visiting the rare breeds, meet the new arrivals and follow the wildlife trails. It is set in glorious countryside overlooking the Windrush Valley.

Crocodiles of the World, Brize Norton

There are 26 species of crocodile in the world, and at Crocodiles of the World you can see 17 of these. Watch the Nile crocodiles at feeding time and learn more about alligators, caiman and more. To find out more there are wild keeper experiences available for children and adults. There are also a handful of mammals, reptiles, and birds to be seen here.

Relax and Revive:

Calcot Spa, Tetbury

Retreat to Calcot Spa to relax and revive. They offer seasonal wellness remedies and holistic treatments alongside traditional choices. After your treatment of choice, their wonderful outdoor hot tub takes you away to another world.

The Gainsborough Spa, Bath

This beautiful spa encapsulates the history of the Bath waters in stunning surroundings. The spa includes a circuit of natural thermal pools beneath a four-storey glass atrium.

Thermae Bath Spa, Bath

You can choose to visit the Thermae Bath Spa for a two-hour experience and spend time in the thermal pools, or also add on a treatment for a truly relaxing experience. Enjoy views across Bath from the rooftop pool for a really special day.

Lucknam Park Spa, Chippenham

Alongside a treatment menu Lucknam Park also has a range of mind and body sessions including massage and a dry floatation experience. The award-winning facilities include thermal rooms, swimming pools and a lounge.

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