

Your Guide To

Bourton-on-the-Water



‘The Venice of the Cotswolds’

Bourton-on-the-Water is a tourist hot spot, and for good reason. The River Windrush flows through the village and it is criss-crossed with five low stone bridges. This unique feature is how it has become known as the ‘Venice of the Cotswolds’. Each side is lined with picture-perfect Cotswold stone buildings and lush trees. It is a delightful place to spend some time picnicking on the riverbanks and visiting the popular attractions.

There are a host of tea rooms, quaint cafes, and established restaurants ready to host you. Boutique shops, antique stores and even a perfumery can be found along the hidden side streets which are waiting to be explored. Families will enjoy a trip to Birdland, the challenge of the Dragonfly Maze and you can even see the village in miniature detail at the Model Village.

In Sumer, the local football team plays a friendly match in the river, with spectators risking getting wet in the process! In December, Bourton-on-the-Water makes a stunning festive scene with a Christmas Tree at the centre of the river, lights twinkling in the water below.

The village can be a bustling place to visit in peak seasons and it has a fantastic atmosphere all year round!

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

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Quintessentially Cotswolds:

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

This is a wonderful experience for the whole family. Here you'll find a delightful setting inhabited by over 500 birds including flamingos, pelicans, penguins and even the elusive cassowary. The aviaries, which total more than 50, house parrots, falcons, ibis, whilst the Parliament of Owls, the newest attraction in the park, provides a home for 8 different species of owl.

Model Village, Bourton-on-the-Water

You can see all of Bourton-on-the-Water in one glimpse at the Model Village. It has been recreated in 1/9th scale and is a grade II listed replica of the village as it was in 1930. It is built from Cotswold stone and includes a tiny model of the model village within itself! There are tiny trees, a flowing river and miniature shop signs. It is a charming place to visit before seeing the village in its life-size proportions.

Adam Henson's Cotswold Farm Park, Kineton

Cotswold Farm Park has so much to offer throughout the year. Overlooking the Windrush Valley it is a popular attraction for both locals and visitors. You can see the many rare breeds, greet new arrivals, attend live lambing, pick pumpkins, and follow the wildlife trails. Seasonal events vary but there is always a range of activities available.

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

Step back in time at Cotswold Motoring and Toy Museum. You are sure to see memorabilia that reminds you of back in the day that your children today will have no idea what they are! There are over 40 cars, including Brum, vintage caravans, and motorbikes. It's a great day out for the petrol heads and the rest of the family.

The Slaughters

The villages of Upper and Lower Slaughter provide a picturesque setting for a delightful Cotswold walk. While there are no specific tourist attractions here, the pretty villages are joined by the River Eye which you can follow along the Wardens Way. Each village has choices to stop for a meal and there are lots of opportunities for photo shoots.

Dragonfly Maze, Bourton-on-the-Water

The Dragonfly Maze has more hidden than you might first expect. Inspired by the author and artist Kit Williams, whose work *Masquerade* featured a hidden hare and clues to its location within the book. The maze features 14 hidden clues which give you access to the hidden dragonfly at the centre of the maze. It is a traditional yew hedge maze and there is half a mile of possible pathways to get lost in.

Football in the River, Bourton-on-the-Water

For over 100 years a football match has been played in the River Windrush. On August Bank Holiday, two teams from the Bourton Rovers club take to the chilly water and play a unique game in the rushing current. It's great fun and both players and spectators are likely to get wet!

Greystone's Farm Nature Reserve, Bourton-on-the-Water

Not far from Bourton High Street is the spacious Greystone's Farm Nature Reserve. It is a lovely place to spend some time with a picnic and walking with the family. It is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna with wildflowers, insects, butterflies, bird and mammals. Two rivers flow through the reserve which provide a home to the endangered water vole. There are many walking routes to follow, and you can warm up inside the Neolithic Salmonsbury Camp.

Find our tailored collection of services, available at your cottage in our Experiences section on our website!

Connect with Culture:

Fosse Gallery, Bourton-on-the-Water

Showcasing carefully selected contemporary British art, the Fosse Gallery has built a world-renowned reputation after its opening in 1980. The owner is well-known for her keen eye, and she has a passion and commitment to her artists. The Fosse Gallery provides a platform for new artists alongside those of international acclaim.

Broadway Arts Festival

Broadway has a rich and varied history in the arts. William Morris had a studio at Broadway tower in the 1880s, many American writers and artists found inspiration here in the 19th century, J M Barrie played cricket on the village green and German prisoners of war spent time painting the village. The Arts Festival is a celebration of this history, a biennial event hosting workshops, outdoor theatre, exhibitions, talks, music and garden tours. Alongside the main festival, events are arranged throughout the year.

Cotswold Pottery, Bourton-on-the-Water

John and Jude Jelfs are two local potters who live and work in Bourton-on-the-Water. Their showroom is a treasure trove of their work including teapots, jugs, mugs, pots and vases made on the wheel by John. He uses glazes made from locally sourced ingredients and each piece has a beautifully unique finish. Jude's work is hand formed making it more sculptural and contemporary.

Cotswold Perfumery, Bourton-on-the-Water

A perfumery has been based at this 300-year-old Grade II listed building since 1965 and is known worldwide for its fine fragrances. You can buy perfumes in store or book a course to learn the science behind the process. At the end of the day you'll leave with a bottle of your very own custom fragrance.

Wine and Dine:

Alexiou's, Stow-on-the-Wold

Perfect for: dinner

Find a taste of the Mediterranean in the heart of the Cotswolds. Alexiou's is a family run restaurant serving traditional Greek and Cypriot dishes. Dine in the ambience of a traditional taverna and enjoy the elegant and stylish setting.

Atrium at Lords of the Manor, Upper Slaughter

Perfect for: fine dining, vegan options

Head Chef Charles Smith has a passion for sourcing the best ingredients, and these are showcased in the seasonal tasting menu. Using a fusion of French and Cotswold influences you are served an exceptional meal. With only 14 covers it is an intimate and romantic experience, perfect for celebrating a special occasion.

Dial House Restaurant, Bourton-on-the-Water

Perfect for: lunch, dinner, street food, cocktails

The historic Dial House is full of character and charm. Dating back to the 1600s, award-winning dishes are served in these beautiful surroundings. Lunch and dinner are available in the restaurant and tapas and stonebaked pizzas are served from a tipi in the rear garden.

L'Antara Italian Kitchen, Bourton-on-the-Water

Perfect for: dinner, tapas, drinks

This authentic Italian restaurant offers tapas, pizzas, pasta, steak and fish dishes with an array of seasonal specials through the year. Takeaway pizzas are available, and it is advised to book if you would like to eat in.

The Mousetrap Inn, Bourton-on-the-Water

Perfect for: breakfast, lunch, dinner

With a range of locally sourced produce on the menu, The Mousetrap offers a chance to try a taste of the Cotswolds. What's on offer changes with the seasons, including the local ales which have seen them included in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide for the last nine years. Serving their own Mousetrap Gin alongside an array of others you can spend some time relaxing, drink in hand, in front of the fire. Booking is recommended.

Prince of India, Stow-on-the-Wold

Perfect for: dinner, takeaway

More than meets the eye, this traditional India restaurant is well-established in Stow-on-the-Wold. You can choose to dine in or takeaway and delivery is available within a 4-mile radius.

The Rose Tree Restaurant, Bourton-on-the-Water

Perfect for: lunch, dinner, Sunday lunch

On the banks of the River Windrush, this is a picturesque spot to stop for a meal and a drink. The beautiful Grade II listed building of Cotswold stone has an external seating area where you can people watch and enjoy the scenery. It is a popular choice and booking is recommended.

Smiths, Bourton-on-the-Water

Perfect for: burgers, cocktails

A more relaxed choice, Smiths specialize in burgers and cocktails. If you are serious about your burgers, then Smiths is the place to go. This independently family run bar and restaurant specializes in hand pressed patties and offers a varied and unique menu with a range of signature cocktails.

The Den, Bourton-on-the-Water

Perfect for: food to go, lunch, cakes, milkshakes, vegan options

This small but perfectly formed café offers locally baked cakes, baguettes, fresh coffee, and hot chocolates and includes a strong vegan, gluten free and vegetarian menu. There are a couple of tables outside but take your food to go and enjoy it on the banks of the river.

The Hive, Stow-on-the-Wold

Perfect for: breakfast, brunch, lunch

Run by two sisters, The Hive is a friendly and welcoming spot to pop in for a bite to eat on the go or a sit-down meal. Serving breakfast, brunch and lunch they are also licensed so you can relax with a glass of wine.

The Kings Arms, Stow-on-the-Wold

Perfect for: dinner

Overlooking the market square in Stow, The Kings Arms combines contemporary styling with its traditional Cotswold architecture. In the colder months you can warm yourself in front of the fires. This country pub offers a classic menu for lunch and dinner and also serves Sunday lunch.

The Old Bakery Tearoom, Stow-on-the-Wold

Perfect for: lunch, afternoon tea

Taking an unhurried approach, The Old Bakery serve genuinely homemade food which you are given plenty of time to enjoy. Soups, salads, sandwiches and quiches fill the menu or choose a light bite or their delicious cream tea. Run by Jackie and Alan since 2005 you are guaranteed a warm welcome and friendly atmosphere.

The Old Butchers, Stow-on-the-Wold

Perfect for: breakfast, lunch, dinner

This family-run restaurant housed in an older butcher's shop has become a popular place to stop when travelling around Stow-on-the-Wold. They try to minimize waste by using every part of the ingredients they have, from meat to plants. The exciting menu has a diverse offering.

The Old Stocks, Stow-on-the-Wold

Perfect for: dinner, Sunday lunch, drinks

The Old Stocks is a great choice for holding a special event with the beautiful private dining room available. It also has a traditional pub bar and warming open fires for that classic Cotswold atmosphere. The Grade II listed coaching inn has been updated with modern touches filling it with charm and character.

The Porch House, Stow-on-the-Wold

Perfect for: breakfast, coffee and cake, lunch, takeaway

An inn has stood at the site of The Porch House since 947. It is a lovely building with exposed beams, stone walls, and huge fireplaces. Filled with history, this is charming place to enjoy a delicious meal or casual drinks. If you are hosting an event there are many options available for private dining.

Hawkestone Brewery, Bourton-on-the-Water

Perfect for: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Head down to the brewery for a tour or pop into the bar for a pint and some food from one of the independent food trucks serving here, on a Friday and Saturday. Each tour lasts around two hours and you also get to try samples along the way.



Cotswold Explorers:

Stow on the Wold

A hot spot for foodies, Stow-on-the-Wold is a charming place to visit. Step back in time along the historic streets and find the oldest pub in England, an Iron Age Fort and a much-photographed church door at St Edward's. The Cotswold stone buildings are now independent shops and antique emporiums filled with delights.

Daylesford Organic Farm, Moreton-in-Marsh

Daylesford Organic has become a popular shopping destination. This organic farm is where the empire began. At the farm shop stock up on seasonal fruit and veg and main ingredients for your meals. You will also find gifts and home and garden shopping. Spend some time here and enjoy the café, restaurant and bar.

Arlington Row, Bibury

Once described as the 'most beautiful village in England' by William Morris, Bibury is home to Arlington Row. This Instagrammable setting is like stepping back in time. It is one of the most iconic scenes in the Cotswolds and is worth getting to early in the day before the hordes of tourists!

St Edward's Church, Stow-on-the-Wold

St. Edward's Church in the centre of Stow hides a Tolkien-esque surprise. It was built between the 11th and 15th centuries and has become known for its north porch door. Two yew trees stand at either side, framing the large wooden door which looks like something from Middle Earth.

Broadway Tower Country Park, Broadway

Sitting proudly above Broadway, the tower is a stunning landmark. It's history is steeped in the arts & crafts movement and fabulous views are on offer from the roof. Visit the café and spend some time exploring the 50-acre estate with its resident red deer.

Chedworth Roman Villa, Chedworth

The Cotswolds has a rich Roman heritage and the Chedworth villa was once one of the grandest in Britain. Spectacular mosaics are on display and you transported to the past. The villa is in a beautiful valley and is set in an abundance of wildlife and countryside.

Lodge Park & Sherborne Park Estate, Aldsworth

Enjoy the great Cotswold countryside at these peaceful estates. You might be lucky enough to spot the fallow and roe deer and badgers and foxes are also known to visit. It is a beautiful vista with a 17th century grandstand and 18th century water meadows.

Bourton House Garden, Bourton-on-the-Hill

The gardens at Bourton House are small but perfectly formed. 3-acres have been transformed into a magical garden with rare, unusual and exotic plants. There are vivid colours and interesting textures used throughout. It has been a labour of love since 1983 and makes a beautiful day out.

Wychwood Wild Garden, Shipton-under-Wychwood

Walking down the Lime Avenue to the wild gardens you pass 100 lime trees, some more than 250 years old. This grand arrival welcomes you to a magical garden with 12.5 acres to explore. Find waterfalls, ponds, woodland and perhaps some local resident wildlife.

Bourton-on-the-Water is so popular that during peak times, there are more visitors than residents!

Ultimate Days Out for the Family:

Crocodiles of the World, Brize Norton

Though crocodiles are the main feature here, with 17 of the 24 species cared for here, you will also find mammals and lizards. Enclosures house fresh and saltwater crocodiles, caiman and alligators and the centre is dedicated to their conservation. If you want to learn more and get up close, wild keeper experiences are available.

Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens, Burford

Set in over 160-acres, Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens is home to some of the most endangered species in the world. There is a Madagascan walkthrough, the largest collection of reptiles in the world and over 130 species of birds alongside lions, giraffes and so much more. The Victorian Manor at the centre of the park has a walled garden filled with colour which always surprises visitors with its beauty.

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

A fantastic day out for the whole family, Birdland is a popular choice. You can see many rare breeds amongst much loved favourites like the flamingo, keep an eye out for newborns and meet 8 different species of owl. There are events on throughout the year so everybody will always be kept entertained.

Quad Quest, Notgrove

Enjoy Cotswold views as you follow tracks through the Notgrove Estate on an electric quad bike, so you don't disturb the wildlife. You will go on a fully guided adventure and there are ten to choose from depending on who is in your group. Family friendly routes take you past the donkeys, alpacas and goats for feeding time.

North Cotswolds Gymnastic and Trampolining Academy, Bourton-on-the-Water

At the NCGTA, children and toddlers and bounce, climb and jump to their hearts content. Toddler play is open for up to 3-year-olds and they are free to explore the gym in a safe environment (under your own supervision). There are bouncy castles, trampolines, foam shapes, bars and beams and a dedicated baby and toddler area.

Bourton Vale Equestrian Centre, Bourton-on-the-Water

Whether you're a beginner or an experience rider, Bourton Vale arrange hacks through the Slaughters. From 30-minutes to an hour each route includes a ride along the river and plenty of opportunities for photos.

Did you know?

Christmas shopping starts in April in Bourton-on-the-Water when The Victorian Christmas Shop opens its doors.

Relax and Revive:

Bamford Wellness Spa, Kingham

Set on the Daylesford organic farm, Bamford Spa offers a holistic approach to relaxation and healing. A range of treatments use both modern and ancient techniques to fully relax the body and let the mind quiet. Classes are available and you can purchase access to The Spring wet spa.

C-Side Spa, Cowley

The magnificent surroundings of Cowley Manor make the C-Side Spa a luxurious escape. After enjoying a treatment of your choice and a swim in the indoor or outdoor pool, wander the grounds where you will find natural springs and lakes.

Dormy House Spa, Broadway

An award-winning spa just outside the heart of Broadway, a picturesque Cotswold location. You will find a menu of treatments, relaxed spa café and fitness suites alongside the candlelit infinity pool.

Hatherley Manor Spa, Cheltenham

Take some time for yourself at Hatherley Manor Spa. A thermal suite lets you choose your favourite way to rejuvenate, or meditate in their tranquil relaxation room. Visit for a treatment and spend some time in the pool for a break away from life's stresses.

Cotswold House Spa, Chipping Campden

Open for spa days or treatments, Cotswold House Spa also has a hair salon and nail bar on site. Found in the centre of Chipping Campden, combine your spa day with a stroll around the town.

Ellenborough Park Spa, Cheltenham

The luxurious Ellenborough Park will not disappoint. Surrounded by countryside on the outskirts of Cheltenham you can enjoy the grounds after your favourite treatment or treat yourself to afternoon tea.

The Elan Spa at The Greenway, Cheltenham

This oasis of calm is an ideal retreat to relax and unwind while on holiday in the Cotswolds. With a choice of day packages and mini spa days you will find something that will fit your needs perfectly.

The Lygon Arms Spa, Broadway

The Lygon Arms on the main street in Broadway is a wonderful place to while away a few hours with a treatment before spending time relaxing and enjoying the peace and quiet on a lounge. The Lygon is also home to the James Martin Grill for a delicious meal.

The Garden Spa at Minster Mill, Minster Lovell

Choose how you want to spend your time by booking either a spa day, a treatment, or add on use of the pool facilities. This space only allows eight users at a time making it a truly relaxing experience.

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