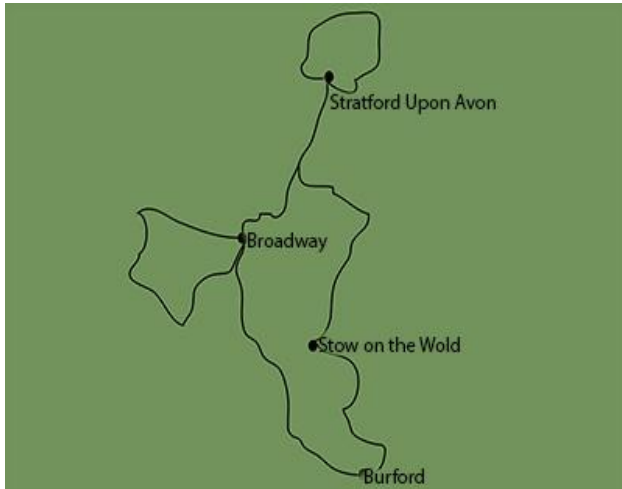


Cycling Safaris

COTSWOLDS 2017 Self Guided Tour 8 days/7 nights



This is a delightful tour, in England which will take you through the Cotswolds and Shakespeare country. This tour offers a chance to see the beautiful Cotswold region of England, this tour incorporates a great blend of Shakespeare and scenic rides offering a chance to step back in time; many towns retain their Tudor character as if frozen in time.

Whether it is watching the sun setting over the rolling hills or rising on Broadway's high street, or the delightful limestone cottages on the winding back roads you will not want to leave this idyllic region. This week long cycling tour takes in some of the quintessential villages this region is renowned for. The Cotswolds is an area pretty much universally renowned for its beauty and essentially English lifestyle. Many picture postcard views will leave you wanting to return here time and time again.

If you enjoy life at a slower pace you will fit right in here in the Cotswolds, or as it is also known, Shakespeare Country.

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 **Stratford upon Avon**

Allow time to look around. Shakespeare's Birthplace is well worth a visit, to find out about the famous playwright. Even having a walk around this culturally beautiful city or if you time it right there may even be a show on offer at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

If arriving early there is a tour we can organise that will take in all five of Shakespeare's houses. This is roughly a ten mile cycle and includes entry into all properties. (Must be booked well in advance and not included in the price) Take in a walk along the idyllic canal to the south west of the city, perfect to walk off your evening meal.

DAY 2**Warwick Castle Loop****29 miles / 47 km**

A wonderful first days cycling to one of the best kept castles in the UK, Warwick Castle. This stunning building, built by William the Conqueror in 1068 within and adjacent to the Anglo-Saxon burgh of Warwick. En-route to Warwick you will travel through the quintessential towns that the Cotswolds is recognised for. For the sharp eyed there is a chance to see one of the only Avro Vulcan fighter jets still in working order in the World. Situated to the north of Loxley at a small private airfield (Wellesbourne), this majestic fighter jet is given a blast down the runway on selected dates throughout the year and is a sight to behold.

DAY 3**Stratford upon Avon - Broadway****20 miles / 32 km**

Today you will cycle in a south direction along the quiet Greenway, converted from an old railway track in 1989. Leaving the Greenway you will head down the quiet country roads, through the rolling hills passing through beautiful countryside. On the way you will pass through one of the gems in the Cotswolds, the ancient market town of Chipping Campden. Today it is a popular Cotswold tourist destination with old inns, hotels, specialist shops and restaurants. Leaving Chipping Campden through the country roads towards your destination, the beautifully kept village of Broadway, often referred to as the 'Jewel of the Cotswold's'. The village lies beneath Fish Hill on the western Cotswold escarpment. The 'broad way' is the wide grass-fringed main street, centered around The Green, which is lined with red chestnut trees and honey-coloured Cotswold limestone buildings, many dating from the 16th century.

DAY 4**Cotswolds Explorer Circular****29 miles / 47 km**

On this day a camera is a must have in your bag! Using mainly quiet roads you will cycle past some of the most breathtaking scenery on offer in this area of outstanding natural beauty. Passing through rolling hills you may work up an appetite for a tea and scone, known locally as a "cream tea", one of the guilty pleasures on offer in the Cotswolds. Ashton under Hill and Beckford are well worth stopping in to see some of the silk craft and little gift shops on offer. Another village well worth looking out for is Stanton; this little gem has been left virtually unspoilt and can be seen in all its Tudor glory. This gentle day's riding gives you plenty of time to enjoy this region and do things at Cotswold pace.

DAY 5**Broadway to Burford****23.5 miles/38 km**

Leaving Broadway cycling through the quiet back roads once again on the way to Burford, be sure to take your camera as you make your way through this picturesque landscape. Cotswold Farm Park is worth a visit for light refreshment. Next we pass through Bourton-on-the-Water. It's known as the 'Venice of the Cotswold's' because of the bridge-spanned stream that runs through the village. Perfect for lunch with lots of cafes with outside seating you will feel as if Venice is only a blink away. Travelling south we then join the cycle way along the River Windrush to Burford, our stop over for the night. Burford is known as the gateway to the Cotswold's. The town centre features some houses dating from the 15th century. It's most notable building, however, is the parish church dedicated to St. John the Baptist.

DAY 6**Burford to Stow on the Wold****21 mi/34 km or 45 miles / 73 km**

Today provides a choice of two routes. The first longer route takes in Blenheim Palace, birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill who was Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1940-1945 and then again from 1951-1955. This magnificent building is set in acres of unspoilt grounds, and is well worth the extra miles! The other route is shorter and allows you to take your time to take in all the beautiful views you will see on the way to the historic town of Stow-on-the-Wold. The town was founded as a planned market place by Norman lords to take advantage of trade on the converging roads.

DAY 7**Stow on the Wold to Stratford upon Avon****30 miles / 48 km**

The last days riding offer the perfect opportunity to feel the fresh clean Cotswold air for the final time. Moreton-in-Marsh is the next main village we will visit. Moreton-in-Marsh was founded on the Roman Fosse Way, later the traditional London to Worcester coaching route via Broadway. We then join the cycle way through Shipston-on-Stour; the town's name derives from being known in ancient times as 'Sheep-wash-Town'. Shipston was for a long time an important sheep market town and after the demand for local wool began to diminish the town continued to flourish thanks to the opening in 1836 of a branch line from the horse-powered tramway built a decade before to link Stratford with Moreton-in-Marsh. Further up the cycle way we come to the village of Ilmington. The village lies just beneath Ilmington Downs, The highest point in Warwickshire is on Ilmington Downs. There is an almost uninterrupted 360 degree magnificent view across the countryside. Arriving in Stratford -upon-Avon having spent what we hope was an enjoyable week in scenic Cotswold countryside.

DAY 8**Departure**

Tour is complete after breakfast.

The recommended route is relatively flat and some 30 miles (50 km) each day should you follow the shorter route. The mileage has been kept low so as to leave plenty of time to stop to visit places of interest along the way. The traffic on the route should be quite light, however you should cycle carefully at all times, especially when going downhill or during any rain showers. Total route distance is about 152 miles (255 km).

TOUR DATES

Self guided tours can start on Saturdays from April until September.

TOUR PRICE 2017

This tour is priced in Sterling:

£720.00 per person sharing

€1095.00 single room occupancy

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights bed and breakfast 3 and 4 star accommodation
- 24 speed touring bike with a pannier bag, bike lock, repair kit, pump
- Tour Information pack
- Route details/Maps
- Luggage transfer each day

You will buy your own lunches and dinner throughout the trip. You should budget for between £5 and £7 for lunch each day. Evening meal cost somewhere between £12 and £20. Nearly all restaurants in England now cater for vegetarians/special diets.

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis with a combination of 3 & 4* B&Bs and hotels. We ensure private facilities almost all of the time. We would be happy to help you organise extra accommodation for the start or the end of the week, you can contact the office directly for this and we will help with bookings or phone numbers if possible.

WHAT TO BRING

*We would seriously recommend that you bring **padded cycling shorts and / or a gel saddle cover** which will definitely make your days cycling more comfortable. Cycling gloves are also a good investment. You can also bring your own saddle which should fit on our bikes.

*We do not provide **rain gear** so be sure to bring your own light weight waterproofs.

*We do not provide **helmets**, it is recommended you wear one, so please bring your own.

*Don't forget sun cream, sunglasses, sun hat.

BIKE & FITNESS



Bikes are Hybrid Touring models in male and female, with 24 speed drive train, have disc brakes, most have front suspension Suntour forks and are fitted with a back carrier, pannier bag and mudguards on the bikes. It is important you give us your height on booking so that we can allocate the correct bike to you.

The advantage of a self guided, cycling safari is that you can take the tour at your own pace. Longer routes are always available on request. However we would recommend that you do try to do some cycling before the tour in order to make your week more enjoyable.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Stratford upon Avon is centrally located within the UK offering easy access from Birmingham International airport. A selection of the airlines serving Birmingham includes American Airlines, Air Canada, Aer Lingus, Air France, Air India, British Airways, British Midland, Continental, Delta, Easyjet, Virgin Atlantic, Quantas. Then get bus and/or train to Stratford

Trains

There are good rail connections from Birmingham airport and the North, South West and South Coast. National Rail Enquiries 08457 484950 www.rail.co.uk

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is the weather like?

England and the Cotswolds have a very mild climate making it ideal for cycling. Although there are occasionally wet days, the rain never usually lasts very long and you are soon free to enjoy a clear view of the magnificent scenery once again.

Are there facilities to change money?

There are banks in Oxford, Burford, Broadway, Stratford, Stow On the Wold, Moreton in Marsh, Chipping Camden, Bourton on the Water and Bureau de Change in Birmingham airport (all open Monday - Friday, 9.30am - 5.00pm). Credit cards are also widely accepted. Traveller's cheques are accepted in banks.

What happens if I am delayed on the first night?

If you know in advance that you will be late please contact the office (+44(0) 1506635 399 or +353(0) 12600749). If you are unexpectedly delayed you should call the first night accommodation to inform them about your delay.

RECOMMENDED READING, VIEWING AND LISTENING

William Shakespeare is an obvious choice.

Stratford & Oxford have many literary links, especially in children's stories through Lewis Carroll, CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien. Lewis and Tolkein met regularly at the Eagle and Child pub to read extracts to each other of their works.

Evelyn Waugh based his novel Brideshead Revisited on his time at Hertford College.

Oxford also provided the backdrop to the award winning detective series Inspector Morse.

Geoffrey Chaucer (Canterbury Tales) resided in Woodstock for some years.

J. M. Barrie was a frequent visitor to Stanway and is thought to have had the idea of Tinkerbell (from Peter Pan) when a moonbeam hit his bedroom wall.