




TEN

Staycation
guide: The
Cotswolds



Declared an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1966, the Cotswolds' rolling hills, sweeping meadows, honey-coloured cottages, chocolate box villages and stately manors make this the archetypal rural English retreat.

Covering 800 square miles and spanning parts of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Wiltshire, and Worcestershire, the region really comes into its own in spring and summer, when you can lace up your hiking boots and follow public footpaths through some of the most idyllic landscapes in the UK. The quiet villages and towns are also ripe for exploration and you can cast yourself back in time at some of the most impressive stately homes and palaces in the National Trust's portfolio. Our specialists know the area inside-out and when the UK government advises it's safe to travel, they will lead you to quiet corners, make sure you dine on the finest local delicacies and find the perfect hotel or cottage where you can truly unwind.

We've listed a selection of the boutique hotels that our members return to time and again. Given the frequency with which we book with these hotels on behalf of our members, we have negotiated special rates and exclusive benefits when you book through us.

If you'd prefer to stay in a self-catered cottage, we can help you find a bolthole that perfectly suits your needs. We'll work with you to research and book your accommodation, help you find flexible booking policies and share details on the cleanliness protocols of each provider, as well as organise grocery deliveries, plan day trips and much more. Many of the properties have said they hope to reopen in early July, pending government advice.

There are few places in the UK as beautiful as the Cotswolds, so dive into our guide to find all the inspiration you need for your future trips to the area.

SIX MUST-SEE SIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

Take in the views from Broadway Tower

Set within 50 acres of estate parkland, this 18th-century tower was the brainchild of legendary architect Capability Brown who built it for Lady Coventry in 1789 so that she could see the beacon hill from her manor house 22 miles away. Today, it's a wonderful day out. Start by exploring the grounds and work up the energy for the upward hike to tour the three-storey folly, and end the day with an ice cream from the shepherd's hut. <https://broadwaytower.co.uk>



Hike a section of the Cotswold Way

Stretching from the market town of Chipping Campden to the Roman city of Bath, the 102-mile route winds its way through some of England's most pastoral scenes. The long-distance walk can be staggered and you'll pass through sleepy villages, explore ancient woodlands, make stops at Neolithic burial barrows, and marvel at stately homes. We can help you plan a route – simply get in touch for details. www.nationaltrail.co.uk

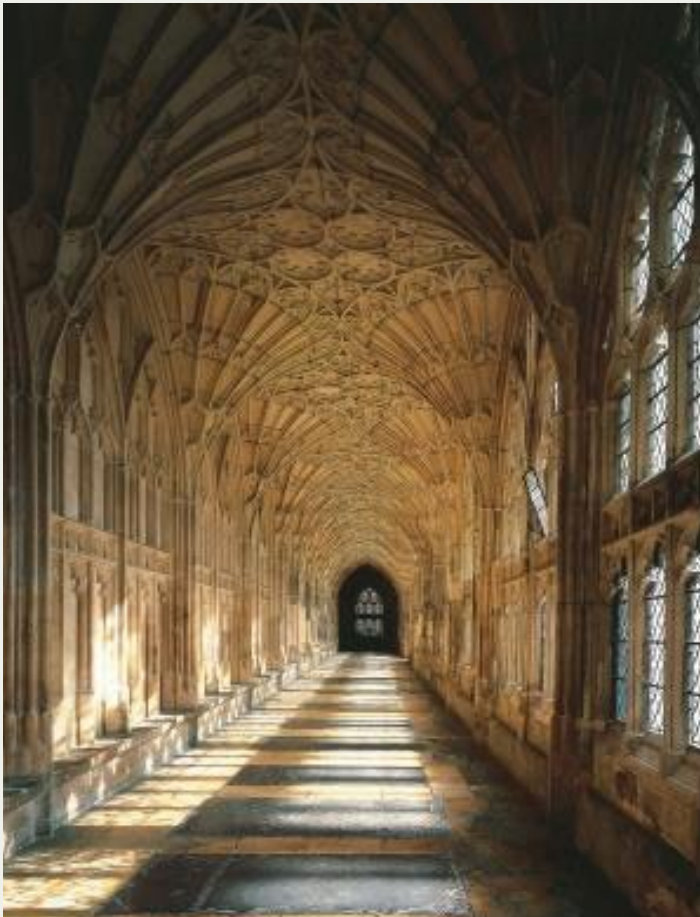


Tour the grounds of Blenheim Palace

With more than 2,000 acres of garden and parkland and hundreds of rooms within the baroque palace, there's enough here to keep you busy for a full day and beyond. Built between 1702 and 1722, it has been home to the Duke of Marlborough and Sir Winston Churchill was born here. If the weather is good, pack a picnic and walk the four-and-a-half-mile loop that leads past lakes to an arboretum, rose garden, cascade, and Vanbrugh's Grand Bridge. www.blenheimpalace.com/

Spot wildlife at Cotswold Water Park

The 140 lakes and wetlands south of Cirencester are home to an incredible array of birds ranging from 20,000 water birds to vast numbers of breeding warblers along with nightingales, little ringed plovers and common terns. A web of cycle and walking trails wind throughout the park and in summer you can hire sailboats, take archery and horse-riding lessons, master wakeboarding and much more. www.waterpark.org/



Visit Gloucester Cathedral

The city's spectacular cathedral is one of the world's finest examples of the Perpendicular Gothic style and it's a peaceful and wondrous place to spend a couple of hours. Inside, make sure you head to the 14-century choir stall to take in the view of the Great East Window – a magnificent piece of stained glass the size of a tennis court. The cloisters are the highlight for many visitors, having doubled as the corridors of Hogwarts in the first, second and sixth Harry Potter films. www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk

Tour the capital of the Cotswolds

The city of Cirencester was once a Roman stronghold known as Corinium and ranked second in size and importance to London. The medieval trade brought further prosperity and much of this rich history can still be seen today. It's a lively town that's full of designer boutiques, excellent restaurants and the UK's oldest polo club favoured by royals, but it remains refreshingly unpretentious. Get in touch with our team to plan your day out.

FIVE UNDER-THE-RADAR EXPERIENCES

Get away from the tourist crowds at five of our quietest hideaways. Our team are on hand to make more suggestions across the county.

Take on the challenge of the Five Valley's Walk

This 210-mile route takes in each of Stroud's beautiful valleys – Painswick, Slad, Toadsmoor, Chalford and Nailsworth. It is easily divided into nine sections, so you can do as much or as little as you like, but the full route is most rewarding if you're up for the challenge.



Cycle the Cotswold Line National Cycle Route

Connecting Honeybourne and Hanborough, this 43-mile route cuts through the heart of the region and will provide you with some of the most striking views in the Cotswolds. The Sustrans route follows quiet country roads and is easily navigated – just follow the number 41 signposts. Expect some hills, but the burn is worth it.

www.sustrans.org.uk



Make a day trip to Blockley

Midway between Moreton-in-Marsh and Chipping Campden, the large town of Blockley remains largely unchanged since its heyday as a silk-producing town in the 18th century. Quaint tea rooms, medieval churches and designer boutiques abound, and you can spend a day pottering along its quiet streets.

Stock up on local delicacies at Daylesford Organic

These guys were well ahead of the curve when it came to organic, seasonal produce and the shop at the centre of the working farm is well stocked with the finest delicacies. Whatever you buy, make sure there's a good selection of dairy products from the herd of British Friesians in your basket.

Tour the summer gardens at Abbey House

Steeped in over 1,000 years of history, the five-acre garden in Malmesbury boasts walled kitchen gardens, monastic fishponds, waterfalls, the largest collection of roses in the UK and over 10,000 varieties of plants giving constant colour from March to November.

www.abbeyhousegardens.co.uk



OUR MEMBERS' FAVOURITE BOUTIQUE HOTELS

Best for wellness... Dormy House

Sitting above the chocolate box village of Broadway, this 17th-century farmhouse comes with traditional flagstone floors, large stone fireplaces and exposed beams, infused with a clean, Scandi-inspired style. An outing to the adjoining Broadway golf course is best followed by a visit to one of the Cotswolds' most indulgent spas, which houses a lavender sauna, salt-infusion steam room, 16-metre infinity pool and offers a wide range of soothing treatments provided by cutting-edge brands Temple Spa, Natura Bissé and Pure Massage.



Best for families... Calcot Hotel & Spa

Four miles from picturesque Tetbury, this rustic haven sits in 200 acres of rolling grounds, perfect for your little ones to explore safely. The converted farmhouse offers a two-bedroom family suite, complete with a private garden. Parents can unwind in the lush aromatherapy spa while the kids burn off energy at the Playbarn, mini-football pitch or pirate play ship, or hone their baking skills at the Bake Time workshops. For lunch, grab a picnic basket for a family feast in the sprawling grounds.

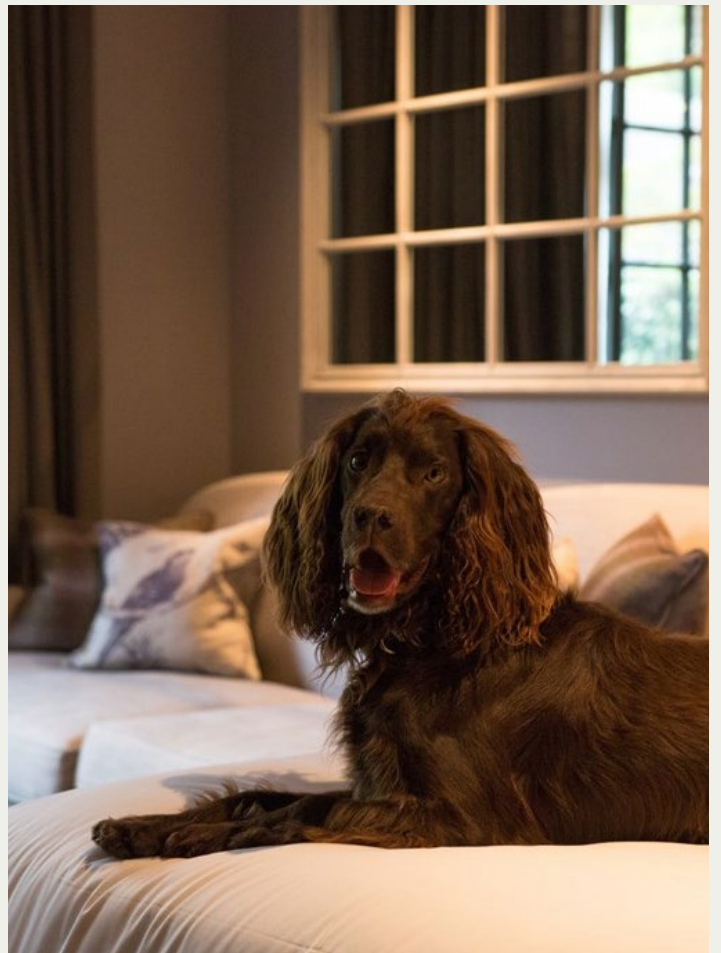


Best for food and drink... Thyme – Hotel, Spa, Farm & Cookery School

Dubbed a village within a village, this cluster of stone properties started out as a cookery school before expanding to a peaceful hamlet retreat with the Leach Valley right on its doorstep. Consisting of a former rectory, farmhouse and converted cottages and barns, this spot is entirely self-sufficient, housing the gorgeous Meadow Spa with heated spring water pool, Thyme's acclaimed The Cookery School and its own village pub. The property's surrounding farm and garden supply the necessary produce for the epicurean menus served at the excellent range of on-site restaurants.

**Best for pets... The Lygon Arms**

Boasting a guest list that includes King Charles I and Oliver Cromwell, this historic inn has seen its fair share of big names staying the night. Centuries later, it remains a popular retreat, located in the centre of Broadway and within easy reach of galleries and museums. Picturesque trails surround the beautiful village, perfect for a walk with your pooch who is more than welcome to stay in the grand restored rooms decked out with antique furnishings, squishy sofas and a comfy dog bed for your furry friend.



Best for views... Barnsley House

This handsome 17th-century manor house sits in the heart of Barnsley village, framed by undiluted countryside and only an hour-and-a-half drive from London. A sleek modern interior subtly incorporates the house's original features, which beautifully complements the natural backdrop the retreat is renowned for. Besides a vegetable patch, the four acres of English gardens, including the hotel's iconic Laburnum Walk, were thought up by famous designer Rosemary Verey. The hotel owns The Village Pub across the road, which is ideal for a relaxed evening meal and a pint or two of local ale.

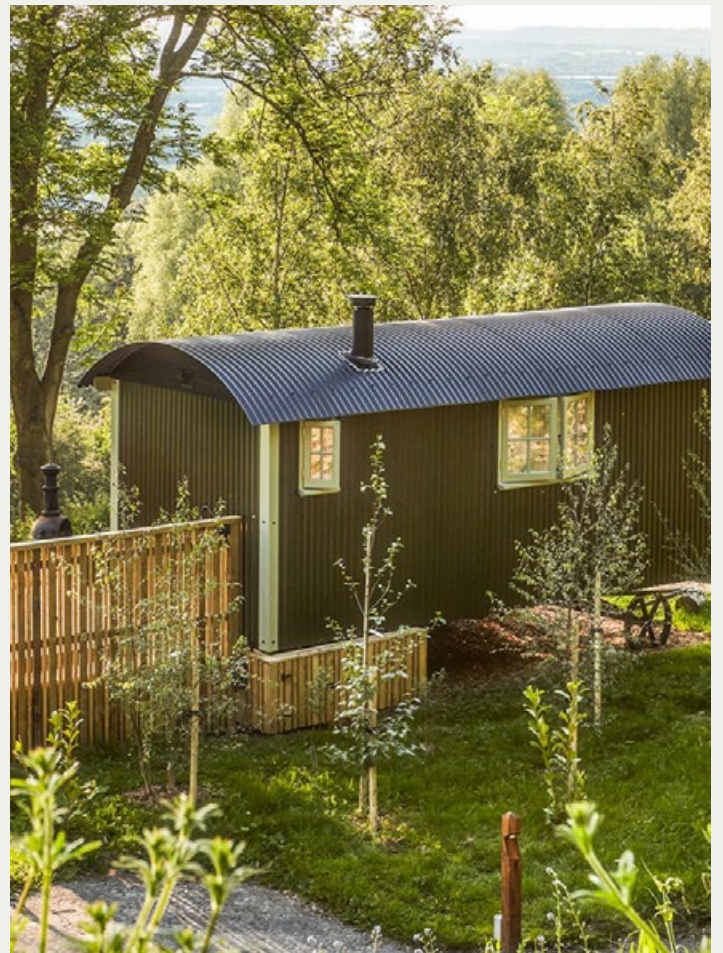


Best for couples... Cowley Manor

Matching country chic with a splash of modernity, this classy escape comes with bucolic grounds and boldly coloured interiors. Only a 15-minute drive from Cheltenham, there's lots to explore nearby, though the hotel itself offers plenty of diversion. Trails snaking through the 55 acres of parkland run past a glittering lake and a collection of contemporary sculptures, which provide a charming backdrop for the hotel's open-air theatre performances in summer. Make sure to pay a visit to the dreamy C-Side Spa, which has been strikingly fitted into the side of a hill.

**Best for the great outdoors... The Fish Hotel**

Located in the 400-acre Farncombe Estate, this escape is a 30-minute walk from Broadway, yet you'll feel a world away. Guests can stay in contemporary bedrooms that come with sweeping Cotswold views, or try something different by booking a treehouse, tucked away in the woodland. For a truly unique experience, opt for a Hilly Hut, where you can overlook the hills from a bubbling outdoor hot tub. The popular Boaty McBoatface hut comes with its own private lake, paddle boat and secluded island, which is perfect for a romantic excursion.



Best for luxury... Ellenborough Park

Situated close to Cheltenham racecourse, this ancient manor house is surrounded by gorgeous honey-coloured stone houses as well 90-acre grounds. Its recent makeover has increased the luxury, with rooms kitted out in an elegant, rural chic style with rich fabrics and lavish wallpaper. The service is impeccable, with a staff happy to cater to guests' every whim, and the grand spa is stocked with local products to enhance your stay.



FINDING THE PERFECT SELF-CATERED COTTAGE

We know that every holiday is as unique as the person booking the trip, meaning everyone has their own set of priorities and preferences when it comes to finding the perfect holiday cottage.

Our specialists are here to save you the time and stress of trawling the internet in search of your dream bolthole – we will work with your budget and preferences to find a selection of properties that we know you'll love. We'll ensure there is availability for your required dates, flexible booking policies (where possible) and that the house will be well-cleaned and safe for your arrival. Our team can also arrange grocery delivery from local suppliers and arrange regular cleaning.

Get in touch today to discuss the options with one of our team or if you have any questions regarding a self-catered holiday.



Best for family holidays... Ryeworth Cottage**Sleeps: 6**

Complete with hammam, huge garden, barbecue terrace and heated indoor swimming pool, this large country house in Kingham has lots of space for families. The open-plan ground floor, with a flagstone floor, has an open fireplace, a four-door AGA and large sofas to sink into at the end of a day of exploring the area.

**Best for a romantic retreat... Little Scarlet****Sleeps: 2**

Once a spice store, this historic cottage in the insanely pretty village of Burford has retained much of its traditional character but has been brought into the modern day with tasteful design touches. The bathroom is particularly special with its twin roll top baths and the courtyard garden is perfect for long summer evenings.

**Best for all-out luxury... The Aviary****Sleeps: 12**

This sprawling 17th-century farmhouse close to Moreton-in-Marsh has been converted into one of the most impressive self-catering retreats in the Cotswolds. There's a 15-metre heated outdoor pool, hot tub, games room, multiple snugs, a cinema room and a huge open-plan kitchen and dining area overlooking the manicured gardens. It's surrounded by incredible countryside, but you needn't leave if you just want to relax.



Best for stepping back in time...

Midsummer Wood

Sleeps: 8

Set in 11 acres on the fringes of Bourton-on-the-Water, this Grade-II listed mill-house has retained every inch of its historic charm. It's an old-world retreat with features like its 14th-century mill race that runs through the house, but it entwines modern luxuries such as a heated swimming pool, Mark Wilkinson country kitchen, tennis court and cinema room.



Best for the great outdoors...

Kingham Cottages

Sleeps: 8

From the fully restored coach house that sleep up to eight guests to the 300-year-old Lodge Cottage that's ideal for four, the collection of five properties on the estate in Kingham are ideally located for venturing into the wilds. When you return home, you'll be greeted with roaring fires, modern kitchens and four-poster beds.



THE READING LIST

There are countless literary masterpieces inspired by the rolling hills and rural life of the Cotswolds – here are four that should be on your bookshelf.



Cider with Rosie by Laurie Lee

With over six million copies sold worldwide since 1959, this childhood account of Cotswold life during World War I has given the region global recognition and is a classic.

The Country Walk by T.S. Eliot

On one of his regular trips to Chipping Camden to visit a college girlfriend, the Nobel laureate was nearly trampled by cows and only escaped by diving into a mulberry bush – this is his humorous, poetic account of the incident.

The Tailor of Gloucester by Beatrix Potter

A personal favourite of the Cotswold author, this bedtime tale is about a tailor whose work on a waistcoat is finished by the grateful mice which he rescues from his cat.

Persuasion by Jane Austen

Austen lived in the Georgian city of Bath with her family from 1801-1806 and it is closely associated with the author, featuring in two of her novels – Persuasion and Northanger Abbey. Today, you can explore the locations that Austen used in her novels with [**free audio walking tour from Visit Bath.**](#)

THE WATCH LIST

From the pastoral lifestyle to the historic villages, the Cotswolds is a film and TV director's dream. Here are the shows and films that will cast you into its landscapes.



Downton Abbey

The six-season period drama has become a global hit since it launched on the BBC in 2010 and many of the locations are dotted across the Cotswolds, including Bampton, which doubles as the fictional village of Downton.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Gloucester Cathedral's historic cloisters were transformed into the hallowed corridors of Hogwarts for the first two Harry Potter films.

Bridget Jones's Diary

The picture-perfect village of Snowhill was covered in fake snow for the winter scenes of the 2001 rom-com that launched Renée Zellweger into the mainstream.

This Country

This BAFTA-winning BBC mockumentary explores the lives of young people in modern rural Britain, focusing on cousins Kerry and Lee 'Kurtan' Mucklowe, and their life experiences in a typical Cotswold village.

THE TOP THREE NATIONAL TRUST PROPERTIES TO VISIT WHEN THEY REOPEN

From impeccably preserved Roman ruins to manicured gardens and stately homes, the Cotswolds is home to an impressive array of National Trust properties. As lockdown eases, many of the sites are reopening and we can keep you up to date with all the latest news. In the meantime, here are three of the most impressive to add to your must-visit list:



Snowhill Manor and Garden

Located on the edge of Snowhill in Gloucestershire, this 16th-century country house is known for its eccentric owner Charles Paget Wade who filled the house with an enormous collection of 22,000 antiques and curiosities. The terraced garden is designed in the Arts and Crafts style and has plenty of nooks for sitting in the sun.

Chedworth Roman Villa

Cradled in a beautiful Cotswold valley, you can view the remains of one of the grandest Roman villas in Britain. Evidence suggests that the first stone structure at the site was erected in AD 200, before it was expanded into a grand villa that stood until the Romans pulled out of Britain in AD 410.

Westbury Court Garden

This Dutch water garden in Westbury-on-Severn, Gloucestershire, was laid out from 1696–1705, and is a rare survival not to have been replaced in the 18th century by a naturalistic garden landscape as popularised by Capability Brown. The 137-metre canal is a major highlight.

Why book through Ten?



- When the government advises it's safe to travel, we will take your preferences and provide you with a range of suitable options, saving you the time and stress of doing the research yourself.
- We have trade access to booking systems for private accommodation and you will enjoy preferential rates, as well as **receiving up to £100 off all bookings made through us before 30 June***.
- We carry out all due diligence and ensure the booking policies are clear and flexible (where possible).
- We'll make sure you're clear on the booking and cancellation policies.
- Our specialists provide on-the-ground support, 24/7, and can plan every aspect of your getaway.
- We will only recommend properties from fully vetted and trusted suppliers.
- UK domestic travel makes up a large proportion of our members' travel bookings and our specialists have been planning and booking UK staycations for our members for more than two decades. As a result, we know our members' favourite destinations inside-out.
- Enjoy exclusive benefits with leading car hire companies, including Avis, Sixt and Enterprise.
- Our dining and entertainment specialists can arrange local grocery deliveries, plan day trips and excursions and much more.

*Ts&Cs apply:

- Discount applicable for accommodation bookings only (no flight-only or car hire)
- Minimum spend £900 for £75 discount and £1,500 for £100 discount
- Discount will not be incorporated into any refunds if the booking is cancelled or transferred
- Offer valid for new bookings only
- Offer redeemable once per member