



## Cotswolds – Village Tour

The charming cottages, the dignified manor house, the historic church, the pub and the green; all the elements of the classic English village that are so well represented by the famous sights of the Cotswolds. Stow-on-the-Wold, the Slaughters, Bourton-on-the-Water, Northleach and Moreton-in-Marsh; these villages and small market towns draw people from around the world to admire their handsome stone buildings and carefully tended gardens that seem to capture the spirit of a lost age. They stand amidst peaceful countryside; winding footpaths lead across pastures and through woodland to other villages off the tourist trail, less well known but often as delightful and even more tranquil. The grand architecture and landscaped parkland of country houses is shown off at its best in the setting of this affluent farmland which has been designated as England's largest Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Be sure to bring a camera!

Main centres: Cheltenham, Bourton-on-the-Water, Stow-on-the-Wold and Moreton-in-Marsh.

11 days, 10 nights

**Day 1** – Arrive in Cheltenham and check into your hotel. Enjoy a stroll around Britain's most complete Regency Spa town. Take in the many elegant buildings, beautiful parks, gardens and fascinating museums.

**Day 2** – Circular walk from Cheltenham Spa. Climb out of Cheltenham to the top of Leckhampton Hill where you will be rewarded by some superb views of the Severn Vale and Cheltenham with some interesting historical sites. Continue on through the village of Coberley and walk to Seven Springs, the disputed source of the river Thames.

**Day 3** – Winchcombe, Belas Knap, Cleeve Hill, & Prestbury. Today starts with a short bus journey

to the ancient small town of Winchcombe, home of Sudeley Castle. It is a walk of stark contrasts, crossing the open grassland of Cleeve Common and the highest point on the Cotswolds before descending into Prestbury, supposedly the most haunted village in England, before heading back to the elegant Georgian buildings and parks of Cheltenham Spa.

**Day 4** – Prinknash, Cranham, Birdlip &, Crickley Hill. Again a bus journey takes you to the start. The first half of this walk follows tracks and paths through the extensive beech woods around Cranham. The second half takes you along the Cotswold escarpment with its stunning views to Crickley Hill.

**Day 5** – Minibus transfer then a walk to Bourton-on-the-Water. The beautiful pastures and woods along the banks of the little River Coln are the setting for the best exposed Roman Villa in the country. The handsome little market town of Northleach provides an excellent introduction to this countryside. Its large 15th century 'wool' church, built by the wealthy merchants, is typical of the Cotswold style while the Heritage Centre gives a fascinating insight into traditional farming life. The walk follows the Monarch's Way through unspoilt hamlets and over rolling country to Bourton in the valley of the River Windrush. This is the most famous village in the area with a wide range of attractions including museums, a perfumery and a delightful maze.

**Day 6** – Circuit from Bourton. A walk over rolling hills through mixed farmland takes you up to Cold Aston. Here you can rest by the pub before strolling on to Naunton where pretty stone cottages and another local inn nestle in a valley surrounded by sheep pasture and horse racing gallops. Follow the River Windrush down through lush meadows and woods, past a 'lost' mediaeval village back to Bourton.

**Continued overleaf...**



**Day 7** – Bourton to Stow-on-the-Wold. Two pairs of beautiful riverside villages feature on today's walk. Lower and Upper Slaughter, on the banks of the little River Eye, are among the most popular in the Cotswolds. The charming cottages, manor houses and water mill, now being restored to full working order, are favourite subjects for local artists who regularly exhibit their work in the village hall. Though less often visited, Lower and Upper Swell on the River Dickler are equally pleasant with cosy country inns and unique features like the ornate Georgian therapeutic well. At Stow-on-the-Wold handsome stone buildings stand around a market square that once hosted some of the greatest sheep fairs in the country.

**Day 8** – Circular walk around the Evenlode Valley. Stroll out through secluded villages to join the Oxfordshire Way through the wide valley of the River Evenlode. The walk here combines wide views across to the Wychwood with visits to Icomb, Bledington and Oddington, often missed from the tourist trails. Enjoy the peace of the countryside as you stroll past delightful cottage gardens, mediaeval church wall paintings, village greens and charming manor houses on the way back to Stow-on-the-Wold.

**Day 9** – Stow-on-the-Wold to Moreton in Marsh. Continue up the Evenlode Valley past the typically English manor at Donnington and the surprising Oriental house at Sezincote, an 18th century manor built in the Indian style with water gardens. Moreton in Marsh stands either side of a broad main street lined with fine houses, shops and inns.

**Day 10** – Circuit from Moreton. The village of Blockley is one of the jewels of the Cotswolds that is often overlooked. The little stream that runs through it once supported a dozen mills that were used for all manner of industry from flour milling to silk weaving. The delightful old buildings, ponds and streams now offer wonderful opportunities for creative gardeners. At Batsford there is gardening on a much larger scale with an Arboretum inspired by the mountain sides of Asia Minor and a Falconry Centre running regular demonstrations. The cottages, church and 14th century tithe barn at Bourton on the Hill make a wonderful and very English scene.

**Day 11** – Depart from Moreton Station.

### Prices

**10 nights**

**B&B Price: £795.00**

**Hotel Price: £955.00**

**9 nights (misses day 4)**

**B&B Price: £717.00**

**Hotel Price: £870.00**

**8 nights (misses days 3 and 4)**

**B&B Price: £639.00**

**Hotel Price: £784.00**

**7 nights (misses days 2, 3 and 4)**

**B&B Price: £560.00**

**Hotel Price: £699.00**

**6 nights (misses days 2, 3, 4 and 10)**

**B&B Price: £497.00**

**Hotel Price: £596.00**

### Local Attractions:

- Batsford Park Arboretum
- Bourton Model Village
- Bourton House Garden
- Chedworth Roman Villa
- Cotswold Pottery
- Mechanical Music Museum
- Old Mill Museum
- Sezincote Manor.

### Ride info:

6-11 miles a day,  
6 days walking.  
Easy.

Note – Starts Cheltenham,  
finishes Moreton-in-Marsh.