

QUINTESSENTIAL ENGLAND

Small-Group, Hiking & Cultural Adventures



Photo: Colin Watts



WHEN:

15 - 26 May 2023
12days/11 nights

WHERE:

East Anglia,
Cotswolds & Bath

WHAT:

Hiking and Cultural
Tour of rural and small-
town England



Quintessential England

*And did those feet in ancient times,
Walk upon England's mountains green:
And was the holy Lamb of God,
On England's pleasant pastures seen!*

William Blake

Okay, so the debate goes on, did Jesus or didn't Jesus get to see England's green mountains and pleasant pastures? It doesn't really matter, what does matter though, is if you choose to take the trip, you will!

This trip is about experiencing many of the quintessentially eccentric ways of English culture. We will see, or do, what the poms know as 'normal'. Where much of the Australian culture was based around the English way of life, you'll see how much Australia has moved on through other influences, leaving England steeped in traditional ways.

On this bespoke tour we are going off the beaten track, and instead of getting snapshots of tourism hotspots, we have hand-picked three areas that you may have heard of but know very little about; East Anglia, The Cotswolds, and Bath.

We'll visit a stately home, a wattle and daub guildhall, and a castle on a hill. We'll experience the joys of fish and chips on a pebble beach, walk along a pier for a stick of rock and play the penny arcade. We'll walk by the higgledy-piggledy cottages of Lavenham, and hike from village to village past honey-coloured thatched Cotswold cottages.

We'll join in on a pub quiz, sip afternoon tea with cucumber sandwiches, punt the Cam, and be spooked in Bath. And finally, we'll have a degustation dinner at a three-star Michelin restaurant, to name but a few of the experiences.

If some of that sounds like a foreign language, do not worry, you'll have your Pommy-Australian host, Suzanne, on hand to translate along the way.

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Suffolk

Day 1 - Bury St Edmunds (Afternoon Tea)

Arrive in Bury St Edmunds to start the tour by 10am. Check-in and meet the group at reception. We will walk into town for a historical walking tour. Bury has just celebrated 1000 years since the founding of the Abbey of St Edmund by King Cnut. Cnut was the King of England, Denmark and Norway - a little unorthodox but that's the way the Vikings rolled!

After the tour, you are free to enjoy the afternoon wandering around the market town. This afternoon, we'll take afternoon tea (tiffin) at the Angel Hotel at 4.00pm, a great British tradition!

Day 2 - Ickworth (B)

After breakfast we'll head a few short miles out of town to visit Ickworth House, the largest stately home in the area. It was first mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086 and has a colourful history ever since. The First Earl of Bristol made this his home transforming it into an aristocratic paradise.

Enjoy the house, gardens and parklands which are now open to the public, thanks to the National Trust (and death duties!). There is an onsite cafe so we can have lunch there without feeling rushed. This is our only place to be today so take your time.

Day 3 - Lavenham - Kersey (B)

The historical villages of Lavenham, Hadleigh, and Kersey are on our visit list today. Lavenham in its 15th century heyday was a thriving town due to the wool industry. However, that industry is long gone, but the wattle and daub workers' cottages still stand proud, if in a higgledy-piggledy and somewhat crooked fashion. Enjoy a wander around, and visit the guildhall and a tea room - you'll understand how important tea is to British culture.

From here we take a short drive to the village of Hadleigh for a country ramble across the farmers' fields to the neighbouring village of Kersey. Here you can try a traditional pub lunch (own expense) to build up your energy, as we still have to walk back (approx 10km round walk).

We'll get back to Bury late afternoon. This evening we can put a team together and take part in the local pub trivia night, I'm sure the locals would love to pit their wits against a team from the antipodes!



Suffolk-Cambridge-Cotswolds

Day 4 - Seaside (B)

We're off to see the sea and experience a quintessential English holiday on the Suffolk coast, all in one day!

From rolling up your trousers and paddling (or swimming) in the freezing North Sea, feel free to place a knotted handkerchief on your head to complete the look, to walking on a pebbled beach without socks or shoes (something akin to walking on lego blocks). We'll visit a pier and experiencing the penny arcades, saucy postcards, and sticks of rock. And no day is complete without eating fish and chips on the beach sheltered from the wind and potential rain! If we can send you home crimson red with sunburn, then our job here is done (only joking, sun smart at all times ☺)

Day 5 - Bury - Cambridge - Cotswolds (B)

After a tearful farewell to Bury St Edmunds, we'll take the 30min drive to the university town of Cambridge. Here we'll hire ourselves a punt (flat-bottomed wooden boat) and punter (person with a long wooden pole) and take a guided punt (ride) down the River Cam. Learn about the history of the colleges, past students, and the rivalry with Oxford University. It's a fascinating tour with lots of fun facts to learn.

After lunch, we'll hit the road for a long drive (approx 2 hours) to beautiful Chipping Campden in the Cotswolds. Arriving late afternoon for some free time.

Day 6 - Broadway 10km (B)

This morning we start a lovely three-day hike from village to village through the Cotswolds.

We leave our accommodation, carrying just our day packs while our luggage is taken ahead of us. The trail climbs onto an escarpment offering fine views across the Vale of Evesham. We'll walk to Broadway Tower (see front cover) and then down to the picturesque town of Broadway with its honey-coloured houses and fine old English tea rooms - you'll wonder how you ever lived without these!

Day 7 - Wood Stanway 10km (B)

Our route today climbs an escarpment to the remains of an Iron Age hill fort called Shenberrow Camp then descends to the pretty villages of Stanton and Stanway before finishing in the hamlet of Wood Stanway. With just 10km to walk we have all the time in the world to stop and enjoy the views and meet the locals along the way.



Cotswolds

Day 8 - Winchcombe 8km (B & D)

Today we will enjoy lovely views across the Vale of Evesham and pass the medieval pilgrimage site of Hailes Abbey before reaching Winchcombe, the ancient capital of Mercia. We won't be far from Sudeley Castle, dating back to the 12th century, so if anyone is in the mood for a castle visit we're almost on their doorstep.

This evening we are going to have a celebratory degustation dinner in Three Star Michelin Restaurant, 5 North St, Winchcombe (drinks at own expense)

Day 9 - Bath (B)

We leave the countryside for the Somerset city of Bath. Built for pleasure and relaxation, beautiful Bath has been a wellness destination since Roman times. The waters are still a big draw card, both at the ancient Roman Baths and the thoroughly modern Thermae Bath Spa, which houses the only natural thermal hot springs in Britain you can bathe in.

This evening we'll go off the beaten track for a fun-filled ghostly tour around the many haunts of beautiful Bath. We'll discover tales of murder, mayhem, witch burnings, hangings, medieval monks, duels, tortures, desperate suicides, poltergeists and even romantic elopements (not every ghost has to be tragic!).

Hopefully you'll be able to sleep well tonight!

Day 10 & 11 - Bath (B)

Our time in Bath is free for you to do as you wish, you may like to visit the Roman baths or the modern-day equivalent along with a spa treatment. No visit is complete without a visit to the Royal Crescent of 30 terrace houses (see photo above). No 1 is a museum to give you an idea what life was like when the crescent was built.

If gardens are your preference you may like the Prior Park Landscape Garden with its Palladian Bridge (one of only four in the world). The great thing is you have time to do as much or as little as pleases you.

If you are unsure what to do, ask your host or others in the group and tag along with them.



Day 12 - Departure (B)

Our tour ends after breakfast today. Bath is a great location for exploring further. You are on the edge of the west country making it easy to head further west toward Lands End. Within an hour you can be in South Wales. Within two hours you can be on the south coast to catch a ferry to the channel islands, or in the centre of London.

If you need any help with onward or homeward travel, please discuss this at the time of booking.

The Details

PRICE INCLUDES

- Small-Group - fully escorted
- Guided tour - Bury St Edmunds
- Entry to Ickworth House
- 11 nights accommodation with breakfast daily
- 1 x afternoon high tea
- All transfers throughout the tour
- Entry to Lavenham Guildhall
- Village to village hike Hadleigh to Kersey return
- Pub trivial night
- Coastal visit including pier walk
- Punting on the River Cam
- Three days village to village hike in Cotswolds (approx 10km/day)
- 1 x degustation dinner (drinks not included)
- Ghost tour of Bath
- Assistance with getting to the start and end of tour

PRICE EXCLUDES:

- Meals not mentioned in inclusions
- All expenses of a personal nature
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Flights to/from UK
- Transport to start/from end of tour

COST PER PERSON

- \$4,795/pp twin share

OWN ROOM OPTION

- \$1,295/own room

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