

In the heart of England | Our Shakespeare-Tour - 8 days

This particular biking vacation in England will take you through the Cotswolds and Shakespeare country. It offers a chance to see the beautiful Cotswold region of England and 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, 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 as beautiful and essentially English. 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.

Day 1: Arrival in Stratford-upon-Avon

Take the 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 organize that will take in all five of Shakespeare's houses. This is roughly a ten mile cycle and includes entry into all properties. 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, ~47 km (29 miles)

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 recognized 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, ~32 km (20 miles)

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-colored Cotswold limestone buildings, many dating from the 16th century.

Day 4: Cotswolds Explorer Circular, ~46 km (29 miles)

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 if 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 unspoiled 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 > Burford, ~38 km (23 miles)

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. Traveling 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 center features

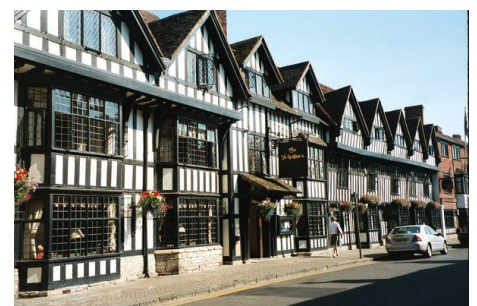
Services:

7 nights in 4**** or 3*** guest houses, hotels and inns
 7x breakfast
 luggage transport
 welcome briefing
 navigation app with maps (access code for App emailed 3 weeks before departure) GB
 service hotline

additional services:

roadbook (maps)	50 €
rental bike	165 €
own bike	0 €

Price:



some houses dating from the 15th century. Its most notable building, however, is the parish church dedicated to St. John the Baptist.

Day 6: Burford > Stow-on-the-Wold, ~34 or 73 km (21 or 45 miles)

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 unspoiled 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 > Stratford-upon-Avon, ~48 km (30 miles)

The last days riding offers 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

Your tour is complete after breakfast.

