



Heart of England 2025

Step into storybook England, where Oxford enchants with its ‘dreaming spires’ and Bath inspires with its Roman and Georgian architecture. Trace Shakespeare’s footsteps in Stratford-upon-Avon as you visit his timbered childhood home. Indulge in the sweet and savoury delights of high tea in the charming Cotswolds. And pause in Lacock Abbey, where hushed cloisters whisper of movie magic and centuries past. Delve into the heart of England with us, where your next chapter is ready to begin.





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Wellington by Blue Orchid @ 18:00

71 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PA

Wellington by Blue Orchid @ 17:30

71 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PA



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Tour highlights

- ✓ Visit the childhood home and final resting place of William Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon
- ✓ Enjoy high tea at a charming village nestled amongst the Cotswolds
- ✓ Discover the rich culture and extraordinary architecture of Bath

More inclusions

- ✓ 5 breakfasts, 3 dinners
- ✓ 5 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- ✓ Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use

- England - GBP



Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

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Your itinerary

Day 1 | London (England)

After meeting the group in England's vibrant capital, we'll get to know one another over a delicious welcome dinner at the hotel.

Included today



Accommodation

Wellington by Blue Orchid (or similar)



Meals

+ Dinner

Day 2 | London – Oxford – Stratford-upon-Avon

After breakfast, we'll set our sights on our first stop: charming Oxford. Here, we'll learn about the poets, professors, scientists and sporting heroes that have graced the city's streets over the years with a locally guided walking tour. Then: we'll venture through quintessential English countryside to meet with the Cotswolds. This charming area is a patchwork of green hills and farmland, peppered with centuries-old villages and caramel-hued cottages. We'll enjoy some free time to stroll the elegant terraced High Street of Chipping Campden – before tucking into another delicious group dinner at our hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Included today



Accommodation

Swan's Nest Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Dinner

Day 3 | Stratford-upon-Avon – Cotswolds – Stratford-upon-Avon

The life and times of William Shakespeare will take centre stage today when we pay a visit to the playwright's timbered childhood home and his wife Anne Hathaway's pretty thatched cottage. A stroll through the blooming gardens here is a must! We'll have some time to enjoy lunch at our leisure – before we explore some picturesque Cotswolds hamlets this afternoon. This evening will be ours to spend at our leisure.

Included today



Accommodation

Swan's Nest Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

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Day 4 | Stratford-upon-Avon – Lacock – Bath

Day four promises to be an indulgent one, with an afternoon of high tea on the agenda before we move on to Lacock. This showstopper of a village often doubles as a film set, and you may recognise it from *Pride and Prejudice* or *The Other Boleyn Girl*. After imagining ourselves as costume drama heroes and heroines, we'll step inside the magnificent abbey – whose peaceful cloisters took a starring turn as the Hogwarts hallways in the *Harry Potter* series. Then: onwards to Bath, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed city with true 'wow' factor, where we'll make ourselves at home for our final two nights. This evening, we'll spend exploring Bath at our own pace.

Included today



Accommodation

The Abbey Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

Day 5 | Bath

After receiving a fascinating insight into Roman life on a morning visit to the Roman Baths, we'll visit the museum at No. 1 Royal Crescent. The afternoon will then be yours to explore the city for yourself. You could enjoy a bit of 'me time' at Thermae Bath Spa (Britain's only thermal spa), and bathe in mineral-rich waters while scanning the skyline from the rooftop pool – or, if you'd prefer to explore on foot, you could discover Bath's proud independent side as you wander past stylish boutiques and celebrated coffee shops. At our last dinner together, we'll swap stories and look back on our English journey with fond memories.

Included today



Accommodation

The Abbey Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Dinner



Day 6 | Bath – Longleat House and Avebury – London

The current seat of the Marquess of Bath, the impressive Longleat House blends classic architecture with creative interiors – and it's here that we'll start the day. We'll have plenty of time to explore before we move on to Avebury, an immense stone circle set within an ancient landscape of enigmatic monuments, tombs and roads. While Stonehenge attracts tourists from around the world and does not permit close access, at Avebury we'll have the opportunity to walk freely among the standing stones. Steeped in mystery, this prehistoric stone circle is a fascinating sight – and makes for a tremendous final stop. Later this afternoon, our trip will come to a close back in London.

Included today



Meals

+ Breakfast



Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).



Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Sun hat | ✓ Long-sleeved tops | ✓ Light jacket |
| ✓ Sunglasses | ✓ Short-sleeved tops | ✓ Waterproof jacket |
| ✓ Sleepwear | ✓ Shorts/skirts | ✓ Trousers |
| ✓ Warm jacket | ✓ Socks | ✓ Swimwear |
| ✓ Underwear | ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ✓ Multi-use adapter plug | ✓ Toiletries | ✓ Camera |
| ✓ Batteries | ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Towel |
| ✓ Umbrella | ✓ Reusable water bottle | ✓ Insect repellent |
| ✓ Any personal medication | ✓ Basic medical kit (paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) | |

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How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

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FAQs

What's the weather like?

The weather in England is famously unpredictable! Generally, summer can be warm and sunny but rain and cloudy skies are still possible. Autumn and winter are cool, wet and windy. We suggest packing for changeable weather – layers, an umbrella and a trusty raincoat will be essential.

Which type of hotels will we stay in?

Our thoughtfully selected accommodation is full of charm and historic details – expect elegant country inns, grand town centre hotels and even the odd castle! For this reason, rooms vary in size, and most hotels don't have lifts – meaning you'll likely need to access your room via stairs. Porterage will be included wherever possible.

Although air conditioning is mostly unavailable in historic buildings, fans will be provided during hot spells. Most hotels have bathtubs with overhead showers (rather than walk-in showers), so you'll be able to enjoy a soak at the end of the day. It's common for kettles to be included in rooms in England, ready for you to make a refreshing cup of English tea!

Will we get to visit Anne Hathaway's Cottage?

Yes, during our time in Stratford-upon-Avon we pay a visit to Anne Hathaway's pretty, thatched cottage.

That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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