



Oxford, Cotswolds & Around

Includes »

Oxfordshire.....	191
Oxford.....	191
The Cotswolds.....	207
Witney.....	209
Painswick	223
Gloucestershire.....	224
Cheltenham.....	224
Hertfordshire.....	233
St Albans	233
Bedfordshire & Buckinghamshire.....	235
Berkshire.....	236
Windsor & Eton	237

Why Go?

Dotted with gorgeous little villages, this part of the country is as close to the old-world English idyll as you'll get. It's a haven of lush rolling hills, rose-clad cottages, graceful stone churches, thatched roofs, cream teas and antique shops. Add to the mix the legendary university city of Oxford, with its splendid architecture and lively student vibe, and it's easy to see why the region is a magnet for visitors.

Although the roads and the most popular villages are busy in summer, it's easy to get off the tourist trail. The Cotswolds are at their best when you find your own romantic refuge and discover the fire-lit inns and grandiose manors that persuade A-list celebrities and the merely moneyed to buy property here.

Most of the area is an easy day-trip from London, but Oxford and the Cotswolds deserve at least a couple of leisurely days.

Best Places to Eat

- » Le Champignon Sauvage (p228)
- » Prithvi (p228)
- » Chef's Table (p221)
- » Edamame (p202)
- » 5 North St (p217)

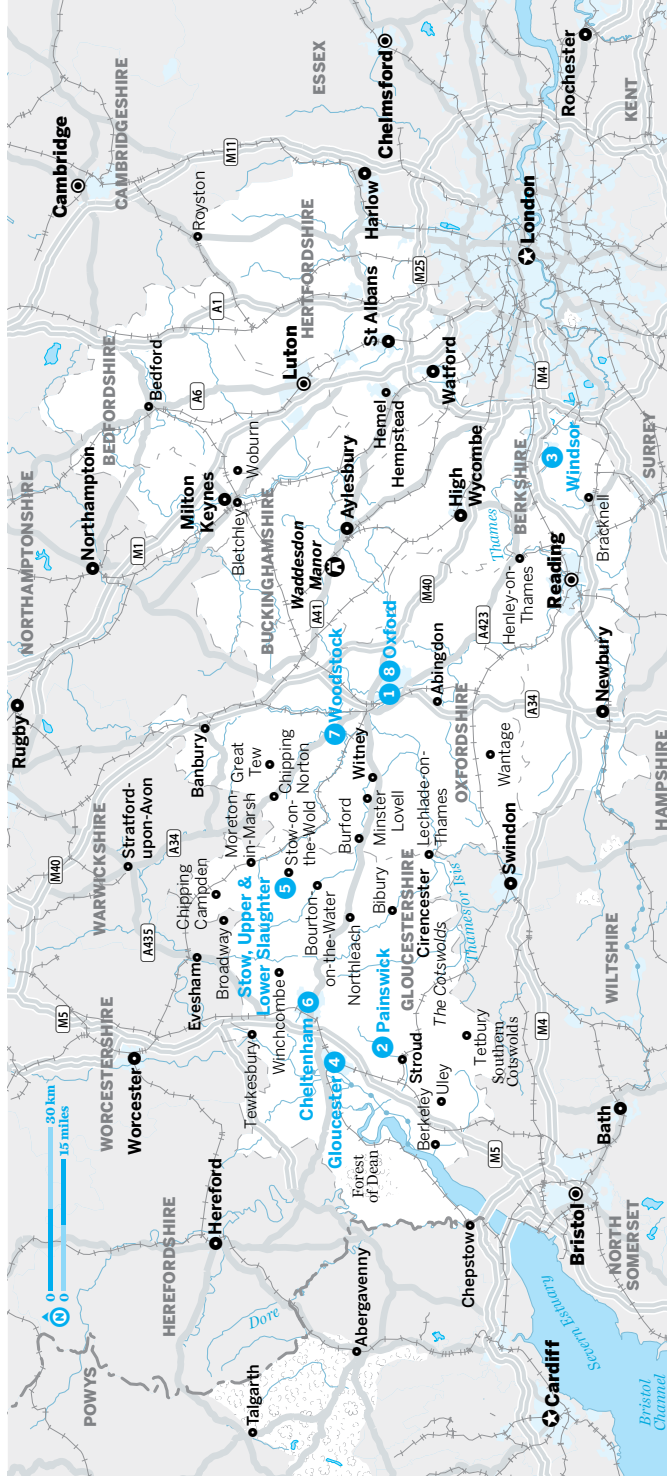
Best Places to Stay

- » Old Swan & Minster Mill (p210)
- » Malmaison (p201)
- » Cotswold88 (p223)
- » Ellenborough Park (p227)
- » Lamb Inn (p211)

When to Go

On 1 May you can welcome the dawn with Oxford's Magdalen College Choir, which sings hymns from the college tower. In July you can sip champagne and watch the rowing at Henley's Royal Regatta and Festival. September is the best time to sample England's finest ales at the four-day St Albans Beer Festival.

The Cotswolds are good for a visit at any time of year, though the best time for rambling is in late spring, early summer and September, with the weather in your favour but without the crowds.



Oxford, Cotswolds & Around Highlights

- 1 Following in the footsteps of Lyra, Tolkien, CS Lewis and Inspector Morse as you tour the **Oxford colleges** (p194)
- 2 Meandering around **Painswick** (p223), one of the most beautiful and unspoilt towns in the Cotswolds
- 3 Getting a glimpse of the high life at the Queen's hideaway, **Windsor Castle** (p237)
- 4 Touring the elegant cloisters at the magnificent **Gloucester Cathedral** (p230)
- 5 Driving the pretty country lanes near **Stow-on-the-Wold** (p217)
- 6 Sampling the superb food at the many fine restaurants in **Cheltenham** (p224)
- 7 Touring the monumental **Blenheim Palace** in Woodstock (p200), one of the grandest stately homes
- 8 Exploring the archaeological treasure trove that is the **Pitt Rivers Museum** (p198) in Oxford