



Oxford, Cotswolds & Around

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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 and thatched roofs. 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.

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 (p199) and Festival. September is the best time to sample England's finest ales at the four-day St Albans Beer Festival. The best time for rambling in the Cotswolds is in spring, early summer and September, with the weather in your favour but without the July and August crowds.

Best Places to Eat

- » Le Champignon Sauvage (p217)
- » Prithvi (p217)
- » Chef's Table (p212)
- » Edamame (p195)
- » 5 North St (p208)

Best Places to Stay

- » Old Swan & Minster Mill (p201)
- » Malmaison (p194)
- » Cotswold88 (p214)
- » Ellenborough Park (p216)
- » Lamb Inn (p204)

Oxford, Cotswolds & Around Highlights

- 1** Following in the footsteps of Lyra, Tolkien, CS Lewis and Inspector Morse as you tour the **Oxford colleges** (p185)
- 2** Meandering around **Painswick**, one of the most beautiful and unspoilt towns in the Cotswolds (p214)
- 3** Getting a glimpse of the high life at the Queen's weekend hideaway, **WindSOR Castle** (p220)
- 4** Touring the elegant cloisters at the magnificent **Gloucester Cathedral** (p215)
- 5** Country driving near **Stow-on-the-Wold** and **Upper and Lower Slaughter** (p209)
- 6** Sampling the superb food at the many fine restaurants in **Cheltenham** (p215)
- 7** Touring **Blenheim Palace** (p193), one of the country's greatest stately homes
- 8** Exploring the anthropological treasure trove that is the **Pitt Rivers Museum** (p190) in Oxford

