



# Oxford, Cotswolds & Around

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Paris House (p222)
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- ➔ Edamame (p195)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Bradley (p217)
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- ➔ Hope House (p199)

## Why Go?

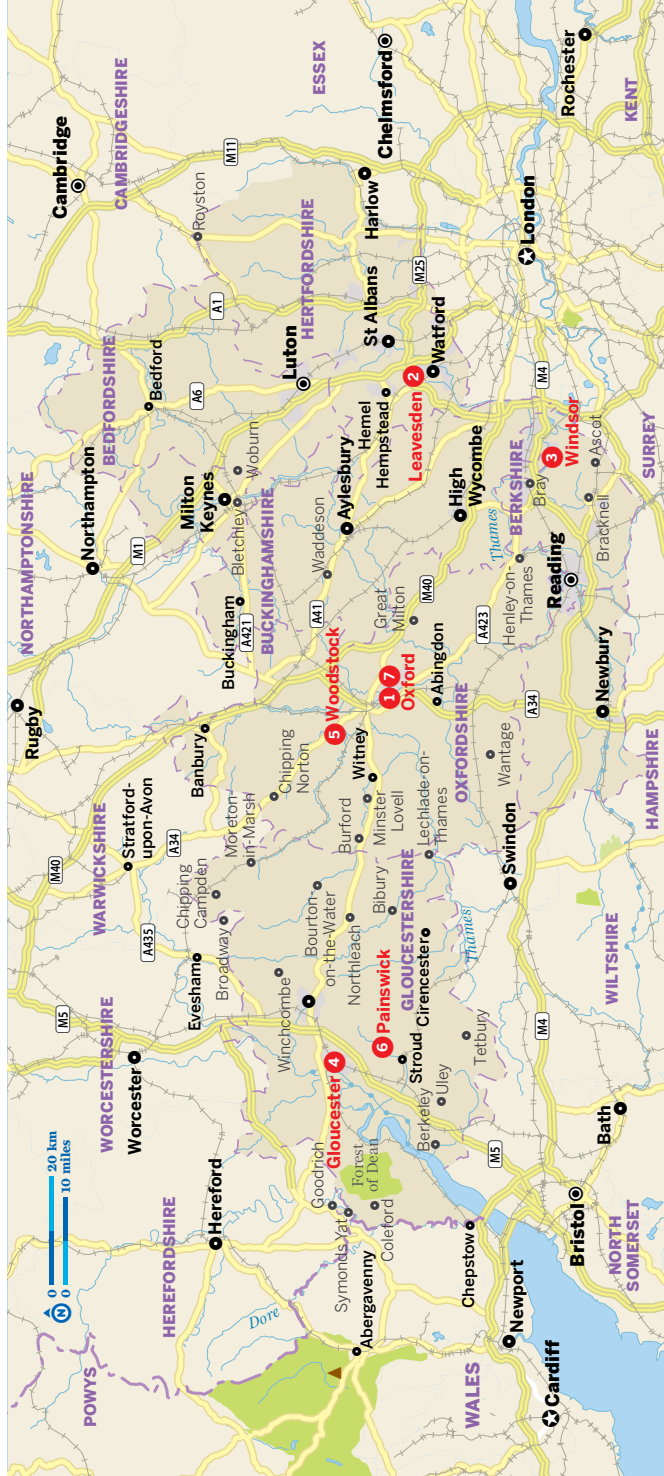
Dotted with gorgeous little villages, this part of the country is as close to the old-world English idyll as you'll get. It's a haven of lush rolling hills, rose-clad cottages, graceful stone churches and thatched roofs. Add to this mix the legendary university city of Oxford, with its gracious architecture 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 a romantic refuge of your own, and discover the fire-lit inns and grandiose manors that persuade A-list celebrities and the 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 and Festival.
- ➔ September is the best time to sample England's finest ales at the four-day St Albans Beer Festival.
- ➔ Rambling in the Cotswolds is ideal in spring, early summer and September, when the weather is in your favour, without the July and August crowds.



## Oxford, Cotswolds & Around Highlights

- 1 Following in the footsteps of JRR Tolkien, CS Lewis, Evelyn Waugh and Oscar Wilde as you tour the **Oxford colleges** (p187)
- 2 Having a wizard of a time at the **Making of Harry Potter studio tour** (p223) in Leavesden
- 3 Getting a glimpse of the regal life at the Queen's most beautiful and unspoilt towns in the Cotswolds
- 4 Touring the elegant cloisters at the magnificent **Gloucester Cathedral** (p217)
- 5 Lording it up in **Blenheim Palace** (p199), one of the country's greatest stately homes
- 6 Meandering around **Painswick** (p214), one of the
- 7 Exploring the anthropological treasure trove that is the **Pitt Rivers Museum** (p187) in Oxford