

PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions to help you put together your perfect trip

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UNDERSTAND GREAT BRITAIN

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you can make sense of what you see

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850

850 Vikings come from Denmark and conquer east and west England, establish their capital at Jorvik, the city of York.


if Britain were 100 people


60 would be Caucasian

ISBN 978-1-74179-566-0



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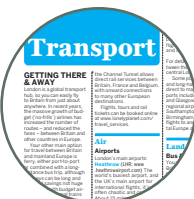
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Great Britain

Top Experiences





Snowdonia

Rugged peaks, glacier-hewn valleys (p744)

The Cotswolds

Classic chocolate-box countryside at its best (p196)

Bath

Britain's belle of the ball (p278)

Cardiff

Small but exuberant capital of Wales (p638)

Pembrokeshire

The best of wild and wonderful West Wales (p673)

Cornwall's Coast

Rugged cliffs, sparkling bays, surf and sand (p319)

Stonehenge

Britain's iconic prehistoric site (p263)

Stratford-upon-Avon

Shakespeare's birthplace, a shrine to the Bard (p406)

Oxford

Beautiful architecture, archaic traditions (p182)

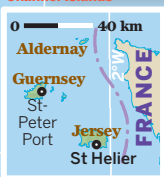
Cambridge

Ancient colleges, gliding punts, dreamy spires (p353)

London's museums

World-famous institutions, great and small (p58)

Channel Islands



See Channel Islands Inset



Look out for these icons:



Our author's recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



Two weeks

Best of Britain

Start with a full day in the nation's capital, **London**, simply walking the streets to admire the world-famous sights: Buckingham Palace, Tower Bridge, Trafalgar Sq and more. Then head southwest to the grand cathedral cities of **Winchester** and **Salisbury**, across to the iconic megaliths of **Stonehenge**, and their less well-known counterpart **Avebury Stone Circle**, then onwards to the beautiful historic city of **Bath**.

Loop over to **Chepstow** and **Cardiff** for a taste of Wales, then cruise across the classic English countryside of the **Cotswolds** to reach **Oxford**. Not far away is **Stratford-upon-Avon**, for everything Shakespeare.

Strike out north to **Edinburgh** for another great castle, before crossing down to **York** for its glorious cathedral and first-class train museum. Keep going south to reach **Cambridge**, another ancient university city, and enjoy the last few days back in **London**, immersed in galleries, museums, luxury shops, street markets, West End shows or East End cafes – or whatever takes your fancy.



One month

The Full Monty

➤ This is a trip for those with time, or an urge to see everything. So brace yourself, and let's be off.

After a day or two in **London**, head southeast to **Canterbury**, then along the coast to hip and happening **Brighton**. For a change of pace, divert to the **New Forest**, then up to historic **Winchester** and **Salisbury** with their awe-inspiring cathedrals. Next, religion of a different kind: the ancient stone circles at **Stonehenge** and **Avebury**.

Go westwards to **Bath**, with its grand Georgian architecture, Roman remains and famous spas, and then over the border to reach Wales. Stop off at the energetic little city of **Cardiff**, then head north through to the whaleback hills of **Brecon Beacons National Park** to reach the quirky book-mad town of **Hay-on-Wye**.

Then it's back to England, and east into the **Cotswolds**, with its rolling hills, quintessential rural scenery and chocolate-box towns like **Chipping Norton**. Not far away is the famous university town of **Oxford**, as well as the ancient town of **Warwick** with its spectacular castle, and Shakespeare's birthplace **Stratford-upon-Avon**.

Continue north to **Chester**, for its famous city walls, diverting into North Wales for the grand castles at **Conwy** and **Caernarfon**, and the equally stunning mountains of **Snowdonia**. If time allows and the weather's good, you can take a train to the top of the highest peak!

Then ferry across the Mersey to **Liverpool**, with a famous musical heritage and revitalised waterfront, or to **Manchester** for a taste of big-city life, followed by a total change of scenery in the tranquil mountains of the **Lake District**.

Just to the north is the sturdy border town of **Carlisle**, and one of Britain's most impressive Roman remains, **Hadrian's Wall**.

Hop across the border to Scotland, via the tranquil **Southern Uplands**, to reach good-time **Glasgow**. Then trek to **Fort William**, maybe diverting up **Ben Nevis**, from where it's easy to reach the beautiful **Isle of Skye**. Then it's time to head south again, via **Stirling Castle** to **Edinburgh**, and on through the abbey towns of **Melrose** and **Jedburgh**.

Back in England, you can marvel at the castle and cathedral of **Durham** and the ancient Viking capital of **York**, before taking in the ancient university city of **Cambridge**, and enjoying the last few days back in **London**.



One month

Walk on the Wild Side

Some itineraries focus on cities, but this is a tour through the best of Britain's natural landscape. So put on your hiking boots, or have a camera at the ready, as we take a south-north meander through some of the country's finest stretches of countryside.

Start in the **New Forest**, for a spot of walking, cycling or horse-riding, then keep heading west, via Dorset's fossil-ridden **Jurassic Coast**, to reach the lonely hills and granite tors of **Dartmoor**. Detour to **Land's End**, where the English mainland plunges into the Atlantic, then travel the stunning cliffs and bays of **Cornwall's North Coast** and the rich farmland of **Devon** to reach the gorse-clad hills of **Exmoor**.

Cross the River Severn into Wales; hike through the rolling hills of the **Brecon Beacons** or go down to the sea in **Pembrokeshire**. Then aim north through remote and little-visited **Mid-Wales** to reach **Snowdonia** – with mountains for walkers and steam trains for all the family. Nearby is the beautiful **Isle of Anglesey**.

Then it's back to England, through the moors and valleys of the **Peak District** and **Yorkshire Dales** – two of England's best-known and best-loved national parks. Westwards from Yorkshire and across the **Pennines** – the chain of hills known as 'England's backbone' – takes you into Cumbria, and the high peaks of the **Lake District**, once the spiritual home for Wordsworth and the Romantic poets, now providing inspiration for walkers and hikers – including England's highest summit **Scafell Pike**.

Head northwards again, over (or along) the spectacular Roman remains of **Hadrian's Wall** to reach **Northumberland National Park**, England's final frontier. The landscape is wild and often unforgiving – but for outdoor fans that's its very attraction.

Next, it's across the border into Scotland, and the delightful hills and forests of the **Southern Uplands**. Further north two new national parks await: the glorious combination of **Loch Lomond & the Trossachs**, and the mountain wilderness of the **Cairngorms**.

That may be wonder enough, but Britain's pastoral pleasures are crowned by **Northwest Scotland**, the famous Highlands and islands, where jewels include peaks like **Ben Nevis** (Britain's highest summit) and remote ranges such as **Torrif** and **Assynt**, while out to sea the lovely islands – **Arran, Skye, Mull, Islay, Jura, North Uist, South Uist, Lewis, Harris** – bask in the afternoon sun...



Two to Three Weeks

Urban Odyssey

▶ To get away from the main track and dig under Britain's skin a little, take this ride through some of the country's less well-known and revitalised cities.

Kick off in **Bristol**, former poor cousin to neighbouring Bath, but today a city with fierce pride, a rich historic legacy and a music scene that rivals cool northern outposts. Divert to **Cardiff**, once a provincial backwater, but now the seat of the devolved Welsh government – and another musical hotbed.

Next stop is **Birmingham**, a city that oozes transformation, with a renovated waterfront, energised museums and a space-age shopping centre. Nearby is **Nottingham**, forever associated with Robin Hood, but renowned today for very merry nightlife. If hitting the dance floor isn't your thing, relax in the city's great pubs.

But don't dawdle. Sup up your pint. We're off again, this time to **Leeds**, where rundown factories and abandoned warehouses have been turned into loft apartments, ritzy boutiques and stylish department stores, hence the nickname 'Knightsbridge of the North'.

Shopping not your thing? No problem. On we go to **Newcastle-upon-Tyne**, the one-time king of coal and steel, now given up on heavy industries in favour of art and architecture – and also famous for to-the-hilt partying. Cross the Millennium Bridge to twin-city **Gateshead** to visit Baltic, a former grain mill turned cutting-edge art gallery, before catching a show at the fabulous Sage concert hall. And don't miss Britain's best-known work of public art, the iconic (and gigantic) Angel of the North.

Still want more? It's got to be **Glasgow**. No longer completely overshadowed by Edinburgh, Scotland's other great city boasts fabulous galleries, welcoming pubs and clubs, some truly electric venues, and – only in Scotland – slick but unpretentious bars.

Pausing only for coffee and toast, it's back to England again and the city of **Liverpool**. The Beatles are done to death, but there's a lively *current* music scene, and this one-time port is reinventing itself as a cultural hot spot, epitomised by the new museums and galleries along the historic waterfront.

To finish your tour, it's just a few miles east to **Manchester**, the self-styled 'Barcelona of Britain' and a long-time stage for musical endeavour, with thriving arts and club scenes, galleries a go-go, dramatic new architecture and – oh yes – a rather well-known football team.



Two weeks

Highland Fling

This itinerary is a circuit of Scotland's finest and most famous sights, and naturally starts in **Edinburgh**, where highlights include the famous castle, as well as the Royal Mile, the new parliament and the haunts of the Old Town. For a change of pace, hop over to **Glasgow** for a day or two as well.

Then head northwest to see Scotland's other great castle at **Stirling**. Next stop is **Callander**, a good base for exploring the **Trossach mountains** – part of Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park – for a first taste of Highland scenery.

Continue north, and the landscape becomes ever more impressive, culminating in the grandeur of **Glen Coe**. Keen hill-walkers will pause for a day at **Fort William** to trek to the top of **Ben Nevis** (plus another day to recover!) before taking the 'Road to the Isles' past glorious **Glenfinnan** to the lovely little port of **Mallaig**.

Take the ferry to the **Isle of Skye**, then head back to the mainland to reach pretty **Plockton** and magnificent **Glen Torridon**. Onwards, via the lively outpost of **Ullapool**, takes you into the British mainland's furthest reaches, the big-sky wilderness of **Sutherland**, before looping south to finish your tour at **Inverness**.

Two weeks

Edge of England

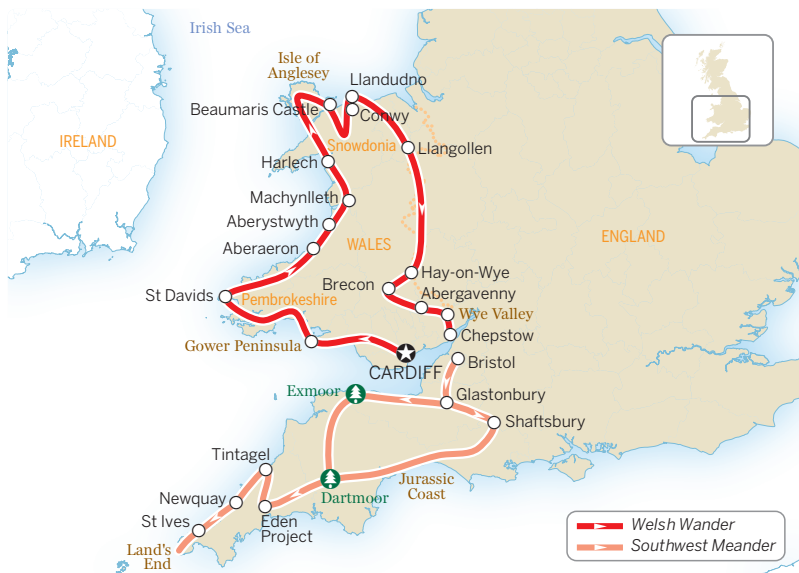
If you like the outdoors, and prefer flocks of birds to crowds of people, try this back-water route along England's eastern fringe.

Start in sleepy **Suffolk**, a favourite spot for boaters, bikers, painters and birdwatchers. Quaint villages and stout market towns such as **Sudbury** and **Lavenham** dot the landscape, while along the coast are wildlife reserves, shingly beaches, fishing ports such as **Aldeburgh** and the delightfully retro seaside resort of **Southwold**.

Things get even quieter as you head into **Norfolk**, especially around the misty lakes and windmill-lined rivers of **the Broads**. For big-sky strolls or historic country pubs, head for the villages along the coast near **Wells-next-the-Sea**.

Across the border in Lincolnshire lies the eerie, pan-flat landscape of **The Fens**, now a haven for otters and all kinds of birdlife. Then it's north again into Yorkshire, where the massive breeding seabird colonies at **Bempton Cliffs** are one of England's finest wildlife spectacles.

Enjoy quirky **Robin Hood's Bay** and bustling **Whitby**, to finally round things off with a blustery stroll between the landmark castles of **Bamburgh** and **Dunstanburgh** on the wild **Northumberland coast**.



Two weeks Welsh Wander

The coast and countryside of Wales has long been a favourite with visitors, and this tour includes most of the hot spots. Combine it with the Southwest Meander for a longer jaunt along part of Britain's Celtic fringe. Start in **Cardiff**, with its fantastical castle, gigantic rugby stadium, revitalised waterfront and stunning Millennium Centre concert hall. Head west via the beautiful beaches of the **Gower** to reach the clear waters and sandy beaches of **Pembrokeshire**. Don't miss the charming market town of **St Davids** and its beautiful cathedral. Continue up the coast via pretty **Aberaeron** to **Aberystwyth**, through 'alternative' **Machynlleth** to reach **Harlech** and its ancient castle. Divert to tranquil **Isle of Anglesey** and historic **Beaumaris Castle**, then strike through the mountains of **Snowdonia** to reach **Conwy** (another stunning castle) and the seaside resort **Llandudno**. Southwards takes you through **Llangollen**, with its jolly steam trains and vertiginous aqueduct, then along the England-Wales borderlands to book-mad **Hay-on-Wye**. Loop inland to peaceful **Brecon** and foodie **Abergavenny**, then saunter down the **Wye Valley** to finish at the frontier town of **Chepstow** – and yet another amazing castle.

Two weeks Southwest Meander

The southwest of England takes a bit of effort to reach but repays in full with a rich green landscape dotted with hills and moors, surrounded by glistening seas.

Start in **Bristol**, the capital of the West-country, then saunter down through the flatlands of Somerset to reach **Glastonbury** – famous for its annual music festival and the best place to stock up on candles or crystals at any time of year. West leads to heathery **Exmoor**. South leads into **Dorset**, where highlights include picturesque **Shaftsbury** and the fossil-strewn **Jurassic Coast**.

Onwards into Devon, and there's a choice of coasts, as well as **Dartmoor**, the highest and wildest hills in southern Britain.

Cross into Cornwall to explore the **Eden Project**, where giant space-age greenhouse domes are home to a range of habitats from jungle to desert. In another era entirely is **Tintagel Castle**, the legendary birthplace of King Arthur. Nearby, you can wax your board in **Newquay**, epicentre of England's surf scene, or browse the galleries at **St Ives**.

The natural finish to this wild west tour is **Land's End**, where the mainland comes to a final full stop. Sink a drink in the First and Last pub, and promise yourself a return trip some day...



Etain O'Carroll

Oxford, Cotswolds & Around, Cambridge & East Anglia Travel writer and photographer Etain grew up in rural Ireland but now calls Oxford home. She has worked on more than 20 Lonely Planet books including numerous *England* and *Great Britain* guides as well as *Cycling Britain*. Her top tip? Oxford and the Cotswolds are expensive to live in but great places to visit on a budget. There are

world-class museums, stunning architecture, gorgeous villages and ancient pubs – most of them free to visit.

Read more about Etain at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/EtainOCarroll



Andy Symington

Glasgow & Southern Scotland; Stirling & Central Scotland; Inverness, the Highlands & the Northern Islands Andy's Scottish forebears make their presence felt in a love of malt, a debatable ginger colour to his facial hair and a love of wild places. From childhood slogs up the M1 he graduated to making dubious road trips around the firths in a disintegrating Mini Metro and thence to peddling

whisky in darkest Leith. Whilst living there, he travelled widely around the country in search of the perfect dram; now resident in Spain, he continues to visit very regularly.

Read more about Andy at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/andy_symington



Neil Wilson

Yorkshire; Edinburgh; Stirling & Central Scotland; Inverness, the Highlands & the Northern Islands Neil has made many cross-border forays into 'God's own country' from his home in Edinburgh, as well as regular expeditions around Scotland. Good weather on this research trip allowed for a memorable ascent of Ingleborough hill, a knee-trashing mountain-bike descent of the Pennine Way

into Hawes, and a sunset panorama of the Applecross hills from a campsite on Skye's Trotternish Ridge. Neil has written more than 50 guidebooks for various publishers, including Lonely Planet's *Scotland* and *England* guides.

Read more about Neil at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/neilwilson



Joe Bindloss

Nottingham & the East Midlands; Birmingham, the West Midlands & the Marches

Born of English stock, albeit in Cyprus, Joe spends a lot of time in the Marches, not least because his parents and brothers live in the sleepy village of Clun (hell, they even go Morris dancing). For this book, Joe juggled exploring rugged uplands and picturesque medieval villages with writing for newspapers and magazines and being a full-time dad in London. Joe has been writing guidebooks for Lonely Planet since 1999, covering everywhere from rural England to the high reaches of the Himalaya.

Read more about Joe at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/bindibhaji



Fionn Davenport

Manchester, Liverpool & the Northwest Dublin-born and bred, Fionn has been traipsing about his favourite bits of England (north of the Watford gap) for more than a decade, all the while falling in love with a country so near to his own yet so utterly unknown to most who assume that England is just one giant suburb dotted with roundabouts. His favourite place is his beloved Anfield in Liverpool, but he'd also settle for the streets of Manchester's Northern Quarter and the

fine restaurants of West Didsbury.



Marc Di Duca

Canterbury & the Southeast, Newcastle & the Northeast From Farnham to the Farne Islands, Marc topped and tailed his native land for this edition of *England*. Born a mile from the Stockton & Darlington railway, Marc spent a decade in central Europe before becoming a full-time travel-guide author based in the southeast. Chilling extremities in the nippy River Tees, sinking ale in Cinque

Ports, scrambling along Hadrian's Wall and stalking Dickens across six counties all formed part of his research for this guide.

Read more about Marc Di Duca at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/madidu



Belinda Dixon

Southwest England (Hampshire, New Forest, Isle of Wight, Dorset, Wiltshire, Devon)

Belinda made a gleeful bolt for the southwest 17 years ago and has worked as a writer, journalist and local radio broadcaster there ever since. This is her sixth mission for Lonely Planet in the region, and it's seen her hugging sarsens in the stone circle at Avebury, rummaging for fossils at Lyme, and cresting

tor tops on Dartmoor. All that and rigorously (very rigorously) testing all the food and drink she can manage.

Read more about Belinda at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/belindadixon



Peter Dragicevich

London, Cardiff, Pembrokeshire & South Wales, Hay-on-Wye & Mid-Wales, Snowdonia & North Wales (West of Snowdonia, Snowdonia National Park) After a dozen years reviewing music and restaurants for publications in New Zealand and Australia, London's bright lights and loud guitars could no longer be resisted. And maybe it's because he's got half a dragon in his surname, but Wales has

held a fascination ever since Peter was sent there to write about castles for one of his first ever travel features. He has contributed to 20 Lonely Planet titles, including *Wales*, *England*, *Walking in Britain* and the last edition of this book.

Read more about Peter at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/peterdragicevich



Catherine Le Nevez

Channel Islands Catherine's hopped back-and-forth from France to the UK since age four, completing her Doctorate of Creative Arts in Writing, Masters in Professional Writing, and post-grad qualifications in Editing and Publishing along the way. But – six flights and four ferry rides later – this was her first chance to discover the islands in between. Catherine has authored or co-authored over two dozen guidebooks worldwide, including several editions of Lonely Planet's

France, *Paris Encounter* and *Ireland* guidebooks, plus newspaper and magazine articles.



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



David Else

Coordinating Author (Plan Your Trip, Understand, Survival Guide) As a professional writer, David has authored over 40 books, including several editions of Lonely Planet's *England*, *Great Britain* and *Walking in Britain*. His knowledge comes from a lifetime of travel around the country – often on foot – a passion dating from university years, when heading for the hills was always more attractive than visiting the library. Originally from London, David has lived in Yorkshire,

Derbyshire and Wales, and is now a resident of the Cotswolds. For this current edition of *Great Britain*, David's research took him from Cornwall to Scotland – via two favourite spots: Porthcurno Beach and the northwest Highlands.

Read more about David at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/davidelse



David Atkinson

Snowdonia & North Wales (North Coast & Borders, Isle of Anglesey) Lapsed Welshman David Atkinson has been chasing the call of *hiraeth* for two editions of Lonely Planet's *Great Britain* guide, focusing this time exclusively on the green, green grass of north Wales. David writes widely for newspapers and magazines, and blogs at [Hit the North \(nowhitthenorth.wordpress.com\)](http://Hit the North (nowhitthenorth.wordpress.com)) about travel around northwest England and Wales.



Oliver Berry

Southwest England (Cornwall, Bristol, Bath, Somerset), The Lake District & Cumbria Oliver is a writer and photographer based in Cornwall. Among many other projects for Lonely Planet, Oliver has written the first editions of *Devon*, *Cornwall & Southwest England* and *The Lake District*, and worked on several previous editions of the *England* and *Great Britain* guides. Research highlights for this edition were sampling some traditional 'scrumpy' on a Somerset cider

farm and watching the sun rise over Glastonbury Tor. You can see some of his latest work at www.oliverberry.com.

Read more about Oliver at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/oliverberry

OVER MORE
PAGE WRITERS

Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

9th edition – May 2011

ISBN 978 1 74179 566 0

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Printed in China

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