

SHERPA: WALKER'S BRITAIN - THE ENGLISH COTSWOLDS

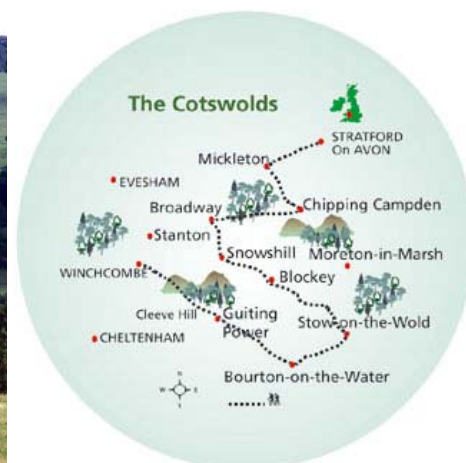
8-days/ 7-nights self-guided inn-to-inn walking holiday

(WMR - Revised: December 10)

This holiday is intended to appeal to those who want a gentle introduction to walking in the rolling rural landscape of the English countryside. The lush green Cotswold's are hilly rather than mountainous – a 'wold' being a *gentle hillside* - the highest point being little more than 1000 feet above sea level. Officially designated as an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**, the Cotswold landscape is an entrancing mixture of parkland, cultivated farmland with dry-stone walls of Jurassic limestone, and patches of unspoilt woodland. Dry-stone walls are everywhere with many built in the 18th and 19th centuries. This took some considerable skill - as there is no cement to hold the walls together. They represent an important historical landscape and a major conservation feature – and are of course still used today by farmers to enclose sheep and cattle

Also stone-built in mostly matching stone are almost all the cottages, farmhouses, villages, and small towns that our route passes. Not all villages are well known, and today many such as Painswick, Biddestone, Winchcombe or Woodstock still hold their many secrets and unspoilt historic churches – open almost any church door and discover a hidden world of history. The larger market towns and villages of the Cotswolds such as Stow-on-the-Wold are major tourism centres with a thriving shopping centre, restaurants and cafes.

About 50-miles of this route - from Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon to Winchcombe - follows the Cotswold Way; a popular 102-mile *Long Distance Path* claimed to be the best waymarked in all of England.



Departs: Daily from April to October.

Cost: \$1185 per person twin share (extra charges for Fri/Sat stay at Mickleton). Single supplement \$225

Starts: Stratford-upon-Avon

Ends: Winchcombe

Getting to the Start: By train from London Paddington to Stratford then a taxi to the hotel (see National Rail website is www.nationalrail.co.uk).

Grading: We grade this walk as 'Easy' in relation our other UK walking tours, the route is hilly, but not mountainous, the weather is rarely too bad for walking, and there are generally quite a number of villages enroute. Days of up to 13 miles are not too long for most reasonably fit people. Trails are footpaths (generally waymarked) and parts of the Cotswolds Way (generally well waymarked). However an ability to use maps is important to trace the route on the ground as it crosses fields and woodlands (a compass is also useful to have as well). One feature of the tour are plenty of stiles (little ladders) to climb over farm fences.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations

Suggested accommodation:

Night 1: Your accommodation tonight in Stratford upon Avon is a very welcoming guesthouse, which is located close to the town center and train station

Night 2: Your accommodation tonight is conveniently situated in the village of Mickleton. This elegant house, built in the Georgian period benefits from large airy rooms that are all ensuite.

Night 3: Our accommodation this evening is a 17th century inn built in Cotswolds stone with ensuite accommodation.

Night 4: A small Bed & Breakfast (B&B), which provides us with comfortable en suite facilities tonight. All rooms are equipped with a TV, and tea & coffee making facilities. The B&B is very quiet, being situated on the edge of the village away from the main roads.

Night 5: Your hotel tonight is family run and who take great pride in providing all guests with a warm welcome on arrival and every care is then taken to assure a comfortable and pleasant stay.

Night 6: Our accommodation for tonight is situated in a small and isolated typical Cotswold village that has allowed time to pass it by. Our accommodation, formerly an inn, is now an attractive guesthouse in a picture postcard setting, offers every comfort and a particularly welcoming atmosphere.

Night 7: We use a variety of guesthouses in the busy village of Winchcombe but our first choice is an enticing 15th century black & white timbered house.

Suggested Itinerary:

Day 1 Stratford: Travel to start point (the birth place of a certain William Shakespeare). Stratford-upon-Avon is accessible by direct train from London Paddington via Reading and Oxford.

Day 2 Mickleton: Stratford to Mickleton. We suggest you stop off at Hidcote gardens en-route - not open every day but highly recommended. (12 miles 5 ½ hours).

Day 3 Broadway: Mickleton to Broadway via Chipping Campden Fish Hill and Broadway Tower. Lots of antique shops in the market town of Broadway. (9 miles 4 hours).

Day 4 Blockley: Broadway to Blockley via Buckland, Laverton, Stanton and Snowhill. (12 miles 6 hours).

Day 5 Bourton: Blockley to Bourton on the Water via Batsford, Stow on the Wold and Lower Slaughter (13 ½ miles 7 hours). Bourton is well known for its footbridges over the river Evenlode and for the scale model of the village.

Day 6 Guiting Power: Bourton to Guiting Power. A tiny gem of a place tucked in the hills. (9 miles 4 hours).

Day 7 Winchcombe: Guiting to Winchcombe via Hailes Abbey and Sudeley Castle. (12 ½ miles 6 hours).

Day 8: End of tour

What's Included: Bed and breakfast accommodation with private (mostly en-suite) bathroom facilities. Luggage transfers from Inn to Inn each day as shown, full route notes and map package.

Other walking holidays – guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers & meals are available in many parts of the UK & Europe through **Outdoor Travel** including the spectacular **Coast to Coast** trail, **St Cuthbert's Way** from Scotland into England, the pilgrims **Way of St James** or **Camino de Santiago** from Le Puy in France to Santiago in Spain or the **Via Francigena** the pilgrims 'road to Rome' in Italy.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations

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