

ENGLAND – SHROPSHIRE HILLS & WELSH BORDERS

8-days / 7-nights one-hotel GUIDED walking tour centre-based at Church Stretton



The attractive small town of Church Stretton, friendly and welcoming to walkers, is an ideal base from which to explore the rolling Shropshire Hills, an *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*, and the Welsh Borders. There are wonderful walks to the Long Mynd, Caer Caradoc and Ragleth Hill direct from Church Stretton, whilst travelling a little further afield enables a wider exploration of this scenic county, and this guided walking holiday offers a great range of walks in the Shropshire Hills and Welsh borderlands.

After the arrival of the railway, in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, Church Stretton grew and the area became known as 'Little Switzerland' due to the dramatic hills on both sides of the valley. Today the town retains the charm of a bygone era. Our accommodation is in a wonderful location just a few minutes' walk from the lovely town centre.

Cost from: **\$2655** per person twin share Single supplement on request.

2024 Departures: 8, 29 March, 12, 19 April, 24 May, 7, 14, 28 June, 5, 26 July, 9, 30 August,
13, 27 September, 1, 22 November, 6 December

Includes: 7 nights in a comfortable room with ensuite bathroom, full board (breakfast, picnic lunch and dinner), experienced walks leader, 5 guided walks, local transport to/from walks, evening social activities.

Not Included: Transport to/from the house, drinks, personal expenses, transport/activities on your free day.



Accommodation: Longmynd House sits in extensive wooded grounds in a wonderful, elevated position above Church Stretton, about 10 minutes' walk from the town with outstanding views across the Stretton Valley. There are 50 bedrooms, some with a balcony, and eight separate lodges in the grounds. A large, heated swimming pool is open May to September. There are **premium rooms** available with a surcharge – ask for details when booking.

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Trip Grading: Moderate to longer distances, mostly on good paths, with sections over rough, rugged or steeper terrain; some walks will have sustained ascents and descents. Easier walks 9-11km with up to 400m of ascent, medium walks 11-15km with up to 600m of ascent, harder walks 15-21km with up to 740m of ascent in a day.

Suggested itinerary (daily routes are at the discretion of the walk leaders):

Day 1: Arrival day

Plan to arrive at your country house accommodation mid-afternoon. Ask about local transport or taxi options from Church Stretton or Shrewsbury railway stations.

Day 2: Stretton Hills

Walk scenic paths around and above Church Stretton. Routes may traverse the slopes of Caer Caradoc, or climb to the summit with its Iron Age hillfort, said to be the site of a British chieftain's stand against the Romans. After summiting Caer Caradoc the longer walk ascends to the Lawley ridge with its fine views and returns to the country house via the lower slopes of the Long Mynd.

Day 3: Darnford Valley & Betchcott Hills

From various starting points we follow the tranquil Darnford Valley on this day's walks, and join the ancient Port Way over the Betchcott Hills. The heather-clad ridge of the Long Mynd dominates the skyline as we cross the ridge and descend towards Church Stretton via Haddon Hill and the golf course.

Day 4: Free day

No walks are organised today. You can relax at the hotel or explore the local area independently. Perhaps visit Ludlow with its medieval buildings and well-preserved castle, Michelin-starred restaurants and acclaimed local producers. Or see the many museums of Ironbridge Gorge, 'birthplace of the Industrial Revolution' where Abraham Darby first manufactured cast iron used to build the iron bridge across the River Severn. Or, play 18 holes at the quirky Church Stretton golf course, one of the highest in England.

Day 5: Hope Bowdler & Ragleth

Stunning views in all directions, weather permitting, as we summit one or both of Hope Bowdler Hill and Ragleth Hill. Some walks also visit the charming village of Little Stretton, and the harder walk takes in the famous Battle Stones, much-photographed rocky outcrops on Willstone Hill.

Day 6: Stiperstones

Stiperstones is a rugged quartzite ridge, shattered by glaciation and erosion into a mass of scree surrounding several rocky tors. The area was a centre for lead mining until the early 20th Century; we may see some evidence of this on our walk. Our easy route skirts round Stiperstones, while other walks traverse the full ridge, gaining views over the Shropshire and Welsh countryside.

Day 7: Pole Bank & the Long Mynd Valleys

The great plateau of the Long Mynd rises behind our country house and offers miles of outstanding walking. On these walks we ascend from the Townbrook Valley through the heather-covered moorland of the Long Mynd to its summit, Pole Bank.

Day 8: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast.



Outdoor Travel offer walking holidays in many parts of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Europe including Wainwright's challenging **Coast-to-Coast** trail, the **Lake District**, the **Yorkshire Dales**, **Cornwall** or **Snowdonia** in Wales, Ireland's **Ring of Kerry**, **Provence** or the **Alps** or **Pyrenees** in France and walks in Austria, Spain or Italy. We offer pilgrimage trails such as the **Way of St James**, the Camino de Santiago from Le Puy in France to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, or the **Via Francigena** – the pilgrims' *Road to Rome*.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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