



The Cotswolds

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Visitor map & guide

cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Cotswolds

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Enjoy the great outdoors in the magical Cotswolds landscape. There is so much to see and do in this area, from walking, cycling, or riding across the hills, to exploring one of the many gardens, heritage sites or nature reserves. Come for a day or stay for a week and discover a beautiful part of rural England. And remember – this is just a selection – there's plenty more out there to explore!

Cotswold Way National Trail

This 102-mile (164 km) trail, between Chipping Campden and Bath, follows the dramatic limestone scarp and offers exhilarating vistas. The AONB is famous for wonderfully diverse walking, including gentle strolls, hilly hikes, long distance paths, short circular rambles and wheelchair-friendly 'walks on wheels'.

Long Distance Routes

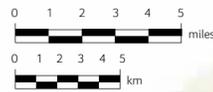
Lots of long distance walking, cycling, and horse riding routes criss-cross the Cotswolds AONB, including the Thames Path, Sabrina Way, Monarch's Way, Macmillan Way, Heart of England Way, Oxfordshire Way and Gloucestershire Way, among many more. Visit the Walking and Exploring section at cotswoldsaonb.org.uk to find out more.

Wildflower grassland

1. Cleeve Common
2. Minchinhampton & Rodborough Commons
3. Painswick Beacon
4. Selsley Common
5. Stonesfield Common

Viewpoints

6. Barrow Wake (Birdlip)
7. Bredon Hill National Nature Reserve
8. Broadway Tower
9. Coaley Peak
10. Dover's Hill
11. Haresfield Beacon
12. Leckhampton Hill
13. Stinchcombe Hill
14. Tog Hill
15. Tyndale Monument



Nature reserves

16. Browne's Folly Nature Reserve
17. Cotswold Commons & Beechwoods National Nature Reserve
18. Elliott (Swift's Hill) Nature Reserve
19. Foxholes Nature Reserve
20. Greystones Farm Nature Reserve
21. Radway Meadows Nature Reserve

Gardens, parks and arboreta

22. Abbey House Gardens
23. Barton Farm Country Park
24. Batsford Arboretum
25. Bourton House Garden
26. Broughton Castle
27. Compton Verney
28. Cotswold Farm Park
29. Cotswold Wildlife Park & Gardens
30. Crickley Hill Country Park
31. Dyrham Park
32. Hidcote Manor Garden
33. Kiftsgate Court Garden
34. Lodge Park & Sherborne Estate
35. Mill Dene Garden
36. National Arboretum, Westonbirt
37. Newark Park
38. Painswick Rococo Garden
39. Prior Park
40. Sezincote House & Gardens
41. Stanway House & Fountain
42. Upton House & Gardens
43. Woodchester Park

Historic buildings

44. Arlington Row
45. Avoncliff & Dundas Aqueducts
46. Blenheim Palace
47. Burford Church
48. Chastleton House
49. Chavenage House
50. Chipping Campden Church
51. Fairford Church
52. Hailes Abbey & Church
53. Hook Norton Brewery
54. Keble Bridge (clapper bridge)
55. Malmesbury Abbey
56. Minster Lovell Hall & Dovecote
57. Northleach Church
58. Owlpen Manor
59. Snowhill Manor
60. Sudeley Castle
61. Woodchester Mansion

Hill forts, long barrows and standing stones

62. Belas Knap Long Barrow
63. Uley Long Barrow (Hetty Pegler's Tump)
64. Little Solsbury Hill
65. Nympsfield Long Barrow
66. Rollright Stones
67. Sodbury Camp hill fort
68. Uley Bury hill fort
69. Windmill Tump Long Barrow

Roman villas

70. Chedworth
71. Great Witcombe
72. North Leigh

Battlefields (English Civil War)

73. Edgehill (1642)
74. Lansdown Hill (1643)
75. Stow-on-the-Wold (1646)

Museums, galleries and culture

76. Broadway Museum and Art Gallery
77. Corinium Museum
78. Court Barn Museum
79. Museum in the Park
80. The Roman Baths
81. The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum

Key

- Cotswold Way National Trail
- Thames Path National Trail
- Gloucestershire Way
- Heart of England Way
- Macmillan Way
- Monarch's Way
- Oxfordshire Way
- Sabrina Way
- 📍 Visitor Information Centre
- 🛣️ Motorways
- 🛣️ A Roads
- 🚉 Railways/stations
- 🌊 River

Remember

Remember to check before travelling to find out about opening times, accessibility, and entry fees (if applicable) – all of which vary from site to site. All distances and times on the map are approximate.





Welcome

The Cotswolds is one of the country's most treasured and quintessentially English landscapes.

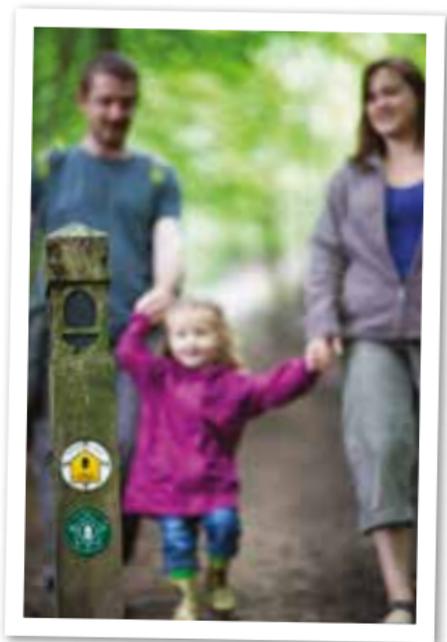
Designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) since 1966, the Cotswolds covers 790 sq miles (2,038 sq km) and lies between the enticing towns and cities of Bath, Cheltenham, Oxford and Stratford-upon-Avon.

It is a varied landscape of rolling hills and tranquil valleys, ancient woodlands and wildflower grasslands, criss-crossed with dry stone walls and an extensive network of footpaths and long distance trails like the spectacular Cotswold Way. Amid it all are picturesque villages and captivating market towns built out of the famous Jurassic limestone that underpins the region and gives it its warmth and distinctive quality.

Cotswold Way and walking

The 102-mile (164 km) National Trail along the scarp between the market town of Chipping Campden in the north and the City of Bath in the south threads together some of the best sights and experiences in the Cotswolds.

Hike it all or enjoy a short circular 'taster' route, striding through panoramic scenery, open pasture, beech woods and picturesque villages. The half-way mark is the charming old mill town of Painswick and you'll pass numerous historic houses, follies and archaeological sites, plus there's always a welcoming pub or tearoom for refreshment!



For long distance walks, circular routes, and guided walk information, visit the Cotswold Way National Trail page at cotswoldsaonb.org.uk for details and downloadable routes.

For further information on long distance walks, cycle and walking routes and programme of guided walks led throughout the year, visit the Walking and exploring section of our website at cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/visiting-and-exploring



Exploring the Cotswolds

Savour hills, rivers, meadows and villages the 'green' way: walking, cycling and horse riding.

Get the spirits soaring and endorphins flowing – whatever your mood and ability, there's a route for you. More than 20 long distance routes and 3,000 miles (4,828 km) of public footpaths criss-cross the AONB, from easygoing 'miles without stiles' or towpath saunters along the Kennet & Avon Canal, to bracing climbs (and views) at Bredon Hill. Go it alone with a map, download route guides, or join one of the AONB's many free guided walks offered by Cotswold Voluntary Wardens throughout the year. There's an annual walking festival centred on Winchcombe and other towns during the year. Horse riding is also popular and cycling is a fantastic way to explore: choose the South Cotswolds for gentler slopes and the northern escarpments for a challenge. There's a spot around every corner that's ideal for a picnic.





Cotswold Lion.

Heritage

People have settled in the Cotswolds for more than 6,000 years, shaping the landscape so enjoyed today.

Delve into the mysteries of ancient belief systems at Neolithic long barrows and scale Iron Age hill forts. In the Roman era the area prospered – witness the great villas, roads and towns like Cirencester – and in the heyday of the medieval wool trade, stunning churches and manor houses rose. You'll also find many notable deeds and people commemorated at historic homes and battlefields.

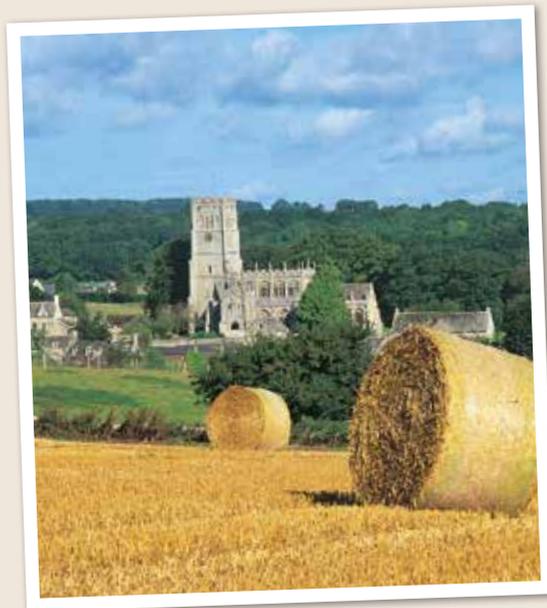


Chastleton House.

The Cotswold sheep, known as Cotswold Lions, are renowned for their long, thick fleece and at one time provided wool for much of England's cloth. Burford's

cathedral-like St John the Baptist Church is one of the region's many 'wool churches', built or endowed by wealthy medieval merchants in the golden era of the trade. Other splendid examples include the wool churches at Northleach, Chipping Campden and Cirencester.

Northleach church.



Nympsfield Long Barrow.





Uley Bury.

Beautiful by design

Look out from any viewpoint and contours etched by man and nature reveal a rich landscape history.

The Cotswold Hills represent the best known section of an outcrop of Jurassic limestone that runs north-east from the Dorset coast to the North Sea off Yorkshire.

It's the geology of the area that underpins the special character of the Cotswolds. With colours ranging from silver-grey to gold, the limestone gives local towns and villages their organic, harmonious look

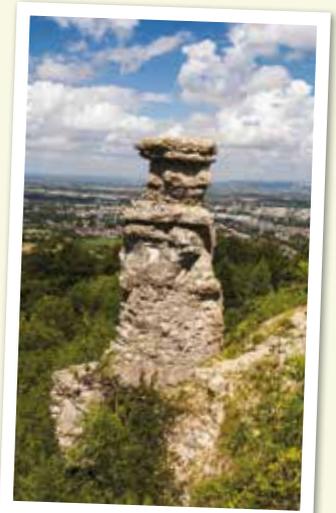


Dry stone walls are an important feature of the Cotswolds landscape.

and creates a strong sense of unity between the built and natural environment.

Over half the country's flower-rich limestone grassland is to be found in the Cotswolds, a product of the AONB's underlying geology combined with centuries of traditional grazing. The very name 'Cotswold' derives from 'sheep shelters' (cots) 'in rolling hills' (wolds), and today mixed farmland covers most of the AONB, framed by characteristic networks of hedges and dry stone walls.

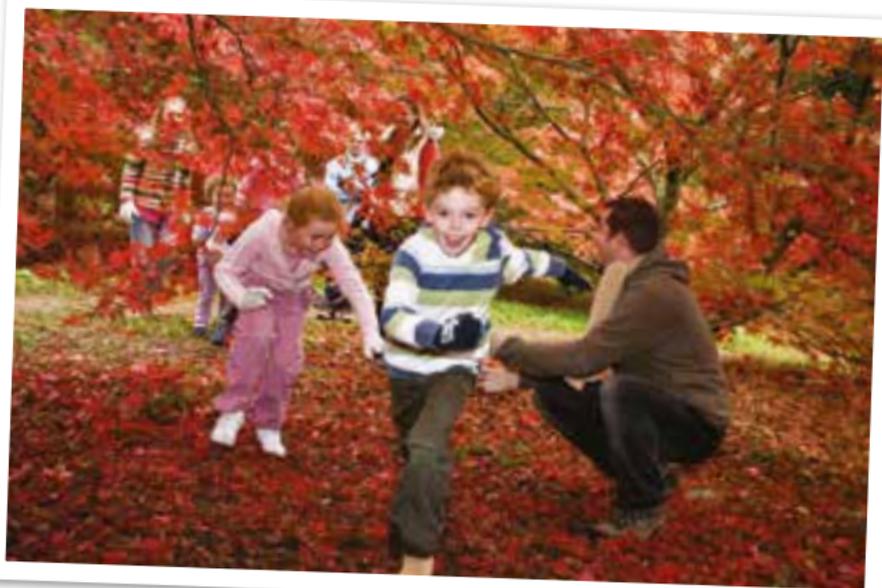
Over 4,000 miles (6,437 km) of dry stone walls run through the Cotswolds. A defining feature of the landscape, they provide valuable shelter and act as wildlife corridors – nesting birds, slow worms, bees and the UK's only population of the endangered snail *Lauria sempronii* are found here.



*The curious **Devil's Chimney** limestone pillar is a popular landmark on Leckhampton Hill.*



Chipping Norton High Street.



PAUL GROOM

National Arboretum, Westonbirt.

Gardens of grandeur

Wander some of the finest gardens and arboreta in the country – Westonbirt, The National Arboretum alone boasts 16,000 trees and five national collections.

There's magic for every season, from snowdrops at Painswick Rococo Garden to fiery autumn colours at Batsford Arboretum.



Stanway House & Fountain.

Admire the world's tallest gravity-fed fountain at Stanway House or England's largest rose at Kiftsgate,

and explore the 'lost landscape' of Woodchester's 18th/19th-century park and lakes.



Bourton House Garden.

Precious by nature

With three National Nature Reserves, 89 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, internationally important beech woods and wildflower grasslands, the Cotswolds supports an exceptional diversity of flora and fauna.

Limestone grasslands are precious places and rich habitats for wildlife, often containing more than 100 species of wildflowers and grasses, and over 25 species of butterflies.

Rare bats, butterflies, orchids, water voles and skylarks are among many species to keep a stronghold in the Cotswolds thanks to careful conservation of habitat.



Beech woodland.



Pyramidal orchid.



Duke of Burgundy butterfly.

Looking after the AONB

The Cotswolds Conservation Board works to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB, to increase understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities, and foster the social and economic well-being of local communities.



You, too, can play your part, observing the Countryside Code, using public transport – check out good value Cotswolds Discoverer bus/train tickets – visit cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/discoverer. You can also help to look after the AONB by volunteering, taking part in rural skills or even making a simple donation through one of the local businesses participating in Caring for the Cotswolds.

Local produce

The farming way of life in the Cotswolds means it's easy to buy scrumptious fresh, quality fare – and support local producers.

Farmers' markets and shops are brimming with local artisan cheeses, ice cream, fruit, meat, preserves, beer, fruit juices and more. Great for picnics, great for a thriving Cotswolds. Regular farmers' markets take place at many towns and villages including Stroud, Bath, Cheltenham, Chipping Norton and Bourton-on-the-Water.



Discover, Explore, Enjoy

For more information about events, self-guided and guided walks, cycling routes and more in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, visit cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

For live travel information including bus and train times, visit traveline.info.



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