



Discovering Our Planet Together



The Cotswolds: Exploring English Nature

Exclusive Access to Highlights & Hidden Corners of Britain's Classic Countryside



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Trip Details:

Days
8 Days /
Apr-Oct

Price
From
\$10995

The Cotswolds: Exploring English Nature

Exclusive Access to Highlights & Hidden Corners of Britain's Classic Countryside

Sometimes, nature travel is more refined than rugged. That's true of our rural sojourn in the Cotswold Hills—it's filled with wild discoveries, yet decidedly genteel. On walks through ancient beech forest and wildflower meadows, along hedgerows and trout-filled streams, an idyllic tableau of traditional England awaits. Our focus is on native habitats, artisan agriculture and conservation in Britain's largest designated National Landscape. Explore hidden byways and unspoiled villages, with private tours of lavish gardens, an organic farm, gourmet picnics, and pints at local pubs that date back centuries. Enjoy exclusive access to Highgrove House Gardens on the royal estate of King Charles III, where a private tea awaits. In the evenings, Britain's finest country house hotels provide a luxurious retreat, renowned for historic architecture, bucolic settings and sustainable farm-to-table fare.

Trip Highlights

Wander scenic footpaths through Britain's largest National Landscape, protecting ancient habitats, globally significant wetlands and rewilded farmlands

Discover picture-postcard villages and local pubs, and stay at historic luxury inns and manor houses set among peaceful gardens, meadows, brooks and woodlands

Enjoy exclusive experiences at grand estates, including King Charles' Highgrove House, lavish gardens and nature reserves, and falconry and sheep dog demonstrations



Itinerary At A Glance

Day 1

Oxford, United Kingdom—City Tour / Minster Lovell

Day 2

Wytham Woods Nature Reserve / Bibury / Bampton / Windrush Valley Walk

Day 3

Highgrove House—Private Garden Tour / Westonbirt National Arboretum

Day 4

Slimbridge Wetland Center / Private Tour of Painswick Rococo Garden / Falconry Experience

Day 5

Sapperton Valley Nature Reserve / River Eye Walk / Upper Slaughter

Day 6

Dawn Chorus Walk / Classic Cotswold Villages / Honeydale Farm

The Cotswolds: Exploring English Nature Itinerary

Exclusive Access to Highlights & Hidden Corners of Britain's Classic Countryside

Day 1: Oxford, United Kingdom—City Tour / Minster Lovell

Our Cotswolds sojourn begins this afternoon in Oxford with a guided walking tour of England's most famous university town. Admire the architecture and heritage of the 15th-century Bodleian Library and several of the colleges that comprise Oxford University, founded by King Henry VIII in 1546. Leaving Oxford, we head west into the heart of the Cotswolds. This rural region, whose name comes from the Old English "cot" for sheep enclosure and "wold," meaning hill—"sheep pens among rolling hills"—spans 800 square miles and is protected as Britain's largest National Landscape. Arrive at Minster Lovell, where a welcome dinner awaits at our inn. This perfectly preserved village of stone cottages with classic thatched roofs enjoys a romantic setting on the River Windrush.





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Day 7

Sheepdog Demonstration / Scenic
Country Walk / Private Tour of
Hidcote Gardens



Itinerary At A Glance

Day 8

Upper Slaughter / London / Depart

Day 2: Wytham Woods Nature Reserve / Bibury / Bampton / Windrush Valley Walk

This morning, explore Wytham Woods Nature Reserve, owned and maintained by Oxford University since 1942 as a site for ecological research. We tour the "backyard natural laboratory" of the university with a private conservator who introduces us to its rich collection of flora and fauna, with more than 500 species of plants, 800 species of butterflies and moths, abundant birds and badgers, spring-fed peat fens, and a wealth of woodland habitats including ancient semi-natural woodland dating to the last Ice Age and secondary woodland intact since the 17th century. Wytham Woods is among the most-studied woodlands in the world, and we learn about the history of research and conservation efforts during our visit.

Next, a scenic drive on country lanes brings us to one of the most picturesque villages in the Cotswolds, Bibury on the River Coln, where we walk along Arlington Row with its stone weavers' cottages built in the 14th century. Continue to the charming village of Bampton, where many external scenes from Downton Abbey were filmed, then to Burford, whose classic cottages sweep down a long hill to the River Windrush. The Windrush Valley is one of the prettiest walking destinations in the Cotswolds, and we follow an easy path leading through the postcard-perfect hamlets of Widford, Swinbrook and Asthall. In contrast to the Cotswolds' more heavily touristed towns, these are unspoiled villages that evoke the traditional England of the imagination. The settings are quintessentially Cotswolds, with medieval churches, thatched cottages, cozy pubs, and stone bridges spanning the river. The scenery is as bucolic as it gets, with the trail skirting pastures filled with grazing sheep enclosed by dry stone walls. The area abounds in sheep, as it has for centuries, and numerous small wildlife species inhabit the hedgerows. Expect abundant wildflowers in spring and summer, a rich palette of warm colors in autumn, and varied bird sightings along the way. Return to Minster Lovell for a second night.



Day 3: Highgrove House—Private Garden Tour / Westonbirt National Arboretum

This morning, enjoy a private guided tour of the gardens at Highgrove House, the country residence of HRH King Charles III, who is an ardent supporter of wildlife conservation and rural landscapes in Britain. Such was his love for the landscape, history and people of the Cotswolds that Charles chose to make this 1796 manor house his personal home. The gardens, more than 35 years in the making, reflect great diversity, from the genteel setting of the Sundial Garden to the unstructured beauty of the Wildflower Meadow.

After lunch at Highgrove, continue to Westonbirt National Arboretum, where you have a choice of a guided interpretive tour or free time to wander the woodlands and gardens. A vital location for research and conservation, Westonbirt holds one of the most important plant collections in the world. Its more than 2,500 tree species include rare and intriguing flora from the farthest corners of the globe. The magnificent botanical collection got its start in 1829 by wealthy Victorian landowner Robert Holford, whose passion for nature and botany grew in tandem with the expansion of the British Empire, when naturalist explorers were bringing back new and exotic species from far-flung lands. Holford financed plant-collecting expeditions around the world, and the arboretum still contains many of the original specimens brought back from these forays.

Please note: *On occasion, unexpected changes in the King's schedule may force us to alter or cancel our visit to Highgrove House and Gardens today, since it is his personal residence. When that is the case, we will try to go on another date, or we will substitute an alternate activity.*



Day 4: Slimbridge Wetland Center / Private Tour of Painswick Rococo Garden / Falconry Experience

This morning's visit to a globally important nature reserve offers a rich encounter with conservation leadership in action. Encompassing 650 acres of wetlands along the Severn Estuary, Slimbridge Wetland Center was established in 1946 by Sir Peter Scott, son of Antarctic explorer Captain Robert Scott. Seeking to protect the birds he loved and their habitat, he set up the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) at Slimbridge as a center for science, conservation and public access to nature. Scott presented the BBC's first live television wildlife programs from Slimbridge, created the IUCN red list that indicates whether species are threatened or endangered, co-founded WWF—World Wildlife Fund—and designed its iconic panda logo.

We are inspired by Sir Peter's vision as we explore Slimbridge, which he called the "avian Serengeti," given the vast number of wild birds that frequent this mosaic of reedbed, grazing marsh, ponds, pools and riverside flooded meadow. Migrating birds pass through in spring while hatchlings appear in early summer, including kingfishers and cranes. From summer warblers to autumn waders, the activity is lively no matter when we visit. The center also breeds rare and endangered birds that are later released to the wild in their native habitats. We learn why wetlands are crucial to the planet's survival, why they are endangered, and what we must do to preserve and restore them.

This afternoon, enjoy lunch and a private horticultural walk through Painswick Rococo Garden, tucked into a hidden valley just off the Cotswold Way footpath that winds through the hills. Designed in the 1740s for the owner of Painswick House, it was restored in the 1980s to evoke its original sense of fanciful whimsy and *joie de vivre*. "Rococo" refers to a period of art fashionable in Europe in the 18th century, characterized by ornamental decoration. England's upper middle classes loved to show off their wealth by indulging in the flamboyant and frivolous, and gardens like this one were an elaborate entertainment space to delight their guests. Today, it is England's only surviving rococo garden. Highlights of our tour may include heritage roses, fiery day lilies, an orchid-filled wildflower meadow, and a focus on butterfly conservation. This afternoon, we're met by a falconer for an interactive birds of prey experience. We'll meet several raptors—typically a hawk, owl, falcon and eagle—which we get to handle and watch fly as we learn about the history of British falconry.

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Day 5: Sapperton Valley Nature Reserve / River Eye Walk / Upper Slaughter

Just up the road lies the Sapperton Valley nature reserve. The narrow, steep-sided valley contains a mix of woodland, marsh and wet meadows along the River Frome. A stretch of the Severn and Thames Canal, built in 1789 but disused since the early 20th century, runs through the reserve. Explore it on a walk among the tall trees, lush vegetation, wild herbs and wildflowers that grow in season, learning about local conservation efforts to restore butterfly populations. Afterwards, continue to a local pub for lunch.

The afternoon holds a stroll through one of the Cotswolds' most enchanting settings. The villages of Upper and Lower Slaughter have names that derive from the Saxon word *slothere* or *sloh*, meaning "slough" or "marshy place," rather than any grisly heritage. Connected by a peaceful mile walk along the River Eye, the villages look straight out of a fairytale with their tiny cottages, steeped churches, stone walls, trailing roses and picturesque old mill. Our walk concludes in the tiny hamlet of Upper Slaughter, where we find the luxurious country house hotel that will be our home for the next three nights.



Day 6: Dawn Chorus Walk / Classic Cotswold Villages / Honeydale Farm

Rise early for a "dawn chorus" bird walk with a local naturalist, who helps us identify the songbirds we hear as we greet the morning. Return to the inn for a hearty English breakfast, then set out to explore a collection of small Cotswolds villages, starting in Stanway, which is famous for its Jacobean manor house with a gravity-fed fountain that reaches heights of nearly 300 feet. Neighboring Stanton is considered one of the most picturesque towns in the Cotswolds. Many of its cottages were built in the mid-1500s, and the church dates to the 9th century. Walk on to Snowhill, built of golden Cotswold limestone, which lies near two long-distance footpaths, the Winchcombe Way and Cotswold Way.

As we weave our way through the bucolic landscape, we observe how the traditional rural heritage of the Cotswolds has shaped the region over the centuries. More than 80% of these rolling hills is agricultural land. Nature here has been managed and conserved by the farming community, which continues its commitment to careful stewardship today. At Honeydale Farm, learn about sustainable agriculture in the Cotswolds. Committed to ecological farming and public education, the FarmED program on the 107-acre site seeks to reconnect people to the land in ways that will nourish them and the Earth both. Our private guided walking tour covers the heritage orchard, kitchen garden, meadows and woodland as we learn about natural flood management, regenerative agriculture, the micro dairy, and the heritage wheat the farm grows for artisan bread making. This evening, enjoy a dinner featuring local farm-to-table fare at an inviting country inn.

Day 7: Sheepdog Demonstration / Scenic Country Walk / Private Tour of Hidcote Gardens

This morning, watch a live sheepdog demonstration at Mickleton Farm, where we learn about the communication between the dogs and their handlers and witness the remarkable way the sheep respond to the dogs' movements. Then we enjoy another village-to-village walk, connecting our lunch stop in Ebrington with our garden tour at Hidcote, as we amble across the rolling hills of the northern Cotswolds. Following paths through grassy fields, and along ancient farm tracks and quiet lanes, we traverse open countryside with expansive views. The route over the limestone terrain rises and falls gently, with a few steady climbs that offer more reward than challenge. Each season unveils its own natural beauty: spring brings fresh green fields and hedgerows strewn with wildflowers; summer offers dry, sun-warmed trails beneath lush, shady canopies; and autumn paints the countryside in rich golds and russets.

At Hidcote Gardens, we have private tour of this National Trust property regarded as one of the finest displays of flora in England. Hidcote's designer, Lawrence Johnston, sourced plants for the gardens from around the world and donated the site to the National Trust in 1948—making it the first of many significant British gardens the Trust would acquire. This evening, a festive farewell dinner awaits as we gather around the table one last time.



Day 8: Upper Slaughter / London / Depart

An early morning transfer is included from our hotel in Upper Slaughter to London's Heathrow Airport, about a two-hour drive, for those who are flying home or headed to other travels. If you choose to remain in the region for further exploration on your own, you can leave any time before scheduled checkout from our hotel—consider a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Blenheim Palace, Sudeley Castle, the Roman city of Bath, or Shakespeare's childhood home of Stratford-upon-Avon—all are nearby.

Please note: While all activities listed on our itinerary will be included, some may take place on days or times that are different from what is shown, depending on local schedules.



Accommodation Details:

Minster Mill

Calcot & Spa

Lords of the Manor

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/cultural-journeys/cotswolds-england-nature-tour/accommodations

The Cotswolds: Exploring English Nature Accommodations

Exclusive Access to Highlights & Hidden Corners of Britain's Classic Countryside



Minster Mill

On the banks of the River Windrush and surrounded by 65 acres of gardens, wildflower meadows and woodlands, this new luxury inn features a heritage exterior with an airy, contemporary atmosphere within.



Calcot & Spa

One of the premier accommodations in the Cotswolds, this luxurious 16th-century manor house hotel sits on 220 acres of rewilded countryside, offering an immersive encounter with nature and local wildlife.



Lords of the Manor

This family-owned 17th-century country house inn offers refined hospitality in one of England's most unspoiled and attractive tiny villages, set among eight acres of gardens along the tranquil River Eye.



A Truer Way to Experience the Cotswolds

The Cotswold Hills, famous for their natural landscapes interwoven with villages of golden limestone, exuberant gardens, small organic farms and grand country estates, embody a vision of rural England that's rarely realized in contemporary times. While this is nature travel of a different sort from an African safari or an Arctic polar bear adventure, an immersion in a quieter natural beauty is also inspiring—and also at risk—as the reach of the urban world grows ever greater. We've gone to great lengths to share the delights of the Cotswolds in the singular manner you've come to expect from Nat Hab:

1 Explore One of Britain's Most Treasured Natural Landscapes in Depth

Though the population of the Cotswolds is small, it's a popular tourist destination. Most visitors come for just a day, often on a coach tour from London or Oxford, racing from one packed town to the next. In contrast, we've created a peaceful, personalized experience. Our wide-ranging itinerary features lesser-known places and interactions that reveal the true natural beauty of the Cotswolds, along with a more private take on famed highlights you wouldn't want to miss.

2 A Focus on Nature & Conservation

If you're inspired by examples of conserving nature and rural vistas amid human presence (after all, there have been people living, farming and working in the Cotswolds for 6,000 years), this trip is for you. Local families and the national government alike are dedicated to preserving and restoring these irreplaceable landscapes, which we discover on footpaths and scenic byways. In addition to admiring classic architecture and glorious gardens, we explore nature reserves of ancient hardwood forest, wildflower meadows, marshes, streams and hedgerows, occasionally encountering local wildlife whose presence is often subtle. We also witness the wonder of "rewilding," inspired by local efforts to return hard-worked terrain to its natural state.

3 Private Tours & Exclusive Access for a Personalized Experience

A hallmark of our itinerary is the exceptional number of private experiences we've arranged. You won't be held up in long queues or bumping shoulders with dozens of other visitors at the Cotswolds' most acclaimed sites. Enjoy private tours of Hidcote and Painswick gardens and the royal gardens at Highgrove House; a private conservator-led tour of Wytham Woods, the natural ecology laboratory of Oxford University; a private canal cruise; private falconry experience; and other behind-the-scenes activities featuring private presentations with local experts. We don't think you'll find anywhere near this privileged access on another trip!



4 A Small Group Allows Access to Less-Visited Destinations

With only 14 travelers, we can navigate narrow country roads and one-vehicle lanes hemmed by hedgerows, which are off limits to motorcoaches. We thus get to places others can't, including tiny villages that exude all the charm you expect in the Cotswolds, plus local pubs and family farms that can't accommodate bus tours. We're also able to stay in intimate inns with personalized service.

5 A Dedicated Expedition Leader—Plus Local Experts for Superlative Interpretation

You'll benefit from the exceptional attention and flexibility from start to finish that only a Nat Hab Expedition Leader can provide. Our guides are a font of knowledge about the natural and cultural history of the Cotswolds, including conservation commitments that are central to preserving the landscape and way of life that make this area unique. Local experts also lend detail and insight to augment your experience. From organic farmers and gardeners to bird conservationists and cheese makers, the specialist guides who join us add to your appreciation for the region, its nature and its people.

6 Country House Hotels Offer Luxury, History & Hospitality

Nature travel isn't necessarily about the accommodations. But in the Cotswolds—on *our* itinerary—they are a highlight! We've selected several of the region's finest country house hotels, with centuries of history and the character to go with it. We stay in the most idyllic Cotswolds settings, with inns set in peaceful stone villages, surrounded by gardens, manicured lawns, rolling countryside and wild nature. All offer elegant guest rooms and amenities, with dining rooms managed by award-winning chefs who tap local purveyors for the finest and freshest ingredients.

7 Farm-to-Table Food Culture Offers Outstanding Local Fare

There is a big emphasis in the Cotswolds on "field to fork" food: local, organic artisan production of cheese, cream, lamb, pork, trout, berries, honey, cider, ale and more. The inns and pubs where we take our meals source many of their ingredients from known local producers. For nature lovers who are also foodies, this trip won't disappoint!

8 Outstanding Naturalist Expedition Leaders

We're known for the quality of our guides, and you'll find that the leadership on this trip is no exception! With a deep knowledge of England's diverse ecosystems, your Expedition Leader enhances your adventure in a way that makes you feel safe, cared for and enlightened. [Read our Expedition Leader bios](#) and traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

9 Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures a Rewarding Experience

With Natural Habitat Adventures, you get our exclusive guarantee, promising that we will meet the lofty expectations set in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most impressive guarantee made by any adventure travel company. [for yourself!](#)



10 **Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey**

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.



Discovering Our Planet Together



Dates & Pricing
Summary:

Prices:
From \$10995

Group Size:
Limited to 14
Travelers

The Cotswolds: Exploring English Nature Dates, Pricing & Info

Exclusive Access to Highlights & Hidden Corners of Britain's Classic Countryside

2026 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
Apr 29, 2026	May 6, 2026	\$11295 USD Habitat Club Pricing Available
May 6, 2026	May 13, 2026	\$11295 USD
May 13, 2026	May 20, 2026	\$11295 USD Habitat Club Pricing Available
May 20, 2026	May 27, 2026	\$11295 USD
May 27, 2026	Jun 3, 2026	\$11295 USD



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:
From \$10995

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Limited to 14
Travelers

Departure	Return	Notes
Jun 3, 2026	Jun 10, 2026	\$11295 USD
Jun 10, 2026	Jun 17, 2026	\$10995 USD <u>Women's Journey</u>
Jun 17, 2026	Jun 24, 2026	\$10995 USD
Jun 24, 2026	Jul 1, 2026	\$10995 USD <u>Habitat Club Pricing Available</u>
Aug 26, 2026	Sep 2, 2026	\$10995 USD
Sep 9, 2026	Sep 16, 2026	\$10995 USD
Sep 23, 2026	Sep 30, 2026	\$11295 USD

2027 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
Apr 20, 2027	Apr 27, 2027	\$11495 USD
Apr 27, 2027	May 4, 2027	\$11495 USD
May 4, 2027	May 11, 2027	\$11495 USD
May 11, 2027	May 18, 2027	\$11495 USD
May 18, 2027	May 25, 2027	\$11495 USD



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:
From \$10995

Group Size:
Limited to 14
Travelers

Departure	Return	Notes
May 25, 2027	Jun 1, 2027	\$11495 USD
Jun 1, 2027	Jun 8, 2027	\$11495 USD
Jun 8, 2027	Jun 15, 2027	\$11495 USD <u>Women's Journey</u>
Jun 15, 2027	Jun 22, 2027	\$11495 USD
Jun 22, 2027	Jun 29, 2027	\$11495 USD
Jul 20, 2027	Jul 27, 2027	\$11495 USD
Aug 17, 2027	Aug 24, 2027	\$11495 USD
Sep 7, 2027	Sep 14, 2027	\$11495 USD
Sep 21, 2027	Sep 28, 2027	\$11495 USD
Oct 5, 2027	Oct 12, 2027	\$11495 USD



Pricing

See <https://nathab.com/cultural-journeys/cotswolds-england-nature-tour/dates-fees> for the latest pricing details.

Included

Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s) and local guides, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some gratuities, airport transfer for those arriving by air on Day 1 and on final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry and internet, etc.), airline baggage fees, required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Important Information About This Trip

This more refined nature adventure is especially for those who value and appreciate nature of all kinds, both vast wilderness where human presence is absent, and natural landscapes—like the Cotswolds—where humans have been part of the mix for 6,000 years, living in harmony and stewarding the land. For travelers who have a special interest in conservation, land trusts, historic preservation, reintroduction of native species, etc., the Cotswolds are like a living laboratory for observing this commitment in action. Garden aficionados will be in heaven on this trip. The Cotswolds' celebrated gardens, both grand and small-scale, are simply unsurpassed and we will enjoy private garden tours. And for those who appreciate fine food and drink, and distinctive accommodations steeped in history and local character, our trip showcases some of Britain's very best.

Please note that on occasion, unexpected changes in the King's schedule may force us to alter or cancel our visit to Highgrove House and Gardens on Day 4, since it is his personal residence. When that is the case, we will try to go on another date, or we will substitute an alternate activity.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least \$250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.



Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in London. **Arrive at Heathrow Airport by 11 am on Day 1** to join the group and transfer to Oxford for a guided walking tour and our Day 1 welcome dinner.

You may depart London any time after 11 am on the final day. Nat Hab will provide one group transfer to London Heathrow, typically departing early in the morning. Please keep this in mind when booking flights, as later departures may result in additional waiting time at the airport.

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.



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Extension Details:

Scotland's Wild Highlands & Islands
\$12995

The Cotswolds: Exploring English Nature Extensions

Exclusive Access to Highlights & Hidden Corners of Britain's Classic Countryside



Scotland's Wild Highlands & Islands

Explore rugged coast and rugged mountains from the Outer Hebrides to Highland heights as we discover a land of lochs, whales, seabirds, wildflowers, granite islands and prehistoric cultures.

\$12995



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