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The Cotswolds

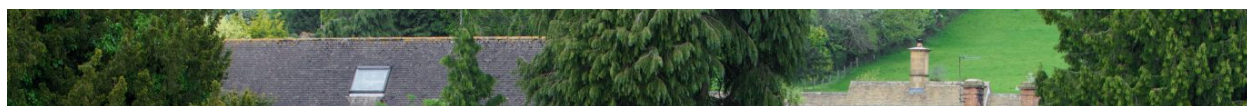
DAY TRIPS

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The 6 Best Day Trips From London, From Bath to the Cotswolds

There's no hiding how much we love London, but let's face it: England is so much more than Buckingham Palace and Big Ben. From a bohemian city by the sea to a country-house hotel in an old-growth forest, these six best day trips from London cater to the foodie, academic, and nature-lover in all of us.

By Lindsey Olander May 20, 2019





1

The Cotswolds

Two hours and 20 minutes by car or 1 hour and 45 minutes by train from London

There's a reason why the Cotswolds is, in many minds, the definition of idyllic England. Its six counties of rolling hills, tiny villages with their old-world churches looming over stone cottages, and sheep-dotted meadows have been eternalized in countless paintings, novels, and poems throughout the centuries. No matter what shire you choose to explore—

Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Warwickshire—it promises to be as picturesque as you imagine. The [Soho Farmhouse](#), a 100-acre estate and 18th-century farm in Oxfordshire, is the perfect marriage of city-meets-country life with 40 Americana-inspired log cabins fronting a lake along with a glassed-in gym and designer hair salon. After working up an appetite strolling the grounds in your Wellington boots (provided on arrival), taking in a flick at the 60-seat theater, or competing in a round on the tennis courts, head 25 minutes north to [Kingham Plough](#) pub for modern takes on English classics. Looking to keep a lower profile? [Cotswold House Hotel](#), in the old wool town of Chipping Campden, occupies a Regency townhouse on a high street with an award-winning spa.

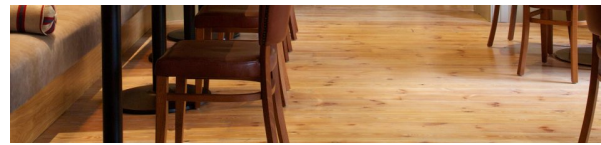
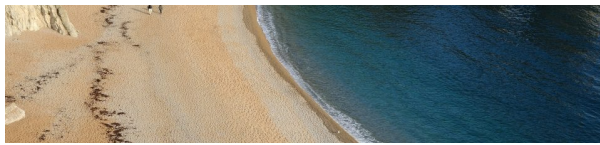
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Dorset

Three hours by car from London

It might be more of a schlep to reach Britain's English Channel coast, but it's worth the drive. Miles of beaches, natural harbors, windswept countryside carved by footpaths, crumbling castles, chalk cliffs that rise up from the sea, a temperate micro-climate that keeps it sunny year-round—no wonder Dorset claims one of the longest life expectancies in Britain. Among its many incredible natural wonders is [Durdle Door](#) beach, famous for its sloping shingle sands that reach out towards a natural limestone arch and secluded cove, part of the Jurassic Coast and England's only natural World Heritage Site. Are you a walker? Head east along the [South West Coast Path](#) and you'll eventually hit [The Pig on the Beach](#), an aristocratic manor house in Studland turned charming hotel just five minutes from the beach. We love the country house-style rooms (think paisley fabrics and reclaimed floorboards) and the food, much of which is grown in the hotel garden—not to mention those clifftop views of Old Harry Rocks and the Isle of Wight. Not an ocean person? No matter—[The Grosvenor Arms](#), a former Georgian coaching inn located more inland in Shaftesbury, delivers just as much regional charm.

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**Check Prices for The Grosvenor Arms in Shaftesbury,
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3

Bath

Two and a half hours by car or 90 minutes by train from London

Most of Britain's medieval towns and quaint villages can't hold a candle to Bath, which looks like a period movie set come to life. Visitors have been making the journey to this tiny city for centuries to gaze at its expertly restored Georgian residences, built from honey-colored Bath stone, and take a dip in the steaming pools inside its 2,000-year-old [Roman Baths](#), a complex of temples and pools fed by three hot springs. It's one of the best-preserved Roman spas in the world, and attracts a multitude of people who come to ogle its architecture and luxuriate in its 115-degree waters. When the crowds prove too

much, escape to the [Gainsborough Bath Spa](#). The former 1800s hospital features elegant guest rooms by renowned New York-based firm Champalimaud Design (think muted colors, vintage radios, and headboards depicting pastoral scenes) and a sky-lit bath of its own that uses the same water source the Romans did back in 75 BC. The restaurant here is exceptional, but set aside time for dinner at the [Bath Priory](#), a four-acre country house hotel whose modern British cuisine has earned its terrace restaurant the city's only Michelin star.

TOUR TO BOOK: Let someone else do the driving on this [day-trip tour](#) from London, which hits not one but three major UNESCO World Heritage Sites including Bath, Stonehenge, and lesser-known Avebury. You'll catch a glimpse of prehistoric Silbury Hill, step inside the Roman Baths, and see Stonehenge as it would have looked four thousand years ago with the help of virtual reality.

[Check Prices for The Gainsborough Bath Spa in Bath, United Kingdom](#)



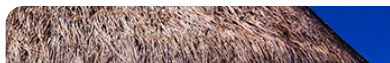
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4

Brighton

Two hours by car or one hour by train from London

If you think England isn't known for its beaches, you've probably never been to Brighton. Life in this seaside resort town on England's southern coast, home to one of England's largest LGBT communities, is progressive and light-hearted—and a catch-all for anyone seeking some old-fashioned fun, whether it's riding a roller coaster on the pier, supporting local art, or exploring the legendary nightlife. Classic oyster bars are many, but we recommend hitting up the [Salt Room](#), the latest seafood-centric restaurant to hit the waterfront. After digging in to salt cod fritters and whole Cornish monkfish, it's time to see the sights. Take a walk along the iconic Victorian-era [Brighton Pier](#), first opened in 1899, to try your hand at arcade games and or chow down on some candyfloss as you watch swimmers drift in and out of the surf that lines its wide

shingle beach. The shopping here is also superb, especially along The Lanes, a bohemian maze of narrow streets overflowing with retro pubs and cafés and storefronts peddling vintage clothes and antiques. When it starts to rain (this is England after all), up your culture quota with a walk through the [Brighton Museum and Art Gallery](#), the [Toy and Model Museum](#) (great for kids), or the [Royal Pavilion](#), an Indian-style pleasure palace built for King George IV defined by its complex exterior domes and minarets and even more outlandish interiors, which drip with dragon wallpaper and Mandarin figurines.

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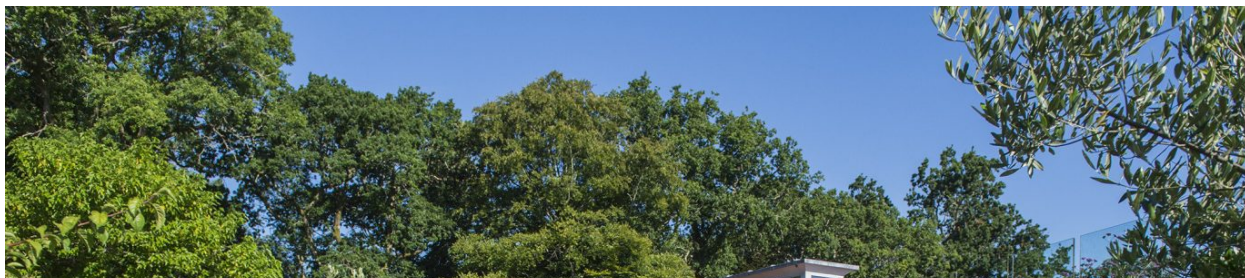
5

Cambridge

Two hours by car or 45 minutes by train from London

Whether you're a prospective student or a prospective tourist, there's no easy answer for which of England's venerable academic towns, Oxford and Cambridge, is best. But, because urban Oxford is a more substantial town with lots to see, Cambridge becomes an easier side trip. The [University of Cambridge](#) makes up much of the town, with some 31

separate colleges. The only true way to see them is on a [punting tour](#) along the River Cam, which winds its way through “the backs” of the colleges. Unless you’re a student, we’re sorry to say that experiencing actual dormitory life is off-limits; instead, base yourself at the [Varsity Hotel & Spa](#), in the center of town. Rooms are light-hearted and modern, with designer wallpaper, steam trunks for storage, and picture windows. The rooftop bar is great for taking in the town’s medieval rooftops over cocktails before dinner in the downstairs steakhouse, occupying a 17th-century former brewery. Foodies with more refined taste should book well in advance for a meal at [Midsummer House](#), a Victorian-era cottage and conservatory right on the river renowned for its two-Michelin-starred French cuisine. Of course, you can’t do right by Cambridge without popping into [Fitzbillies](#), an Art Nouveau bakery and institution that still uses the same recipes (many a closely guarded secret) it did when the café first opened its doors in 1922. The treat to order: a Chelsea Bun, swirled with the perfect amount of honey, cinnamon, and raisins.







6

New Forest, Hampshire, England

One hour and 45 minutes by car from London

It's hard to believe a wild, unenclosed expanse of forest, heath, and pasture lies less than two hours outside one of the world's most visited cities, but that's exactly what you'll find when you enter the [New Forest](#). Much of the woodland—now a designated National Park—is as it was when William the Conqueror sectioned it off as a royal hunting ground in 1079. This is the backdrop for the [Lime Wood Hotel](#), a formidable 13th-century Regency hunting lodge made over into an effortlessly beautiful 32-room retreat. But this isn't your average country estate. Sure, there are sumptuous additions—Velvet French chairs, raw-silk wall coverings, grand fireplaces

—but there’s also more contemporary details, including Nespresso machines, an excellent restaurant, and a retractable glass roof that lets light shine down on the central atrium. After a stroll—or better yet, a ride on horseback—through the tastefully manicured grounds, a trip to the spa is just what the doctor ordered.

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