



DISCOVER WILTSHIRE THIS CHRISTMAS

Wiltshire offers group visitors many festive delights this Christmas. Come and enjoy rural market towns, independent shopping, great days out, festive food and drink, plus great value group accommodation. A perfect destination for your group this Christmas.

Here are some of **VisitWiltshire's** Christmas highlights for groups:

Great Days Out:

Home of the Marchioness of Landsdowne, **Bowood House's** Christmas Extravaganza offers an amazing opportunity to indulge in a fantastic shopping experience. A variety of stunning stalls including handmade toys, Christmas food, sculptures, evening clothes, indulgences, shoes, books, silk flowers, handbags, table decorations, a personal shopping service and much more! There will also be a licensed Christmas café serving delicious light lunches and teas. Open from 10am 24 November until 3pm 25 November, £8 per adult. www.bowood.org/event/bowood-house-christmas-extravaganza/

Longleat will end its 50th Anniversary celebrations with the return of the magnificent Chinese lanterns, with an exciting new theme. Thousands of illuminated lanterns will light up the park and tell a story in a way no one's ever experienced before. Longleat's prestigious Elizabethan stately home will also be dressed in traditional Victorian festive décor; with characters roaming the house breathing an enchanting and immersive life into the grand interiors. Various dates from 11 November to 2 January. Fantastic discounts on Day Tickets for groups of 12 or more people. Bespoke packages for groups and new online booking for 12 – 32 people. www.longleat.co.uk/groups

National Trust's - **Mompesson House** is celebrating a traditional Georgian Christmas with mince pies and mulled wine in the garden tea room and a festive trail for children. Sat 26 November plus 13 other dates. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mompesson-house.

National Trust's **Stourhead House and Gardens** are open with selected showrooms ornately decorated for Christmas. Visitors can discover how the Hoare family celebrated Christmas through the ages. Explore the beautiful gardens complete with Gothic Cottage and a warming log fire. 2 or 3 course lunches can be pre-booked for groups. Open from 26 November – 21 December, 11am-3.30pm (last entry 3pm). www.nationaltrust.org.uk/stourhead

At **Salisbury Cathedral** you can witness the spectacular Darkness to Light Advent Procession on 26 and 27 November, as 13,000 candles light up the cathedral. There is an interactive family theatre production by Hoodwink's - A Winter's Tale from 16 -18 December, plus Group Carols with mulled wine and mince pies on 6 and 9 December and a 40ft Christmas Tree. www.salisburycathedral.org.uk

Arundells is a hidden gem, where visitors can explore the home of former Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath and find out more about the man who was an amazing musician, sailor and art collector. Exclusive tours out of season for groups of 10 or more. Joint tickets with Salisbury Cathedral & Magna Carta also available. Pre-booking essential. www.arundells.org

Events and Entertainment

Wiltshire's rural market towns have many Christmas events and festivities including **Malmesbury's** Community Choir Christmas Concert on 3 December and the Malmesbury Singers Christmas Concert on 10 December, plus late night shopping on 2 December. On Saturday 26 November in **Corsham**, you can write a wish, pop it in bauble and hang it on Corsham's High Street Christmas tree for Father Christmas to collect when he's passing. It's free and open for wishes from 10am-1pm. Corsham's Christmas Lights Switch on is on 2 December from 5pm with music, entertainment, Christmas market, reindeer and, of course, a very special visitor in his grotto. **Bradford-on-Avon's** Christmas light switch on will be on 25 November at 6pm.

This year's **Wyvern Theatre** pantomime is the enchanting tale of Cinderella, which takes to the stage from Saturday 10 December to Sunday 8 January. Special group rates from only £17.50 apply for bookings of 8+ people. The Wyvern will also be hosting a selection of hospitality events, from 'Festive Tea and Tours' to 'Dick Whittington's Dinner Invite' and 'Murder at the Panto', a special festive take on the Murder Mystery Dinner. www.swindontheatres.co.uk

Shopping:

Salisbury Christmas Market – offers over 75 beautifully decorated chalets where you will find a wide range of exhibitors selling food, drink and Christmas gifts. This year's market opens on 24 November and runs until 18 December. Salisbury, a coach friendly city, offers a central drop off point within meters of the market and a team of Christmas market ambassadors who will greet groups on arrival. Pay and display coach parking is available. www.salisburychristmasmarket.co.uk

McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Swindon is launching its Christmas event on 12 November with indoor Christmas gift stalls, snowfall throughout the day – irrespective of the weather - and reindeer visiting every weekend from 26 November. Pre-book your group to receive a group pack including a 10% discount card and £5 gift card lunch voucher for coach drivers. www.mcarthurglen.com/uk/swindon-designer-outlet

Accommodation:

Old Sarum Hotels – Three group-friendly Wiltshire Hotels – **The Cathedral Hotel** has 20 rooms and is in the heart of the Salisbury; **The Old Mill Hotel**, Harnham, is a charming 15th century hotel with 11 en-suite rooms situated in the most tranquil location not far from the centre of Salisbury; and **The Castle Hotel** in Devizes is an 18th Century coaching inn with 19 bedrooms, situated to nearby attractions **Wadworth Brewery** and **Wiltshire Museum**. Book direct for best available rates. www.oldsarumhotels.co.uk

Best Western Mayfield House Hotel, near Malmesbury, has 28 rooms, a lounge, bar and snug plus English walled gardens. It has recently passed an AA inspection with an improved year-on-year score plus a 5 out of 5 Food Standards rating for its award-winning rosette restaurant for local fine dining. Great group discounts, free accommodation for drivers, free coach parking and Wi-Fi. Minimum group size 10 rooms. www.mayfieldhousehotel.co.uk

Discover Wiltshire are offering Christmas packages featuring Longleat and Salisbury Christmas Market. Please visit the new '**Book a Wiltshire**' Tour page for special group packages or visit www.discoverwiltshire.com

For planning your group visit to Wiltshire, great group benefits, coach parking, itineraries, group accommodation and more please go to www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/groups. For further information on 'things to do', 'where to stay' and 'what's on' in Wiltshire throughout the year please see www.visitwiltshire.co.uk.

Please note we are now taking enquiries from GTOs and Tour Operators who wish to attend the next VisitWiltshire Familiarisation Visit on Sunday 2 – Tuesday 4 October 2016. Please contact flowallace@visitwiltshire.co.uk to register your interest.

For further information, images or to register your interest for a familiarisation visit please contact Florence Wallace, Travel Trade & PR Manager, flo.wallace@visitwiltshire.co.uk Tel: 01722 341309 or 07436 588860. Follow us on twitter [@VisitWiltshire](https://twitter.com/VisitWiltshire) or on Facebook [#timeforwiltshire](https://www.facebook.com/timeforwiltshire)

Notes to editors:

VisitWiltshire was established in August 2011 and is the official Tourist Board for Wiltshire representing over 600 partners. It is a public/private sector membership organisation with our main funder being Wiltshire Council. VisitWiltshire's priority is to grow the county's Visitor Economy by raising awareness of the destination and generating additional tourism visits and spend. Wiltshire's Visitor Economy currently generates an estimated £1.5billion and supports over 28,000 jobs.

Images to support this editorial about Christmas can be downloaded from our Flickr gallery via the following album links:

- Christmas - <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/j4247i>
- Salisbury Christmas Market - <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/E8GD15>
- Shopping - <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/tbqe7w>
- Winter - <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/k3d366>

If you require additional albums on specific products mentioned above please email flowallace@visitwiltshire.co.uk and album links can be forwarded.

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