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Welcome to Wiltshire!

Wiltshire has been a special place for a very long time. Our World Heritage sites of Stonehenge & Avebury, stand testament to the ages.

Wiltshire has timeless monuments, rolling green downs, ancient woodlands and bustling market towns. There are parish churches, grand historic houses and country inns with local ales. Arts and culture, food and drink, shopping, nightlife and plenty of places to visit and stay with a warm welcome are at the heart of a Wiltshire experience. All this, yet only an hour and a half, or less, from London.

Come and visit Wiltshire in 2018 to write your chapter in our never ending story of Timeless Pleasures, Timeless Places, Timeless Wonders and Timeless Nature.

VisitWiltshire is the official Destination Management & Marketing Organisation 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 29,000 jobs.

The VisitWiltshire website – www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/media - is a wealth of information. Be sure to check out Wiltshire's highlights for 2018 and beyond, plus recent press releases, feature ideas, Wiltshire town information and much more.

Connect with us via social media on Twitter (@VisitWiltshire), Facebook (VisitWiltshire) or Instagram (@VisitWiltshire). Read our blogs on www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/blog.

Images to promote tourism to Wiltshire can be accessed via our digital photo library. The following albums are available for media use when credited www.visitwiltshire.co.uk.

- Timeless Pleasures - <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/p76RBe>
- Timeless Places - <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/N8U0w1>
- Timeless Wonders - <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/JB4P09>
- Timeless Nature - <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/8adz9z>

Terms and conditions and a full list of albums can be found [here](#).

For further information or to arrange a press visit please do not hesitate to contact us:

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Wiltshire's Highlights for 2018 and Beyond!

It's an exciting time for visitors heading to Wiltshire in 2018 and beyond, with the new Great West Way project getting underway, new accommodation, attraction news, grant projects, exhibitions and events, Wiltshire on-screen, plus food and drink news. Come and experience Wiltshire to write your chapter in our never ending story of Timeless Pleasures, Timeless Places, Timeless Wonders and Timeless Nature.

Great West Way

VisitWiltshire are working to create one of the world's premier touring routes between London and Bristol. This is one of a number of successful projects made possible by HM Government's £40m Discover England Fund, administered by VisitEngland (www.discoverenglandfund.org).

The Great West Way follows a 125-mile route - a quarter of which is in Wiltshire - based on one of the first Great Roads commissioned by the Kings of England. It offers an extraordinary variety of English experiences not found in any other part of the country.

Visitors will be able to explore by road (coach and car), railway, waterway or by walking or cycling. It's for curious and inquisitive travelers. Those who like to go deeper, to see, feel, do, try and taste for themselves. It's for seekers searching for the real, authentic essence of England.

The Great West Way will promote a range of product themes reflecting the route's tourism assets including history and heritage, food and drink, countryside, film tourism, gardens and luxury tourism.

This new tourism route will be launched in March 2019. For information about the Great West Way project including Round 1 activity and the progress of Round 2 activity, please take a look at www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/greatwestway.

New Accommodation

[The Three Daggers](#), Westbury, is opening Hillside Cottage & Spa – a new 6 bedroom exclusive-use luxury house with outdoor steam room, sauna, hot tub, plunge pool, spa and treatment centre. This new facility is the perfect place for corporate meetings and events, family celebrations, weddings and holiday getaways.

The Calf Shed, providing new accessible accommodation designed in collaboration with spinal injury patients and part of [Manor Farm Cottages](#) in Salisbury, is a modern, stylish luxury retreat that can sleep up to 5 people.

[Highway Hill](#), in Calne, is a new development set in the rolling downland of the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It offers quirky accommodation in a haven of natural beauty and outdoor experiences with three shepherd's huts and two bell tents.

Looking beyond 2018, [Longleat's](#) plans to build a new 240 room hotel, with water park and business conference facilities on the edge of its Estate near Warminster have been approved by Wiltshire Council.

Attraction news - something a little different

The [REME Museum](#), Lyneham, is now fully open to the public and the recently opened [Visit Hillbrush](#) welcomes visitors to this unique family-run attraction.

[Salisbury Escape Rooms](#) have a new theme called CSI Salisbury – where visitors are assisting a police investigation into art thefts, money laundering etc.

[Salisbury Plain Horseback Safaris](#) run by Salisbury Plain Safaris, will be fully operational in 2018. A riding experience departing only on Saturdays for up to 4 people, begins with a briefing and short warm-up riding lesson, before heading out onto Salisbury Plain for a 2-hour accompanied hack.

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[Lacock Abbey's](#) new theme for 2018 will be 'Women of Lacock', featuring four different key women and their influence on the village, with interpretation and events throughout the year. They have also just opened a new upmarket tea room.

[The Merchant's House](#) in Marlborough will be opening the Marlborough Museum in 2018, which will feature items reflecting the town's social history over the past several hundred years.

VisitWiltshire has recently launched a new online shop - www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/shop – making it quicker and easier than ever before for visitors to plan and book their visit to Wiltshire by purchasing tickets for a variety of Wiltshire attractions, events and activities.

Heritage Lottery Funded Grant Projects

We are delighted to report that a number of Wiltshire businesses have been successful in their Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) applications, which will benefit natural, industrial, archival and architectural heritage across the county.

[Kennet and Avon Canal Trust](#) has been awarded £559,300 and are set to carry out essential restoration and conservation work on the Grade I Listed Crofton Beam Engines and the buildings in which they are housed. Access, facilities and interpretation at the site near Marlborough will be transformed.

[Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) has been awarded £814,100 and will be purchasing 34.54ha of land, doubling the size of the Coombe Bissett Down nature reserve, and restoring it to chalk grassland which is so important for many species of butterflies and birds. In addition, [Langford Lakes](#) will be renovating an old site building into a new visitor centre and creating a new raised pond with accessible viewing area.

[Trowbridge Museum](#) has been awarded £1,172,500 and will be conserving Home Mill, the historic building, expanding its gallery space and creating new facilities for visitors including a lift and a library and learning space. Displays will be reimagined and the textile heritage of other buildings in the town will be told through a new app. The Museum will close in June 2018 and re-open May 2020.

Anniversaries, key events, festivals and exhibitions

2018 is the centenary of the end of the First World War, so a number of attractions will be celebrating this anniversary. The [American Museum in Britain](#) will have a First World War exhibition focusing on America's involvement and it also has a renovation project of their Mount Vernon Garden.

The [Stonehenge Summer Solstice Music Festival](#) (18–22 June) is celebrating its 10th year in 2018. This event celebrates the summer solstice in spiritual style and the site is walking distance from Stonehenge World Heritage Site. Overnight bookings can be made at [Stonehenge Campsite & Glamping Pods](#).

[Longleat](#) are opening a Killer Animatronics exhibition (24 March-31 October) where visitors can see the big, the beautiful and the sometimes bizarre world of predators come to life. Exhibits include an actual size great white shark and a super-sized venus flytrap. In addition, Longleat's other events include Food and Drink Festival (23–24 June), Sky Safari (14–16 September) and the ever-popular Christmas Festival of Lights (selected dates from 9 November).

[Salisbury Museum's](#) Terry Pratchett exhibition continues until 13 January 2018 and from 27 January–12 May they will be opening a major new exhibition, 'Brian Graham: Towards Music'.

Don't miss VisitWiltshire's top pick events for 2018:

[Swindon Festival of Literature](#) (1–13 May), [Downton Cuckoo Fair](#) (5 May), [Chippenham Folk Festival](#) (27–30 May), [Daily Mail Chalke Valley History Festival](#) (25 June–1 July), [Marlborough College Summer School](#) (8 July–4 August), [Malmesbury Carnival & Festival](#) (5 July–3 September), [Royal International Air Tattoo](#) (13–15 July), [Edington Music Festival](#) (19–26 August) and [Marlborough Literature Festival](#) (28 September–1 October).

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[Salisbury Christmas Market's](#) winter wonderland, with its authentic German Market-style wooden chalets and festive events, will be expanding into the Cathedral Close and Market Square. Open on selected dates throughout November and December.

Wiltshire on Screen News

Wiltshire has taken centre stage in a whole host of big screen movies and TV costume dramas over recent years.

BBC's Poldark series has been filming around the county so be prepared to spot some familiar Wiltshire locations in 2018. Previous episodes included the market town of [Corsham](#) and [Great Chalfield Manor](#).

[Wilton House](#) will be featured in the new Tomb Raider film, due for release in 2018, and a new series of White Princess was filmed at [Lacock Abbey](#), previously filmed in Bradford on Avon.

Food and Drink News

VisitWiltshire will be producing a new food and drink handy fold-out map in February 2018. This will highlight Wiltshire's food and drink offer to visitors and will include businesses such as local producers, specialist food and drink shops, food markets, cafes, food and drink festivals and foodie experiences.

[The Farm Cookery School](#) will be running a new 'Taste Wiltshire' event on 9 September. This will be a celebration of food and drink producers in Wiltshire with stalls and cooking demonstrations.

[The Red Lion Freehouse](#) in East Chisenbury won 'Inn of the Year' according to The Independent's good Hotel Guide 2018. [The Bell at Ramsbury](#) won the 'Pub of the Year 2017/18' from the AA Hospitality Awards and [Fisherton Mill's Gallery Café](#) won 'Best Cheap Eats in the West' from the Observer Food Monthly Awards 2017.

Less than a year after joining [Whatley Manor Hotel & Spa](#), near Malmesbury, executive chef Niall Keating has been awarded a Michelin star for the Dining Room, in the Michelin UK & Ireland Guide 2018.

For further information or to arrange a press visit please contact Florence Wallace, Travel Trade & PR Manager, flowallace@visitwiltshire.co.uk Tel: 01722 341309 or 07436 588860

Notes to editors:

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Recent press releases and a VisitWiltshire Press Pack including ideas for features can be found at www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/media.

Images from the following albums can be downloaded from our Flickr gallery via the links below:

Timeless Places – <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/3T518Y>

Timeless Wonders – <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/WT23px>

Timeless Nature – <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/eeUQac>

Timeless Pleasures – <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/8e7M5o>

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Value for Tourism - Economic Impact Highlights 2015

- 2015 was another record year for Wiltshire tourism, the fourth record year in a row. Staying visits, visitor spend and economic impact are all at record levels.
- Wiltshire's visitor economy is worth £1.53bn (+4%) per annum and supports over 29,000 jobs.
- Tourism contributes £860m GVA per annum to Wiltshire's economy.
- Mainly driven by a reduction in the number of short-stay day visitors, the total number of visitors to Wiltshire in 2015 was down 1.5% to 19.6m visitors.
- Wiltshire attracted a record 1.84m staying visitors in 2015 (+5%), spending a record £368m (+4%).
- Total annual tourism business turnover and GVA have increased by 35% since 2011 to £1,530m and £860m respectively.
- Wiltshire's 17.7 million day visits generated £668m in day visitor expenditure.
- At similar levels to previous years:
 - UK staying visitors stay for an average of 2.7 nights, spending £175 per person per visit.
 - Overseas staying visitors stay for an average of 6.0 nights, spending £326 per person per visit.
 - Day visitors spend an average of £35.50 per person per visit.

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Wiltshire's Fun Facts

- Did you know there have been many Wiltshire locations filmed for the Poldark series including Great Chalfield Manor. Other recent filming includes Tomb Raider featuring Wilton House and Transformers: The Last Knight was filmed at Stonehenge. Look out for Wiltshire on your TV/Cinema in 2018!
- Did you know that Wiltshire has a Grade II Listed Sticke tennis court at Hartham Park, Corsham?
- Did you know that the Wiltshire Cycleway, Regional Route 20, is 160 miles and takes in some of the country's most spectacular scenery? It's best to do in an anti-clockwise direction. There are also two National Cycle Routes passing through South Wiltshire, Numbers 24 and 45.
- **In Cricklade, just off the high street**, there is a sign that says "In 1832 on this spot nothing happened!"
- Wiltshire has some strange named places; Lover (pronounced Lowver), which is famous for its visits by romantics near Valentine's Day; New Zealand which can be found just off the A3102 south of Lyneham; and Tiddleywink, which is situated just outside Castle Combe.
- The Kennet & Avon Canal is a total of 87 miles and links London with the Bristol Channel. The Caen Hill Locks are a flight of 29 locks between Rowde and Devizes with a rise of 1 in 44 gradient or 237 feet in 2 miles.
- Did you know that Salisbury (in 2012) and Chippenham (in 2016) have been awarded purple flag status, meaning that they offer a 'gold standard' night life with lower crime and anti-social behaviour?
- Did you know that Stonehenge attracts over 1.3m people of year? The massive sarsen stones came from Marlborough, 20 miles away, the smaller bluestones from the Preseli Mountains of South Wales, a distance of almost 200 miles. They offer a limited number of stone circle access visits outside normal opening hours.
- Salisbury Cathedral is unusual in that it was built within a single century, has the tallest spire (123m/404ft), largest cloisters and largest cathedral close (80 acres) in Britain.
- Did you know that Mayfield House Hotel was a 16th century Veterinary Apothecaries
- Wiltshire is very lucky to have one of only two southern England Magna Carta Baron towns (and the only one in the Southwest) in Trowbridge, it's County Town. Baron Henry was one 25 enforcer Barones elected to ensure King John stuck to the terms of this iconic document.
- Did you know you can park in Dorset and hop over the county boundary to the beautiful Larmer Tree gardens in Wiltshire.
- Did you know that at Sir Harold Hillier Gardens the staff have counted more than 200 different plants that flower in between Christmas Day and New Year?
- The Salisbury Museum houses 5 watercolours by Turner and the Wessex Gallery has 2,140 objects on display.
- Did you know that Wadworth Brewery is the only Brewery that has a full time in-house Sign Writing team, who hand-paint all the pub signs in the traditional way!
- Did you know that Wadworth Brewery still use traditional Shire Horses to deliver all of the beer locally within a 2.5 mile radius?
- Did you know that The Pound Arts Centre is situated on an old Primary School building in Corsham and many visitors mention that it used to be their first school?
- Did you know Marlborough suffered a disastrous fire in 1653? Cromwell ordered a collection in England and Wales for the sufferers and Thomas Bayly of the Merchant's House claimed £2,339, the second largest claim in the town.

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- Did you know that the Royal Naval Air Service had an air station at Stonehenge during WWI? The air station was called RNAS Stonehenge.
- Salisbury Cathedral's spire is the tallest in Britain (40ft / 123m). It was added to the Cathedral in the mid-1300s and weighs around 6,600 tons
 - Today's spire is around three inches taller than the original as a result of restoration work done in the 1950s. It is believed that architects at the time might have forgotten to include the mortar in their calculations!
 - Britain's largest cloisters with landscaped garth.
 - The world's oldest working mechanical clock, which dates back to 1386. The turret clock, which has no face, has ticks more than 4.4 billion times since it was built.
 - The finest of only four surviving 1215 Magna Carta in an interactive exhibition.
- At Stourhead the Temple of Apollo was used in 2005 adaptation of Pride and Prejudice starring Kiera Knightly.
- Did you know that Poldark was filmed in Corsham? The Land-locked market town became Truro for the hit BBC series.
- Did you know that Harold Peto placed the statue of Britannia on the bridge at Iford Manor around 1907? He wrote to the council to let them know and asked them to look after her.
- Nearly 300 archaeological treasures used or buried at Stonehenge are on display.
- For a short time at the start of the war, Lucknam Park was home to hundreds of evacuee's before being transformed into a bustling informal headquarters for airmen from the neighbouring aerodrome. They used Lucknam Park's Beech and Lime tree driveway to park the Spitfire and Hurricane planes – the huge trees being a perfect camouflage.
- Lucknam Park's drive from the entrance gates is one mile long to the hotel.
- The Victoria Art Gallery contains a bust of William Harbutt, the inventor of Plasticine. The collection also includes one of the oldest wine bottles. The green benches in the upper gallery were claimed by Anthony Green RA to be perfect for courting couples
- 1,170,000 litres (240,000 gallons) of water rises from the Sacred Spring at all Roman Baths every day.
- The Lady Margaret Hungerford Almshouses is unusual in having a schoolroom attached "for the education of ten poor boys". Thomas Gibbs (aged 13) confirmed this when he carved his name on the paneling in 1777.
- Lady Margaret's husband, Sir Edward Hungerford was Cromwell's commander in the south west and took part in the battle of Lansdowne. He is buried with his wife in a magnificent tomb in Farleigh Hungerford Castle.
- The mound in Marlborough College grounds used to be known as Merlin's barrow and was supposedly where the wizard was buried. We now know that it dates from the same period as Silbury Hill between 4,500 and 4,000 years ago. The old outdoor swimming pool at the college was fed by an underground spring and once formed part of the Norman Castle's moat – it was freezing at any time of year!

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Major Achievements and Awards in Wiltshire

2017

- VisitWiltshire has been awarded £1m Discover England Fund to create The Great West Way – one of the world's premier touring routes between London and Bristol - www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/greatwestway
- The Kennet & Avon Canal, cared for by the Canal and River Trust, has been given a Green Flag Award, which recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces.
- The Kennet & Avon Canal (£559,300), Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (£814,100) and Trowbridge Museum (£1,172,500) have been successful in their Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) applications, which will benefit natural, industrial, archival and architectural heritage across the county.
- VisitWiltshire launches new online shop at www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/shop enabling visitors to purchase tickets for a variety of Wiltshire attractions, events and activities.
- Arts:
 - Arts Council England funding for the next four years (2018 – 2022) will benefit Wiltshire Music Centre (£406,700), Salisbury Arts Theatre (£5,111,776), The Pound Arts Trust (£301,740) and Wessex Museum's Partnership including Wiltshire and Salisbury Museums (£1.24 million).
 - Swindon's Wyvern Theatre has been named the most welcoming theatre in the South West according to the public who voted at the UK Theatre Awards
- Accommodation:
 - Manor Farm B&B in Collingborune Kingston won Outstanding Host Award 2017 at the Evio awards who celebrate the best of independent hosts and hoteliers.
- Food & Drink:
 - Fisherton Mill, Salisbury won 'Best Cheap Eats in the West' from the Observer Food Monthly Awards 2017.
 - The Cosy Club, Salisbury has won Best Vegan Menu at the PETA Vegan Food Awards.
 - The Red Lion Freehouse in East Chisenbury won 'Inn of the Year' according to The Independent's good Hotel Guide 2018.
 - The Bell at Ramsbury won the 'Pub of the Year 2017/18' from the AA Hospitality Awards.
 - Less than a year after joining [Whatley Manor Hotel & Spa](#), near Malmesbury, executive chef Niall Keating has been awarded a Michelin star for the Dining Room, in the Michelin UK & Ireland Guide 2018.
 - Lucknam Park's chef Joshua Murphy won Young Professional Chef of the Year in the South West Chef competition (sponsored by Michael Caines and Lympstone Manor).

2016

- VisitWiltshire secures Discover England phase 1 funding to develop a new long distance touring route - The Great West Way.
- VisitWiltshire win TravelMole Best Tourist Board Website Award (Jan 2016)
- VisitWiltshire launches new drone videos which to date has reached around 800,000 people
- Salisbury Reds introduce brand new Stonehenge Tour buses with commentary in 10 different languages.
- Salisbury Cathedral were nominated in the 3rd annual LandLove Magazine Awards for Britain's favourite cathedral!

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- Koh Thai Tapas, Asian restaurant in Salisbury voted as finalists for the Asian Curry Awards' Restaurant of the Year
- The Merchant's House awarded Coach Friendly Visitor Attraction status by CPT
- The Royal Oak at Swallowcliffe has been voted Newcomer of the Year Good Hotel Guide (for 2017)
- Salisbury's application successful to join the England's Heritage Cities consortium

2015

- VisitWiltshire puts South West England firmly on the map for international visitors, whilst leading on the travel trade strand of VisitEngland's South West Tourism Growth Fund.
- Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2015 recognised Salisbury as one of the Top 10 Cities in the World to visit.
- New Tourism website for Salisbury launched – www.visitsalisbury.co.uk
- VisitWiltshire wins English Tourism Social Media Index
- STEAM Museum of Great Western Railway's Kevin, shortlisted for VisitEngland's Tourism Superstar Award 2015.
- The International Magna Carta Press event run by VisitWiltshire with support from Salisbury BID, Salisbury City Council and Salisbury Cathedral secured in excess of £560k AVE and reached over 68 million people.
- VisitWiltshire develops its new Timeless brand positioning
- VisitWiltshire developed its new Wiltshire Association of Visitor Attractions (WAVA) group

2014

- VisitWiltshire hosted the GTOA annual conference in Swindon
- VisitWiltshire developed its Travel Trade group and expanded its activity
- Devizes and Salisbury secured coach friendly status with CPT
- The new Stonehenge Visitor Centre opened for its full visitor season (opened Dec 2013)

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A county 10,000 years in the making...



Avebury Stone Circle



World-famous Stonehenge



Silbury Hill

Since Wiltshire's story began some 10,000 years ago, it has amassed a treasure-trove of attractions taking you on a journey through time from Stone Age to present day. Probably the most iconic of Wiltshire's sites is [Stonehenge](#) which, to this day, remains a mysterious, monolithic monument known as a site of unique importance. Stonehenge's orientation on the rising and setting sun has always been one of its most remarkable features, but why it was built in this way remains a mystery to this day.

The world-class visitor centre at Stonehenge which opened in December 2013, houses museum-quality permanent and temporary exhibitions, plus a spacious shop and café. Entrance to Stonehenge is managed through timed tickets, and advance booking is strongly advised. Pre-booking is the only way to guarantee entry on the day and at the time of your choice; there is limited walk-up availability on the day.

Further north is [Avebury](#), the largest stone circle in the world. Dating from around 4,500 years ago, the stones form a huge ring a quarter of a mile across and enclose part of the village. Avebury is the focus of an amazing cluster of ancient monuments. Follow an 'avenue' partially marked by stones that originally led to The Sanctuary; visit West Kennet Long Barrow, one of Britain's largest Stone Age burial sites; or gaze across the fields towards the giant mound of Silbury Hill which stands over 130 feet high.

Wiltshire is also home to the vast Iron Age hill fort of [Old Sarum](#) – the original site of the beautiful cathedral city of Salisbury. It was re-used by Romans, Saxons and Normans before growing into one of the most flourishing settlements in medieval England. Other Iron Age hill forts can be found around the county, at Battlesbury Camp, Cley Hill, Bratton Castle in west Wiltshire, Barbury Castle near Swindon, and Oldbury Castle near Calne.

During the industrial revolution, the [Kennet & Avon Canal](#) was created linking Bristol to Reading by water. The canal, although no longer used for industrial reasons, is still buzzing with activity and is the perfect spot for a stroll or cycle along the tow path.

Wiltshire also boasts a number of museums that offer the chance to unearth the secrets of this historic county. The archaeology collections at [Wiltshire Museum](#) in Devizes, for instance, are among the finest in Britain. Displays feature collections excavated from the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site, including finds from Bush Barrow – described as the Crown Jewels of the 'King of Stonehenge'. [The Salisbury Museum](#) also has archaeology collections of outstanding national importance.

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Ancient Market Towns and Beautiful Villages

Wiltshire is blessed with a fantastic variety of historic market towns and stunning picturesque villages, each one with something to offer. Here are a sample of Wiltshire's beautiful market towns and villages.

Amesbury



Nestling within a loop of the River Avon alongside the A303, just 1½ miles from Stonehenge, historic [Amesbury](#) is a destination not to be missed. With recent evidence of a large settlement from 8820BC and a breath-taking Mesolithic collection, Amesbury History Centre will amaze visitors with its story of the town where history began.

Bradford on Avon

The unspoilt market town of [Bradford on Avon](#) offers a mix of delightful shops, restaurants, hotels and bed and breakfasts lining the narrow streets, not to mention a weekly market on Thursdays (8am-4pm). Still a natural focus at the centre of the town, the ancient bridge retains two of its 13th century arches and offers a fabulous view of the hillside above the town - dotted with the old weavers' cottages – and the river bank flanked by 19th century former cloth mills.



Calne



[Calne](#) evolved during the 18th and 19th centuries with the wool industry. Blending the old with the new, much of the original Calne is located along the River Marden where some of the historic buildings still remain. There is also the recently restored Castlefields Park with nature trails and cycle path easily accessible from the town centre.

Castle Combe

Set within the stunning Wiltshire Cotswolds, [Castle Combe](#) is a classically quaint English village. Often referred to as the 'prettiest village in England', it has even been featured regularly on the big screen – most recently in Hollywood blockbuster 'The Wolfman' and Stephen Spielberg's 'War Horse'. Visitors can also stop by the Corsham market on Tuesdays (8am-3pm) which is nearby.



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Chippenham

[Chippenham](#) prospered thanks to its location on the Wilts & Berks Canal, the London to Bristol stage coach route, and the Great Western Railway. This historic riverside market town houses a wealth of period buildings, the Museum & Heritage Centre, the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre and a variety of shops and restaurants. A little over an hour's journey from central London, Chippenham offers an ideal centre for relaxation and exploration of rural Wiltshire and the Cotswolds.



Corsham



[Corsham](#) is a quiet, unspoilt town where peacocks wander freely around the streets! Thanks to the wool trade and the quarrying of golden Bath stone, Corsham developed from its Saxon origins into a prosperous town. The historic High Street consists mainly of properties from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, including old inns, an elegant town hall and the stately Corsham Court. The town also has a weekly market, held on Tuesdays.

Cricklade

[Cricklade](#) is the only Wiltshire town on the young River Thames. The wide high street has some interesting specialty shops and many places to eat. In 2011 the town was awarded RH Champion of Champions in the Britain in Bloom competition, while North Meadow National Nature Reserve is renowned for its wild Snakeshead Fritillaries.



Devizes



This historic market town has a colourful medieval past and a rich Georgian heritage. [Devizes](#) has kept its character, with many small, family-run businesses and a good old-fashioned market bustling with fresh food, crafts and curios. The town stands on the Kennet & Avon Canal and is home to both the Wiltshire Museum and Wadworth Brewery.

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Lacock



[Lacock](#) is one of Wiltshire's real gems, with its winding streets, beautiful abbey and houses dating back to the 13th century, all combining to create a stunning backdrop which has starred in a number of film classics – from Harry Potter to Pride and Prejudice. With quality accommodation, atmospheric dining options, the stunning abbey and Fox Talbot Museum, once the home of the pioneer of photography William Fox Talbot, Lacock is the idea base to spend a few days exploring the area.

Malmesbury

Known as the "Queen of Hilltop Towns", [Malmesbury](#) is England's oldest borough with a rich history over 1000 years. And, with a skyline dominated by the imposing Norman Abbey, many of the town's highlights – from the 15th century Market Cross and the Old Courtroom and Almshouses, to the narrow medieval streets, quaint alleyways and the riverwalk – can be easily discovered on foot. Browse the charming streets and thriving high street with an array of independent retailers and a weekly farmers and artisan market.



Marlborough



The handsome old staging post of [Marlborough](#) has evolved into a stylish and cosmopolitan town with its own chic café culture, offering the discerning visitor a unique blend of attractions and facilities. The High Street is one of the widest in Europe, lined on both sides with characterful old buildings housing an array of high quality shops.

Melksham

The town of [Melksham](#) evolved at a ford across the River Avon and was once part of a vast royal forest that stretched as far as Chippenham and was a favourite hunting ground of Tudor Kings. In the 19th century, the town boasted the discovery of Saline and Chalybeate springs, and an attempt was made in 1815 to develop the town as a spa that would rival nearby Bath.



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Pewsey

Archaeological digs around the village of [Pewsey](#) indicate that there has been a settlement here since the 6th century, but it was the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1810, and the railway in 1862 that transformed Pewsey into a bustling community. A quaint village that retains its charming character, Pewsey is a hotspot for crop circle enthusiasts. The Pewsey Vale is recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is extremely popular with outdoor enthusiasts.



Royal Wootton Bassett



[Royal Wootton Bassett](#) offers a wide range of independent shops including a greengrocer, award-winning butcher, a deli, plus items for the home from the ironmonger and Shabby Chic shops. Since being granted the 'Royal' prefix in November 2011 the town has continued to build on its strong traditional values with a welcoming, friendly atmosphere.

Salisbury

Superbly situated in southern England's rural heartland, medieval [Salisbury](#) is the perfect fusion of ancient and modern. Salisbury lies at the confluence of five rivers and the awe-inspiring sight of the Cathedral described as 'Britain's best view'. Salisbury is bursting with things on offer for visitors, from first class arts venues such as the Salisbury Playhouse and great shopping to museums, stunning gardens and a huge range of eating options; not to mention a market on Tuesdays and Saturdays (8am-4pm).



Swindon



Thanks to the arrival of the Great Western Railway in the mid-19th century, [Swindon](#) developed from a sleepy market town into a hive of industry. Today, visitors can enjoy the quiet courtyards, traditional shops and pubs of the Old Town alongside the excellent shopping on offer in the new town centre, not to mention two of Swindon's main attractions: STEAM Museum and the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet.

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Tisbury



The largest village in the Nadder Valley, [Tisbury](#) has been a settlement for over 2,000 years and offers an excellent choice of independent shops. It is a great base from which to explore picturesque villages such as Hindon and the Donheads, local towns such as Wilton and Shaftesbury, and attractions such as Longleat, Stourhead and Old Wardour Castle.

Trowbridge

[Trowbridge](#) is Wiltshire's county town, with a Market Charter dating back to the year 1200. Situated in the heart of west Wiltshire, the town has ancient roots, having been first mentioned in the Domesday Book as 'Straburg', and was once the centre of West of England woollen cloth production - Trowbridge Museum's collections focus on this fascinating heritage. The town has a rich array of independent retailers, national chains and high quality markets.



Warminster



[Warminster](#) is a warm and welcoming historic town with lots to do for all the family. The town boasts many historic attractions as well as nature trails, meadows and grassy marshlands, all of which provide plenty of opportunities for cycling and walking activities, as well as water sports at the nearby Shearwater Lake. It is also the nearest town to Longleat - home of the UK's first ever Safari Park and one of Britain's most impressive examples of high Elizabethan architecture.

Westbury

Set within a striking landscape nestling below Salisbury Plain and overlooked by the famous Westbury White Horse, [Westbury](#) offers access to Wiltshire's glorious countryside and opportunities for walking, cycling, pony trekking, kite flying, hang gliding and paragliding. Westbury is exceptionally well positioned for all UK major road and railway connections with the mainline railway station offering links to London, Wales and the whole of the south west of England.



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Spectacular Countryside

Wiltshire is very lucky to have not one, not two but three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – not to mention a section of the New Forest National Park and over 8,200 footpaths waiting to be discovered. Easy to explore, yet off the beaten track, Wiltshire's scenery is as beautiful as it is varied, ranging from rolling chalk downland to gentle Cotswold hills; from a high grassy plateau to acres of ancient woodland.



Big skies and Broad Horizons

At the heart of the county lies the vast expanse of the [Salisbury Plain](#). In addition to being a military training area, the land is home to some unique wildlife including the recently reintroduced Great Bustard – Wiltshire's county bird. Within the Plain also lies the abandoned village of Imber, which opens at various times during the year.

Havens for Wildlife

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust manages 37 nature reserves across the county, covering a wide variety of natural habitats from bog and wetland to chalk grassland and woodland. The National Nature Reserve at North Meadow, near Cricklade is renowned for its spectacular display of Snakeshead Fritillaries during April, while West Woods at Marlborough and Grovely Woods near Wilton are carpeted with beautiful bluebells in May.

Wiltshire's White Horses

Among the many characteristic images of Wiltshire are its [white horses](#), of which eight can still be seen today across the centre of the county. The oldest, at Westbury, has a history dating back at least 300 years. The most recent, at Devizes, was cut into the chalk to commemorate the Millennium in the year 2000.

Cycling, Walking and Horse Riding

Wherever you are in the county, Wiltshire's miles of ancient drove roads and uncrowded country lanes are the perfect way to explore this quintessentially English landscape. A series of [cycle routes](#) range from short hops to long-distance trails – of which the 160-mile Wiltshire Cycleway is an excellent example. Elsewhere around the county you can sample one of several National Cycle Routes, or experience part of the National Byway. Walkers will love Wiltshire too, with the opportunity to revel in part of the Ridgeway, a classic National Trail, or take to the Thames Path, which follows this most famous of rivers from its source in the Cotswolds towards London.

Whether galloping over rolling chalk downs or hacking through beautiful woodland, horse riders are also well served, with plenty of spectacular routes to choose from.

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Arts, culture and industrial heritage

From international events and award-winning museums to theatrical events and independent galleries, Wiltshire is rich in both arts and culture.

The [Ageas Salisbury International Arts Festival](#) takes place for two weeks at the end of May/beginning of June (will resume in 2019). The festival brings with it classical and world music, theatre, dance, visual arts and more.

For two weeks in the summer, the [International Street Festival and Carnival](#) comes to Devizes. The festival includes a confetti battle and carnival parade as well as lots of street theatre.

Anyone with an eye for the arts should head to [Fisherton Mill](#). Here lies a treasure trove of amazing artwork in the largest independent art gallery in the South West. See on-site artists in their studios and discover beautiful handmade cards and jewellery for sale.

In Bradford on Avon, the [Wiltshire Music Centre](#) hosts regular concerts in its 300 seater hall attracting internationally renowned musicians including the City of London Sinfonia, jazz legend Courtney Pine and famous guitarist John Williams.

Wiltshire is also a country with an intriguing industrial heritage. Traditionally a very agricultural county, Wiltshire's main development during the Industrial Revolution came from the cloth industry, the development of the [Kennet & Avon Canal](#) and later the Great Western Railway. Some of these sites can still be visited today and help preserve the history of the area.



The Caen Locks of the Kennet and Avon Canal



Steam Museum of the Great Western Railway

The Great Western Railway (GWR) was designed by famous engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel to link Bristol and London. Swindon played a large part in the GWR and housed the Swindon Railway Works which was used to repair and maintain the network. The works remained open until 1986 and since this time the site has been redeveloped housing [STEAM - the Museum of the Great Western Railway](#) and the [McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Swindon](#).

Other museums and sites well worth visiting include the [Trowbridge Museum](#), [Wilton Windmill](#) and [Wadworth Brewery](#).

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Stately homes and gardens

Wiltshire is home to a world-class collection of gardens and stately homes, and its sweeping landscapes are studded with horticultural gems.

[Stourhead's](#) harmonic vistas - especially the classic view of the Turf Bridge, lake and Pantheon on the opposite shore - seem to epitomise the county as a whole. This outstanding stately home, one of Wiltshire's finest 18th century landscaped gardens, is a delicious mix of formal and informal features. And it's not just the gardens that draw visitors, for at Stourhead's heart lies a Palladian mansion filled with glittering furnishings and objects d'art.

At [Bowood House and Gardens](#), master landscaper 'Capability' Brown created a flowing mix of woodlands and lawns sloping down to a lake, overlooked by the formal terraces of an imposing stately home. Bowood has an all-round appeal, for set amongst its woods is an imaginatively designed Adventure Playground for younger visitors.

[Longleat](#) is a beautiful stately home in Wiltshire and also attracts a family audience. The house, seat of the Marquess of Bath, is surrounded by magnificent grounds that again bear the mark of industrious 18th century landscaper 'Capability' Brown.

[Wilton House](#) is another stately home in Wiltshire. Here, the magnificent 450-year-old house – seen in films such as *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* - stands amongst parklands, woodlands and water gardens.

[Lydiard House and Park](#) near Swindon is a Palladian jewel. With its formal parkland, pasture, beautiful woodland walks, avenues and lake, it still retains the grand design of its 18th century heyday.

[Mompesson House](#) in Salisbury's Cathedral Close is a Queen Anne-style with a small, courtyard garden. It was also used in the film *Sense and Sensibility*.

Make sure you also visit The Peto Garden, a little corner of Italy at [Iford Manor](#), near Bradford on Avon.

And don't forget that many other beautiful Wiltshire gardens are open to the public on selected dates throughout the year through The National Gardens Scheme.



The lake and temple at Stourhead House



The gardens at Bowood House

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Shopping in and eating out

Wiltshire is home to not only some great outlet shopping but many towns and villages blessed with independent shops, making it ideal for a UK shopping break! A visit to [McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Swindon](#) is a must for any shopaholic as here you'll find over 90 top named stores including John Lewis Home, Hugo Boss and LK Bennett, all with reductions of up to 60% off the RRP.



McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Swindon

Salisbury is host to a thriving scene of independent shops from boutiques through to specialist hobby shops. It also has the Old George Mall, Cross Keys and Maltings shopping areas, the twice weekly market and three miles outside of the city is Wilton Shopping Village with its outlet shops; not to mention the superb Christmas Market.

Marlborough, Devizes, Bradford on Avon and Corsham all have a unique array of independent shops often in historic buildings and make the perfect locations for picking up something special.

County town Trowbridge hosts the Shires Shopping Centre with its high street stores and Trowbridge Museum, whilst Chippenham retains its historic roots with its market that still comes every Friday and Saturday to The Shambles.

For a unique gift visit one of the independent shops in Lacock or the craft village at [Studley Grange](#) and don't forget the array of markets that Wiltshire has to offer too!

Let us tempt you with gourmet dining at one of our restaurants, a latte in one of our cafés, join some of our friendly locals for some traditional English fare in our pubs or a cream tea in one of our tea rooms and sample the local Wiltshire food.

Wiltshire is proud to have award-winning dining with three Michelin starred restaurants at some of our prestigious hotels and inns, as well as AA rosettes for fine dining.

Head to one of our Wiltshire farmers' markets for fresh produce directly from the supplier, or perhaps even improve your culinary skills at a cookery school.

We are also lucky to have some fine vineyards and breweries in Wiltshire, including [Wadworth Brewery](#) famed for its 6X beer. Why not also sample local cider and apple juice too – often found in our local farmers' markets.

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Getting here

By Road

The north of Wiltshire is conveniently accessible from London or Heathrow Airport by using the M4. The M3 connects London to the A30 and A303 roads, which serve the south of Wiltshire. From the Midlands and the North, the best route is by the M5 to the Almondsbury interchange near Bristol and then into Wiltshire by the M4, A4 or A36.

Self-drive classic car hire – available from Vintage Classics in Melksham – is a great way to explore the county. From the beautiful city of Salisbury to the rural idyll of Castle Combe and the World Heritage Site of Stonehenge and Avebury, there can be few finer ways to view this mystical and romantic area than from a classic vehicle. Alternatively travel in style with Gray's Retro Car Hire Ltd for a nostalgic drive through Wiltshire.

To help plan your journey once in Wiltshire visit www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk

By Coach

There are regular long-distance coach services from many parts of England to Chippenham, Marlborough, Salisbury, Swindon and other Wiltshire towns. Visit www.nationalexpress.com to view timetable information.

By Rail

Fast and regular Inter-City services as follows:

- From London (Paddington) to Bath and Bristol serve Swindon (55 mins) and Chippenham (70 mins) in the north of Wiltshire, and Great Bedwyn (90 mins).
- From London (Waterloo), the West Country trains stop at Salisbury (90 mins) and Tisbury (103 mins).
- The Bristol to Weymouth and Southampton lines call at Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury, Warminster and Salisbury for visitors from the Midlands and the North.
- Popular tourist attractions, such as Stonehenge, can be reached from London by rail services to Swindon and Salisbury respectively where connecting bus services are available.

For National Rail Enquiries, anywhere in the UK, call Local Rate: 08457 484950 (UK only). Alternatively, visit www.nationalrail.co.uk to view timetable information.

By Air

The following airports are all within easy reach of Wiltshire:

- London Heathrow
- Exeter
- London Gatwick
- Southampton
- Bournemouth
- Bristol
- Cardiff

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By Sea

Car ferries operate from Hook of Holland, Cherbourg, Caen, Le Havre, St. Malo and Bilbao to Harwich, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Southampton or Poole. Apart from Harwich, all are within one to three hours' drive of Wiltshire.

For more information visit www.posl.com or www.brittanyferries.co.uk or www.condorferries.com

Airport and Seaport Transfers

If you need transfers to or from an airport or seaport, contact Salisbury and District Value Cars – www.salisbury-valuecars.co.uk who will be happy to help.

To help you plan your journey to Wiltshire visit www.transportdirect.info

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