




**ENGLAND'S
GREAT WEST WAY***
INSPIRING ITINERARIES
**DELIGHTFUL DETOURS
TO CHELTENHAM**

Montpelier, Cheltenham

Meander off the beaten path

A day away from England's Great West Way brings even more interest to a trip that's already jam-packed with new discoveries. So why not take time out for some off-route exploration? After an overnight stay along the Great West Way, head north to the lovely, rolling Cotswolds. This delightful detour offers an abundance of genuine heritage and cultural choice:

Malmesbury

England's oldest borough, this market town is brimming with history. Evidence shows that there was an Iron Age fort here, and Romans occupied the area. The 15th century Market Cross, with its still-accurate sundial, presides over the farmers' and artisan market every Friday. A visit could include Malmesbury Abbey and Abbey House Gardens, the grounds of the former Abbot's lodging. The remarkable Norman abbey, still in use as a church today, houses the tomb of Athelstan, first king of all England and features a 15th century illuminated Bible. Stop for refreshments at the Grade I listed, Old Bell Hotel, England's oldest hotel, sitting proudly next to the Abbey.

Cirencester

The 'Capital of the Cotswolds' is a lovely market town with ancient honey-coloured stone buildings in picturesque narrow streets. In Roman times it was 'Corinium Dobunorum', second in size only to London. However, the Saxons destroyed the town in the 6th century and it was renamed 'Coryn Ceasre'. It recovered to become a prosperous wool town in the medieval period. The award-winning **Corinium Museum** tells the story of the town's importance as a Roman settlement tracing Cirencester's history from prehistoric times. **New Brewery Arts** craft centre has a gallery and craft shop offering beautiful works, a busy café, accommodation, education studios and on-site craft makers. Visitors can indulge their creativity with practical sessions led by artist educators, tours and talks; or take self-led visits to the gallery.

Cheltenham

Treat your senses to the gorgeous architecture of the UK's most complete Regency town. Shop, eat and marvel at the architecture of the Promenade and Montpellier Walk. Celebrate local heroes by visiting the statue of Edward Wilson, part of the Scott Antarctic Expedition. **The Wilson - Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum** is named after the Polar explorer and the fascinating archives tell his story. Learn the history of the town, explore the library of the printer and book-lover Emery Walker, and glory in the internationally important Arts and Crafts Movement collection and extensive fine art collections.

Places	Time/miles/kms
Chippenham to Malmesbury	10m/16kms
Cricklade to Malmesbury	12m/19kms
Malmesbury to Cirencester	15m/24kms
Cirencester to Cheltenham	16m/25 kms
Cheltenham to Cricklade	25m/40kms

INSPIRING ITINERARIES

DELIGHTFUL DETOURS



Malmesbury Abbey



View of Cheltenham



New Brewery Arts Centre, Cirencester



The Queens Hotel



Neptune's Fountain, Cheltenham

Another museum not to be missed is the **Holst Birthplace Museum**. Gustav Holst was one of England's most respected composers, best known for his work *The Planets*. He was born in this Regency terraced house in 1874. Now it's one of only two composer birthplace museums in the country, where you can explore Holst's life, his music, his family and friendships, and general domestic life at the end of the 19th century. Before you leave, take afternoon tea at **Queens Hotel**. Tantalise your tastebuds with tiffin as you enjoy the same magnificent architecture that attracted so many society figures to Queens, one of the first purpose-built hotels in Europe. It retains many of its original features, including the wallpaper designed by Pugin, a key figure in nineteenth century architecture and design, and the Georgian staircase.

Wholesalers/DMCs

Hotels & More: hotels-more.com

Norman Allen Group Travel Ltd: group-travel.com

Local Tour Operators offering tour packages /individual days out for groups or individuals:

Around & About Bath:
aroundandaboutbath.com

Salisbury, Stonehenge and Sarum Tours:
salburystonehengegetours.co.uk

South West Heritage Tours:
southwestdriverguide.co.uk

Tours2Order: tours2order.com

Tour and Explore: tourandexplore.com

A selection of tour operators and guiding services who offer bookable itineraries along the **Great West Way** can be found on the **Bookable Products** section of **Greatwestway.co.uk/traveltrade**

CONTACTS

Cotswolds: cotswolds.com

Malmesbury: discovermalmesbury.life

Abbey House Gardens:

abbeyhousegardens.co.uk

Corinium Museum: coriniummuseum.org

Holst Birthplace Museum: holstmuseum.org.uk

Malmesbury Abbey: malmesburyabbey.com

New Brewery Arts: newbreweryarts.org.uk

Old Bell Hotel: oldbellhotel.co.uk

Queens Hotel: queenshotelcheltenham.co.uk

The Wilson - Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum: cheltenhammuseum.org.uk

Accommodation

Base your clients along the route:

The Old Bell Hotel, Malmesbury:

oldbellhotel.co.uk

Whatley Manor Hotel and Spa, Malmesbury:

whatleymanor.com

Best Western Plus Angel Hotel,

Chippenham: angel-hotel-chippenham.com

Cricklade House Hotel, Cricklade:

crickladehotel.co.uk