

MT Sobek: A Walk in the Cotswolds

Day 1 Explore Blenheim Palace & Burford

1-hour private minibus transfer

After meeting in Oxford (easily reached by train from London and Heathrow Airport), take a 30-minute transfer to Blenheim Palace, known for its striking Baroque architecture. Enjoy a private tour of the Palace, the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill, then stretch your legs on a wander through its wonderful garden and extensive landscaped grounds. Then take a 30-minute transfer into the Cotswolds and to the picturesque village of Burford, home for the next two nights.

Accommodation: The Lamb Inn

(L, D)

Day 2 Hike the Monarch's Way North

3–4 hours/6 miles hiking on rolling & flat terrain

Today, embark on the first hiking adventure in the Cotswolds. Hike from one enchanting village to another on good trails, through pastoral green countryside. Highlights include the hamlets of Bourton-on-the-Water (known as the 'Venice of the Cotswolds'), and Lower Slaughter (much nicer than its name suggests) before finishing at the equally lovely Stow-on-the-Wold. A short 15 minute transfer leads back to the hotel in Burford.

Accommodation: The Lamb Inn

(B, L, D)

Day 3 Hike the Cotswolds Way

1.5-hour private minibus transfer

3–4 hours/6 miles hiking on rolling terrain with 650' elevation gain

Today starts with a short transfer to the historic market town of Chipping Campden, the official start of the Cotswolds Way trail. Set off southward toward the village of Broadway, then up Dover's Hill to take in great views across the region. After checking in to the hotel in Broadway, take an afternoon trip to the medieval market town of Stratford-upon-Avon (30 minutes away), renowned as the 16th-century birthplace of William Shakespeare. There may even be time to catch a show before returning to Broadway.

Accommodation: The Broadway

(B, L, D)

Day 4 Head South Along the Cotswolds Way

4–5 hours/9 miles hiking with 1150' elevation gain

Today continue on the Cotswolds Way, hiking directly from the hotel southwards out of Broadway on rolling terrain. Climb up to an Iron Age hill fort before descending again to cross fields and some woodland at the bottom of the escarpment. From here, pass through various pretty villages including a ruined abbey and ancient churches before arriving in the Cotswolds town of Winchcombe. A short transfer leads back to the hotel in Broadway, where you spend another night.

Accommodation: The Broadway

(B, L, D)

Day 5 Hike from the Hamlet of Painswick to the Town of Stroud

1-hour private minibus transfer

4–5 hours/7 miles hiking with 980' elevation gain

After a one-hour transfer into the central Cotswolds, start hiking just north of the hamlet of Painswick, for a climb up to Painswick Beacon. Situated over 900 feet up on the escarpment, it commands a fine vantage point to survey the surroundings. The hike then leads past an Iron Age fort

before descending into woodlands which, in early summer, are filled with bluebells and wood anemone. Leaving the woods, descend into the Stroud valley and into the center of Stroud, a town known for its independent shops, cafés, and galleries.

Accommodation: Bear of Rodborough
(B, L, D)

Day 6 Head from Stroud to the Market Town of Dursley

4–5 hours/7.5 miles hiking with 980' elevation gain

Continue on the Cotswolds Way, hiking from Stroud to the nearby town of Dursley. The route continues into Penn Wood, and onto Coaley Peak, which features stellar views over the Cotswolds and west towards Wales. Climb the little summit of Cam Long Down, and down into the market town of Dursley, then transfer east to nearby Bibury. Tonight's hotel is located just yards from Arlington Row, a row of 17th-century weavers' cottages often said to be the prettiest street in England. Enjoy a stroll around before dinner.

Accommodation: The Swan Hotel
(B, L, D)

Day 7 Discover Whitehorse Hill & Cirencester

1.5-hour private minibus transfer

3–4 hours/7 miles hiking with 490' elevation gain

The final hike of the trip explores the ancient chalk downs of Oxfordshire following ancient trails known as ridgeways. Pass a Neolithic long barrow and chamber tomb site before reaching the end point, the site of Uffington Castle and the famous 'White Horse,' a 360-ft-long prehistoric hillside sculpture that's more than 3,000 years old. Leaving the horse behind, transfer into nearby Cirencester, a historic town of Roman origin, known as the capital of the Cotswolds. Spend the afternoon exploring it and transfer back to Bibury for a final farewell dinner.

Accommodation: The Swan Hotel
(B, L, D)

Day 8 Return to Oxford

45-minute private minibus transfer

After breakfast, transfer back to Oxford where the trip concludes.

(B)