

SHAKESPEARE COUNTRY LEISURE DRIVES



STOUR TOUR

(Driving directions are shown in red)

Tour details

Approximately 45 miles

This tour starts from Stratford-upon-Avon and takes you through the southern-most part of Warwickshire and the edge of the Cotswolds. This part of South Warwickshire is characterised by gently rolling open countryside.

Beautifully situated on the river, Stratford-upon-Avon has strong links with Shakespeare and a blend of heritage, drama and other attractions.

Starting from the roundabout at the Alveston Manor Hotel in Stratford, take the A3400 signed Shipston. At the next roundabout, go straight on, signed Shipston, then turn immediately right onto the B4632 towards Mickleton. Pass the Stratford Garden Centre and Long Marston airfield, both on your right. If you wish to visit the Barn Antiques Centre, turn right about half a mile after the airfield. On leaving the Centre, come back to this point to rejoin the route.

The **Barn Antiques Centre (1)** in Long Marston is one of the largest antique centres in the Midlands. The barn offers everything from superior bric-a-brac to fine antique furniture.

Staying on our route, turn left off the main road signed Lower Quinton, Kiftsgate and Hidcote Gardens.

The twin villages of Lower and Upper Quinton are jointly served by the beautiful parish church of St Swithin's.

After the church, take a right turn, following signs to Hidcote and Kiftsgate. To your right is Meon Hill.

Fine views can be enjoyed from a walk to the top of **Meon Hill**, the site of an ancient nunnery.

At the T-junction, turn right, signed Hidcote and Kiftsgate. There is an optional signed detour to Ilmington and Mickleton at this point (turn left).

Ilmington is one of the larger villages of South Warwickshire, with a medley of unspoilt historic buildings around a village green and war memorial. The Howard Arms, ideally located on the village green, is a perfect place for a pint and delicious food.

Three Ways House Hotel, in **Mickleton**, is the home of the Pudding Club. Sticky toffee, syrup sponge and spotted dick are some of the typical puddings you will find on the daily menu in the Bar-Brasserie. All served with lashings of custard!

Bear left into the single-track road uphill, following the signs for Hidcote and Kiftsgate. To visit Kiftsgate Court Garden, enter the second entrance car park signposted on your right.

Kiftsgate Court Gardens (2) has a fine collection of plants and shrubs, including the largest rose in England. The most recent addition is a contemporary water garden.

To visit Hidcote Manor Garden, turn right out of the Kiftsgate Court Gardens car park and take the road on your left and park as directed in the National Trust car park.

Hidcote Manor Garden (3) is one of the most inventive and influential gardens of the 20th century. This 10 acre garden is, in fact, a series of garden 'rooms', each with its own special atmosphere. The garden is internationally renowned for rare shrubs and trees, as well as herbaceous borders and old roses. There is both a waitress service restaurant and thatched tea bar.

Return to the junction opposite Kiftsgate and turn left towards Mickleton and Hidcote Boyce to rejoin the route. Stay on this road and bear right towards Ebrington. At the crossroads turn right, signed Chipping Campden and drive on for two miles. At the T-junction, turn left signed Chipping Campden onto the B4081. At another T-junction, turn left onto the B4035, signed Chipping Campden. Drive through Chipping Campden.

The charming village of Chipping Campden, on the edge of the Cotswolds, features a fine arcaded Jacobean market hall with pointed gables.

In the main street, take a tight left turn, opposite the red telephone box, signed Bourton-on-the-Hill. Follow the road round to the right towards Broadway and carry on past some thatched houses and up a steep hill. At the crossroads with the A44, go straight over towards Snowhill, taking a single-track road with passing places. Follow the signs to Snowhill, passing Snowhill Lavender Fields on the right and turning right at 3 separate junctions. The third right is signed Snowhill Manor ½ mile. At the T-junction in Snowhill turn right (if you take a sharp left you will drive into the village centre). You will come to a car park for Snowhill Manor on your left, then a signpost on the left to the Manor and more parking.

Snowhill Manor (4) ~ this delightful Arts and Crafts garden was designed by its owner, Charles Paget Wade, in collaboration with MH Baillie Scott, as a series of outdoor rooms.

Turn right out of Snowhill Manor car park to retrace your route for a short distance. Turn left at the junction signed Chipping Campden, Bourton-on-the-Water and Snowhill Lavender. Drive back up the hill and out of the village. At the crossroads, turn left signed Broadway Tower and Chipping Campden

At the next set of crossroads bear left, passing Snowhill Lavender Fields on your left. At the T-junction, turn left towards Broadway and continue on this road till you come back to the junction with the A44. At the junction, turn right towards Bourton on the Hill. To visit Mill Dene Garden, take the first left hand turn and follow the Brown signs to the garden. At the T-junction, turn right, then a sharp left and go down a steep hill. Turn right and follow the signs to the garden.

Mill Dene Garden (5) is a garden to nourish your senses. Set round an old water-mill and pond, the garden is terraced up steep sides to beautiful Cotswold views at the top.

Come out of Mill Dene Garden and turn right. At the T-junction, turn left signed Oxford. Continue forward entering Bourton on the Hill.

As you leave the village you go past the entrance to Cotswold Falconry Centre and Batsford Arboretum on your left; keep on this road to Moreton in Marsh.

At the **Cotswold Falconry Centre (6)** watch the eagles, hawks, owls and falcons as they soar through the sky in spectacular style. See the large collection of breeding birds and look into their nests using special cameras.

In Moreton-in-Marsh, turn left at the first mini roundabout onto the A429 and keep on this road, heading towards Stratford along the Roman Fosse Way . Follow this fast road for five miles. At the crossroads turn right onto the B4035 signed Shipston-on-Stour, and drive into the town.

The small market town of **Shipston-on-Stour** derives its name of 'Sheep-wash-Town' from its washing of sheep in the river in early summer. Indeed, Shipston used to be one of the busiest sheep markets in the country. Today, the town is more noted for its elegant Georgian buildings, fine parish church and collection of small shops including a saddlers, clock shop and one of the last wet fish shops in England.

In the town centre, turn left following the signs towards Tredington and Stratford. Drive carefully through Tredington.

The pretty village of Tredington, just two miles from Shipston, has been a deserved winner of the Rural Community Council's 'Best Small Village' award.

At the next roundabout take a right towards Ettington.

The **Fox and Goose Inn** at **Armscote** - originally two cottages and the blacksmith's forge – is a tasty detour off the main route.

Keep following the signs for Ettington at the next two roundabouts. As you enter the village of Ettington turn right after the church into Halford Road to visit the Old Quakers Meeting House which is 300 yards on your right.

The **Old Quakers Meeting House (7)** in Ettington is a 17th century architectural gem, which is set in beautiful, peaceful gardens.

To get back to Stratford, return to the roundabout just outside Ettington, and go straight on taking the A422 to Stratford.

On the way back to Stratford you will pass the **Houndshill** at Ettington - ideal for lunch or an evening meal!

