

DAY TRIPS FROM LONDON

The Bath and Stonehenge day guide

Bath and Stonehenge are in the same direction from London, west of the city, so one day trip can visit both. That is why they share one guide: you do not need to choose between them. Castle Combe and Lacock are small villages in the same direction, and some tours add them. There is one page for each of the five stops: what it is, what to see, what fits in the time you have, and where to find toilets and food.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1

Check how long your tour gives you at each stop. Your tour's page lists the stops and the time at each one.

2

On the stop's page, tap how long your tour stops there: the route shows what fits.

3

Set a phone alarm 10 minutes before you need to be back at the bus.

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BEFORE YOU ARRIVE · READ THIS ON THE WAY

Bath and Stonehenge in two minutes

One honey-coloured stone for a whole city

Bath is built of Bath stone, an oolitic limestone (a rock made of tiny round grains) laid down in a shallow sea in the Jurassic period. The International Union of Geological Sciences says it weathers to an attractive honey colour. Its use across the city gives Bath a united look.

Look for: The warm cream-to-honey colour of the Royal Crescent, the Circus and the Abbey.

Why the water in Bath is hot

Visit Bath says the hot springs deliver over one million litres of mineral-rich water every day. Bath is the only place in the UK where the mineral water comes out hot. Rainwater probably enters the ground through limestone to the north, west and south of the city.

Look for: The steam rising from the Great Bath at the Roman Baths.

Two kinds of stone at Stonehenge

English Heritage says there are two types of stone at Stonehenge. The large sarsens most likely came from West Woods, near Marlborough, weighing 25 tons each on average. The smaller bluestones all came from the Preseli Hills in south-west Wales.

Look for: The tall grey sarsens of the outer ring, and the smaller stones inside them.

A LITTLE HISTORY

ABOUT 2500 BC

The stones are raised

English Heritage says the stone circle at Stonehenge was built in the late Neolithic period, about 2500 BC, after an earlier ditch-and-bank monument. It was changed over about 1,500 years.

1ST CENTURY AD

The Romans find the springs

The Romans founded a town at Bath in the 1st century AD and used the natural hot springs as a thermal spa. Their temple and baths still lie at the heart of the city.

973

A king is crowned in Bath

King Edgar was crowned King of All England in Bath on Whitsunday in 973. The service was put together by Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, and a window in Bath Abbey shows the crowning.

THE 1700S

The Georgian city

In the 18th century Bath grew into an elegant spa city. UNESCO says its crescents, terraces and squares were planned to join architecture, town planning and landscape.

Stonehenge

Ancient stones on an open plain

WHY STOP HERE

Leave the city streets for wide grassland and a ring of giant stones. A visit starts at the visitor centre, with its exhibition and rebuilt Neolithic (Stone Age) houses. A shuttle bus then takes you out to the stones. It is an outdoor stop with big skies and little shelter, so it feels very different from a day in Bath.

DON'T MISS

Stones brought from far away

The tall sarsens of the outer ring, with stone lintels across the top. Among them are the smaller bluestones, which can look bluish when wet.





SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
40 min	**The Stone Circle** · 40 min here · in the entry ticket **DON'T MISS** — The ring of tall sarsen stones with lintels across the top, and the smaller bluestones inside. A path goes all the way around the circle.
50 min	**The great trilithons** · 10 min here · in the entry ticket — Five trilithons, which are pairs of upright stones capped by a lintel, form a horseshoe inside the circle. The stones are joined like timber, with pegs and sockets.
60 min	**The Heel Stone** · 10 min here · in the entry ticket — A large stone that has not been shaped, standing outside the circle where the Avenue meets the ancient earthwork. Seen from the centre of the circle, the midsummer sun rises beside it.
90 min	**The exhibition and the 5,500-year-old man** · 30 min here · in the entry ticket — More than 250 objects found in the landscape, such as jewellery, pottery and tools. There is also a reconstructed face of a man who lived here 5,500 years ago.
110 min	**The Neolithic houses** · 20 min here · in the entry ticket — Full-size copies of Stone Age homes outside the visitor centre, with white chalk walls, thatched roofs and wooden furniture.
140 min	**Burial mounds on the way** · 30 min here · in the entry ticket — Bronze Age burial mounds beside the walking route between the visitor centre and the stones, with information panels along the way.

Allow at least 40 minutes here: the first stop is The Stone Circle.

TOILETS AND FOOD

English Heritage says the toilets are at the visitor centre, not at the stone circle. They include accessible, baby and adult change facilities. The visitor centre café serves grab-and-go hot and cold food, such as soup, pasties, sandwiches and salads. You can also picnic in the monument field.

The Neolithic houses: what you are seeing

Full-size Stone Age homes, built beside the visitor centre



Neolithic means New Stone Age, the time before metal tools. These houses are modern copies, but they follow real homes from about 4,500 years ago. Read this on the bus, then step inside and compare.

Based on real digs

Archaeologists dug at Durrington Walls in 2006 and 2007, a large ceremonial enclosure (a space marked out by a bank) just over a mile north-east of the stones. They found the remains of houses, and English Heritage built these copies from what they found.

Who lived there, and when

Radiocarbon dating (a test that measures the age of old material) showed the originals date from about 2500 BC, when the giant sarsen stones were being raised. So the people in the originals lived nearby while Stonehenge was being built.

How the copies were made

A team of 60 English Heritage volunteers built them from local materials: hazel-rod frames, wheat-straw thatch, and walls of chalk, hay and water. The work used over 20 tonnes of chalk and about 5,000 hazel rods.

A link to the builders

English Heritage says the houses help join the ancient stones to the people who lived and worked here. Volunteers show the builders' skills, such as grinding grain with a quern (a hand stone mill) and making rope from rushes.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR INSIDE

The hearth

The fire's smoke rises through the thatched roof. English Heritage says the white chalk walls and floor reflect sunlight and hold the fire's heat.

The beds

Beds stand around the walls. English Heritage says the furniture is wooden or woven.

Storage and shelves

Look for storage and shelving around the walls. English Heritage lists them with the beds and seating.

The single room

Each house is one room, five metres on each side, and English Heritage calls it bright and airy.

Bath

Georgian crescents, the Abbey and Jane Austen

WHY STOP HERE

Bath is a city day on foot. The Romans built baths and a temple over its hot springs. Georgian (1700s) builders later laid out grand squares and crescents (curved rows of houses) on the hills around the centre. Some tours give you free time in the city. Others include planned visits to named sights, such as the Roman Baths, so check which one your tour offers.

DON'T MISS

A whole city on the World Heritage list

The golden stone of the terraces on the hills around the centre, set among green slopes.





SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
30 min	**Bath Abbey** · 30 min here · **own ticket** — Ladders of angels on the West Front outside, and inside a fan-vaulted ceiling and a window showing King Edgar's crowning in 973.
40 min	**Pulteney Bridge** · 10 min here · free — A Palladian bridge over the River Avon with shops built along both sides, and a weir below it.
50 min	**The Circus** · 10 min here · free — A ring of three curved Georgian terraces, begun by John Wood the Elder in 1754 and finished by his son, with three streets leading into it.
65 min	**The Royal Crescent** · 15 min here · free **DON'T MISS** — Thirty matching Georgian houses in one sweeping curve, looking out over a lawn and park.
125 min	**The Jane Austen Centre** · 60 min here · **own ticket** — An exhibition on Jane Austen's life in Bath, with character actors, and a Regency tea room on the second floor.

Has a page of its own: The Roman Baths (90 min, page 7)

TICKET	Yes. The Abbey sells a ticket that includes its Discovery Centre, online or at the Welcome Desk. Last entry is 30 minutes before closing. The listed Sunday hours are short and in the afternoon.
TOILETS	Yes. Bath and North East Somerset Council lists city centre public toilets at Charlotte Street Car Park (7 am to 8 pm) and Shaftesbury Road (7 am to 6 pm), and in Parade Gardens (7 am to 4 pm). The council's page was checked on 30 October 2026.
FOOD	The Roman Baths website says its Pump Room Restaurant, next to the Roman Baths, serves a Morning Bakery and Brunch and a Jane Austen Afternoon Tea every day, with the spa water to taste from the fountain.

Jane Austen in Bath

Five years in the city, two novels set there



Jane Austen lived in Bath from 1801 to 1806 and wrote very little there. Yet all six of her novels mention Bath, and two of them, Northanger Abbey and Persuasion, are set partly in the city.

Why the Austens moved to Bath

In 1801 her father, Rev. George Austen, retired. Jane, her parents and her sister Cassandra left their Hampshire home for lodgings in Bath. Her father died there in January 1805, and the women then depended on Jane's brothers for money. Jane left Bath in 1806.

What Bath gave her writing

Visit Bath, quoting the Jane Austen Centre, says Bath was a constant source of inspiration. Jane went to balls and concerts, and her output while she lived there was small. It adds that she remembered her time in Gay Street fondly.

Published after her death

Neither Bath novel appeared in her lifetime. An early version of Northanger Abbey, then called Susan, was sold in 1803 but not printed. Jane died in July 1817, aged 41. Both novels were published that December, the first time her name was given as the author.

Bath in the two novels

In Northanger Abbey, Catherine Morland visits Bath and spends her mornings in the Pump Room. In Persuasion, Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth find their love again there, and Visit Bath points to Gravel Walk and Union Street.

AUSTEN PLACES YOU MAY PASS ANYWAY

4 Sydney Place

The Austen family home in Bath, from 1801 to 1804.

25 Gay Street

After her father died, the family lodged here. The Jane Austen Centre is a few doors away, at 40 Gay Street.

The Pump Room

In Northanger Abbey, Catherine and her hosts walk up and down here each morning, looking at everybody.

The Assembly Rooms

Visit Bath says it gave Jane and her characters great entertainment. The National Trust says it is closed for renovation and hopes to reopen in 2027.

The Royal Crescent

On a Sunday in Northanger Abbey, Catherine and Isabella hurry here from the crowded Pump Room for fresh air.

The Roman Baths

Roman Britain up close

WHY STOP HERE

Step below the street to the heart of Roman Bath. Walk above the steaming Great Bath and see the spring where hot water still rises. Find a temple, carved stone and objects thrown to a goddess. It is a ticketed museum visit with its own time slot, so check that your tour includes it and how long you get inside.



DON'T MISS

Messages to a goddess

The curse tablets and the Beau Street Hoard in the museum galleries.



SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
20 min	**The Great Bath, from terrace to pool** · 20 min here · in the entry ticket — Your first view of the steaming Great Bath, from the terrace, framed by statues of Roman emperors carved in 1894. Then walk round the pool itself, where the Romans walked.
30 min	**The Sacred Spring** · 10 min here · in the entry ticket — The chamber where hot water rises, with the King's Bath above it and a statue of King Bladud, the legendary founder of Bath.
40 min	**The temple pediment and Minerva's head** · 10 min here · in the entry ticket — The great carved pediment with its Gorgon's head, and the gilded bronze head of the goddess Sulis Minerva.
50 min	**The curse tablets** · 10 min here · in the entry ticket **DON'T MISS** — Rolled lead and pewter sheets with messages to the goddess, some of Britain's earliest prayers.
65 min	**The Roman characters** · 15 min here · in the entry ticket — Costumed Romans, such as a soldier or a stonemason, based on real people who lived here 2,000 years ago.

TICKET	No. Time in Bath and entry to the Roman Baths are separate. On the exact tour page, look for a Roman Baths visit and whether the entry ticket is included. If you buy your own, book a time slot at least a day ahead. Tickets often sell out in summer.
TOILETS AND FOOD	The Roman Baths say there are two sets of toilets. One is near the main reception, before you buy your ticket. The other is at the very end of the visit. Only water may be taken inside, so eat before or after. Their page names the Pump Room Restaurant as a favourite for afternoon tea.

Castle Combe

A short walk in a stone village

WHY STOP HERE

After Stonehenge and Bath, Castle Combe is the quiet part of the day. Old stone cottages line one small street that runs from a medieval market cross down to a bridge over the By Brook. It is a short stop for looking and taking photographs, not a day of shops or sights. Only some tours include it.

DON'T MISS

A village that became a film set

The bridge over the By Brook and the view back up the street, the scene that cameras keep returning to.





SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
15 min	**The honey-coloured cottages** · 15 min here · free — Rows of old stone cottages in a wooded valley. The parish council says the village has changed very little over the centuries.
25 min	**The bridge over the By Brook** · 10 min here · free DON'T MISS — The stone bridge at the bottom of the street, with the brook below and the cottages rising behind it.
30 min	**The medieval market cross** · 5 min here · free — A stone cross under a pyramid-shaped tiled roof in the market place, carved with roses and shields.
40 min	**St Andrew's Church** · 10 min here · free — A church with a faceless clock, fan vaulting in the tower, and the tomb of a knight who died in 1270.
50 min	**The old buildings round the market place** · 10 min here · free — Houses and inns from the 1500s and 1600s, such as the Old Court House, built early in the 1500s, and the White Hart.

TOILETS AND FOOD	Public toilets are just south of the bridge over the By Brook. There are no rows of gift shops. The parish council names the Castle Inn, the White Hart and the Manor House Hotel for lunch or dinner, and asks visitors to enjoy a cream tea. A short tour stop leaves little time to eat.
QUIETER TIME	Early morning or late afternoon, and on weekdays. The parish council says spring and autumn are calmer than summer, and that early morning or late afternoon is calmer than the midday crowds. It says weekdays are better than weekends, and asks visitors to avoid bank holidays, when the car park is likely to be full.

Lacock

Harry Potter, Pride and Prejudice, Downton Abbey, Wolf Hall, Cranford and The Wolfman

WHY STOP HERE

Four old streets of timber-framed cottages, a medieval tithe barn (a large old barn) and a ford, all cared for by the National Trust. Beside them stands the abbey where Fox Talbot made the first photographic negative in 1835. It is the second village choice on one private tour, so check what your stop allows.

DON'T MISS

A village laid out on a grid

The window of the old shop at 2 High Street, and the 14th-century tithe barn.





SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
20 min	**The four village streets** · 20 min here · free — Timber-framed cottages, small shops, pubs and a bakery along a medieval grid of streets.
25 min	**The shop window at 2 High Street** · 5 min here · free DON'T MISS — A shop window arranged in the style of the early 1900s by Miss Butler, the last shopkeeper, and left untouched since.
35 min	**The medieval tithe barn** · 10 min here · free — A medieval barn from the 1300s, standing in the village.
55 min	**Film and TV locations** · 20 min here · free — The abbey's cloisters stood in for parts of Hogwarts in two Harry Potter films, and the village's timber-framed houses have appeared in Pride and Prejudice (BBC, 1995) and Cranford.
115 min	**Lacock Abbey and its cloister** · 60 min here · **own ticket** — A country house with monastic roots and an original medieval cloister, once home to Fox Talbot.
160 min	**The Fox Talbot Museum** · 45 min here · **own ticket** — Early cameras and objects from the birth of photography, in a 16th-century barn, plus changing exhibitions.

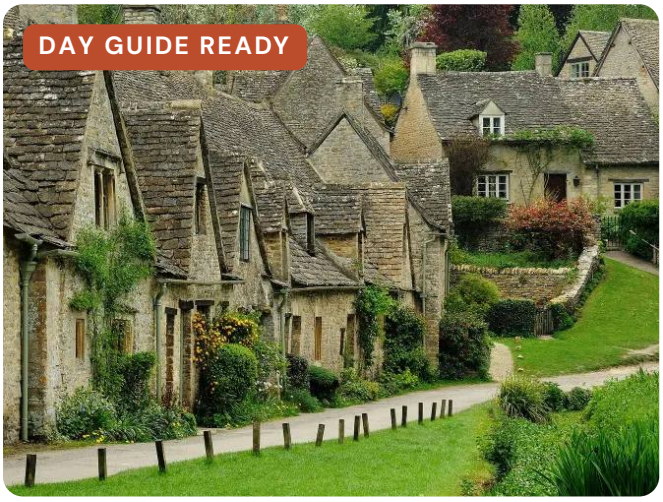
TOILETS AND FOOD The Stables Café in the village serves drinks, light lunches, cakes and ice cream, and there are shops, pubs and a bakery. Toilets are in the abbey courtyard and by the Stables Café.

More days out from London

Each region has its own page, with every tour's stops and how long you get at each one.

Ready to choose a tour?

See every Bath and Stonehenge day trip side by side: the stops, the minutes at each one, and what is included. seebeyondthecity.com/london/bath-stonehenge/#compare



THE COTSWOLDS

Cotswold villages & market towns

Bibury · Bourton-on-the-Water · Stow-on-the-Wold
Up to about 153 km · 95 miles

Get the Cotswolds day guide
seebeyondthecity.com/london/cotswolds/



KENT

Cliffs, castles & Canterbury

White Cliffs of Dover · Canterbury · Leeds Castle
Up to about 120 km · 75 miles

Get the Kent day guide
seebeyondthecity.com/london/kent/

Spotted a change?

Opening times and prices change. Reply to the email this guide came in and tell us what you found.

Travelling with someone?

Forward the email, so they have the guide on their phone too.

Sources

Where each page's facts come from, by stop. Each name is a link to the source.

STONEHENGE

English Heritage: building Stonehenge
English Heritage: Stonehenge questions and answers
English Heritage: Stonehenge glossary
English Heritage: Stonehenge exhibitions
English Heritage: Neolithic houses
English Heritage: Stonehenge access
English Heritage: Stonehenge facilities

THE NEOLITHIC HOUSES: WHAT YOU ARE SEEING

English Heritage: Neolithic houses

BATH

UNESCO: City of Bath
Bath Abbey: tours
No. 1 Royal Crescent: plan your visit
Jane Austen Centre in Bath
Visit Bath: The Circus
Historic England: Pulteney Bridge
Bath Abbey: visiting
Bath & North East Somerset Council: find a public toilet
Roman Baths: Pump Room Restaurant

JANE AUSTEN IN BATH

Jane Austen's House: timeline
Visit Bath: a brief history of Jane Austen in Bath
Jane Austen Society: Bath
Northanger Abbey, chapter 5 (Project Gutenberg)
National Trust: Bath Assembly Rooms

THE ROMAN BATHS

Roman Baths: walkthrough of the site
Roman Baths: the Roman Sacred Spring
Roman Baths: plan your visit
Roman Baths: frequently asked questions

CASTLE COMBE

Wiltshire Council community history: Castle Combe
Castle Combe Parish Council: visiting responsibly
Historic England: medieval market cross, Castle Combe
Bybrook Benefice: St Andrew, Castle Combe

LACOCK

National Trust: exploring the village at Lacock
National Trust: Lacock Abbey and village stars on-screen
National Trust: the history of Lacock Abbey
National Trust: the Fox Talbot Museum
National Trust: Lacock
National Trust: eating and shopping at Lacock Abbey

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3	**Stonehenge**	Stonehenge tourists	Steven Lek	CC BY-SA 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
3	**Stonehenge: The Stone Circle**	Stonehenge, Condado de Wiltshire, Inglaterra, 2014-08-12, DD 11	Diego Delso	CC BY-SA 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
5	**Bath**	Puente Pulteney, Bath, Inglaterra, 2014-08-12, DD 52	Diego Delso	CC BY-SA 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
5	**Bath: The Royal Crescent**	2023-09-15 Bath Royal Crescent 05	Bärbel Miemietz	CC BY-SA 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
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7	**The Roman Baths: The curse tablets**	Roman baths 2014 60	Photograph by Mike Peel (www.mikepeel.net).	CC BY-SA 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
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