

DAY TRIPS FROM LONDON

The Oxford and Stratford day guide

Oxford, Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick Castle are all north-west of London, and day trips mix them in different ways. There is one page for each of the six 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.

INSIDE PAGE

Before you arrive Oxford and Stratford in two minutes 2

Oxford Colleges, libraries and old streets 3

Radcliffe Camera Oxford's round domed library 4

Bodleian Library An old library in the heart of Oxford 5

Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare's real hometown 6

Shakespeare's Birthplace The house where Shakespeare grew up 7

Warwick Castle Towers, state rooms and live shows 8

Times are typical visit lengths, not a timetable. Opening hours and

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE · READ THIS ON THE WAY

Oxford and Stratford in two minutes

A LITTLE HISTORY

1068

A Norman mound at Warwick

William the Conqueror built a castle at Warwick in 1068, on the north bank of the River Avon. Its high earth mound is the oldest part that still stands.

1096

Teaching begins at Oxford

The University of Oxford says there is no clear date of foundation, but teaching existed here in some form in 1096. The first colleges grew up in the 1200s.

1564

Shakespeare is baptised

William Shakespeare was baptised in Stratford on 26 April 1564. His exact birth date is not known, but people celebrate 23 April.

1847

The Birthplace is saved

In 1847 committees in Stratford and London raised money to buy Shakespeare's Birthplace at auction. Charles Dickens was a leading member of the London committee.

Oxford

Colleges, libraries and old streets

WHY STOP HERE

Oxford is a university city, and its main sights are the buildings of the university. On a guided walk you see colleges, the round Radcliffe Camera, the Bodleian Library and the Bridge of Sighs. Most insides have their own rules, so the walk is best as a first look.

DON'T MISS

The Bodleian Library and the Radcliffe Camera

The round domed building in Radcliffe Square, with the Bodleian's old quadrangle close by.





SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
10 min	**The Bridge of Sighs** · 10 min here · free **DON'T MISS** — A covered bridge over New College Lane that joins two parts of Hertford College. Thomas Graham Jackson designed it, and it was built in 1913 and opened in January 1914. The college says the Venetian bridge it looks most like is the Rialto. Enjoy it from the lane below.
40 min	**The University Church of St Mary the Virgin** · 30 min here · free — The church where the university began to meet. You can go into the church for free, and a separate tower climb gives a view over the old centre.
70 min	**The other colleges** · 30 min here · free — Each college has its own gate and quadrangle. Trinity and some others welcome visitors, but each has its own hours, and some are closed to the public.
100 min	**The Sheldonian Theatre** · 30 min here · **own ticket** — Christopher Wren's hall for university ceremonies, with a painted ceiling inside and a cupola on top.
145 min	**Christ Church** · 45 min here · **own ticket** — A college with its own cathedral. See Tom Quad, named after Great Tom, the bell in Wren's tower, and the Great Hall where the students eat.
190 min	**The Ashmolean Museum** · 45 min here · free — The university's museum of art and archaeology, on Beaumont Street, with galleries from ancient Egypt to Western art.

Has a page of its own: Radcliffe Camera (10 min, page 4) · Bodleian Library (15 min, page 5)

TOILETS	Yes. Oxford City Council lists public toilets at Gloucester Green, Market Street, Oxford Town Hall, Magdalen Street East, Oxford Westgate Library, Westgate Oxford and the train station, and its directory gives opening times (checked 30 October 2026).
FOOD	Two museums have cafes open to everyone. The Bodleian Cafe on the ground floor of the Weston Library serves drinks, snacks and hot meals, with vegetarian and vegan choices. The Ashmolean has a cafe from 10 am and a Rooftop Restaurant from 11:30 am, both open daily until 5 pm (checked 30 October 2026).

Radcliffe Camera

Oxford's round domed library

WHY STOP HERE

The Radcliffe Camera is a round library with a stone dome, in the middle of Radcliffe Square in Oxford. James Gibbs designed it, and it opened in 1749. It is still a working library, so the Bodleian lets visitors in only on its own tour. Most travellers enjoy it from the square, on a short stop during a guided walk of Oxford.

DON'T MISS

A doctor's gift built a round library

The round drum of the building, with the stone dome on top.





SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
5 min	**The dome from Radcliffe Square** · 5 min here · free **DON'T MISS** — The round building with its stone dome, seen from the square. The Bodleian calls it Oxford's most iconic building.
8 min	**The stone and the glazed arches** · 3 min here · free — The lower walls of Headington freestone and the upper part of Taynton stone. The arches of the ground floor were glazed in 1863.
13 min	**The Old Schools Quadrangle** · 5 min here · free — The courtyard at the centre of the Old Library, built between 1613 and 1624. Visitors can walk around it whenever the gates are open.
28 min	**The Weston Library ground floor** · 15 min here · free — A free hall on Broad Street with exhibitions, a café and a shop. The toilets and the ticket desk are here too.
58 min	**Inside, on a Bodleian tour** · 30 min here · **own ticket** — The Bodleian's Radcliffe Camera and City of Oxford Walking Tour goes inside the domed reading room with a guide. Photography is not allowed inside.

TOILETS	Not at the Radcliffe Camera, as far as the Bodleian says. The toilets it describes are in the Weston Library on Broad Street, beyond the café in Blackwell Hall, with an accessible toilet too (checked 30 October 2026).
FOOD	The Bodleian Café in the Weston Library serves soups, sandwiches, hot dishes, cakes and hot drinks, with choices for different diets. It closes at 4:30 pm every day, and last orders are 15 minutes before (checked 30 October 2026).

Tours: seebeyondthecity.com/london/oxford-stratford/#compare

Full guide: seebeyondthecity.com/london/places/radcliffe-camera/

Bodleian Library

An old library in the heart of Oxford

WHY STOP HERE

The Bodleian Library is the University of Oxford's main library, and it has been open to readers since 1602. Its old courtyard, the Old Schools Quadrangle, stands beside the round Radcliffe Camera. Inside, a carved Gothic ceiling and a painted reading room can be seen only on a Bodleian tour.

DON'T MISS

A ruined library brought back to life

The Old Schools Quadrangle, the courtyard at the heart of the Old Library, built between 1613 and 1624.





SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
10 min	**The Old Schools Quadrangle** · 10 min here · free **DON'T MISS** — The courtyard at the centre of the Old Library, built between 1613 and 1624. It once held lecture and examination rooms, called schools. You can walk around it whenever the gates are open.
20 min	**Radcliffe Square** · 10 min here · free — The square beside the Old Library, where the round Radcliffe Camera stands. It was built between 1737 and 1749 and is Britain's first circular library. Inside is open only on a weekend walking tour.
35 min	**The Divinity School** · 15 min here · **own ticket** — The university's oldest teaching room, built from 1424 to 1488, with a carved stone ceiling that holds over 400 crests and other images. You may know it as the infirmary in the Harry Potter films.
55 min	**Blackwell Hall at the Weston Library** · 20 min here · free — The free public hall on the ground floor of the Weston Library, on Broad Street, with exhibitions, a cafe, a shop, the tour ticket desk and seats.
85 min	**Duke Humfrey's Library** · 30 min here · **own ticket** — The oldest reading room of the Bodleian, with a ceiling of painted panels and a reading booth built for King Charles I. Books here were once chained to the shelves.

Also here, with more time: Convocation House and Chancellor's Court (60 min, own ticket)

TOILETS	Yes, at the Weston Library on Broad Street. Go into Blackwell Hall, turn left and walk through the cafe area. There are men's and women's toilets and an accessible toilet (checked 30 October 2026).
FOOD	The Bodleian Cafe in the Weston Library serves soups, salads, sandwiches, hot dishes, cakes and hot drinks, with vegetarian and vegan choices. It opens 9 am to 4:30 pm on weekdays and 10 am to 4:30 pm at weekends (checked 30 October 2026).

Tours: seebeyondthecity.com/london/oxford-stratford/#compare

Full guide: seebeyondthecity.com/london/places/bodleian-library/

Stratford-upon-Avon

Shakespeare's real hometown

WHY STOP HERE

Stratford-upon-Avon is the market town where Shakespeare was baptised, married and buried. Holy Trinity Church holds his grave beside the River Avon. Henley Street, the old bridge and the Royal Shakespeare Company theatres are close together.

DON'T MISS

A baptism and a grave in one church

The chancel with Shakespeare's grave. The church sits on the river bank, at the end of an avenue of lime trees.





SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
30 min	**Holy Trinity Church and Shakespeare's grave** · 30 min here · free **DON'T MISS** — A riverside church reached along an avenue of lime trees, where Shakespeare was baptised and is buried. His grave is in the chancel, with the graves of his wife and daughter.
50 min	**The River Avon and Clopton Bridge** · 20 min here · free — A stone bridge from about 1484 crosses the river on 14 arches, with riverside paths nearby.
80 min	**The Royal Shakespeare Company theatres and tower** · 30 min here · free — The Royal Shakespeare Theatre and the Swan Theatre stand by the River Avon. A lift goes up the theatre tower for a free view.
90 min	**The Guild Chapel** · 10 min here · free — A medieval chapel with a tower from the 1490s, beside the site where Shakespeare's family home once stood.
120 min	**New Place garden** · 30 min here · **own ticket** — The gardens and artworks where Shakespeare's family home stood from 1597 until he died there in 1616. The house itself is gone.

Has a page of its own: Shakespeare's Birthplace (45 min, page 7)

TOILETS	Yes. The Royal Shakespeare Company says its riverside building has plenty of public toilets, and the building is free to enter (checked 30 October 2026). Its Riverside Cafe and shop open daily from 10 am, so it is a comfortable place to stop.
FOOD	Try the Royal Shakespeare Company's Riverside Cafe, which opens daily from 10 am, or its Rooftop Restaurant, which has its own opening times. You do not need a ticket to come in, and the building stands right beside the River Avon.

Tours: seebeyondthecity.com/london/oxford-stratford/#compare

Full guide: seebeyondthecity.com/london/places/stratford-upon-avon/

Shakespeare's Birthplace

The house where Shakespeare grew up

WHY STOP HERE

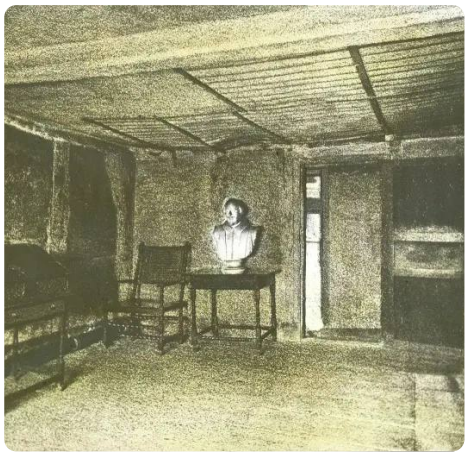
Shakespeare's Birthplace is a timber-framed house on a pedestrian street in Stratford-upon-Avon. William Shakespeare's father worked here as a glovemaker. Inside, you see the family rooms, a glover's workshop display and an exhibition about how Stratford shaped him. It has its own entry ticket, and tours may include it or sell it as an extra.



DON'T MISS

The house where William grew up

The Glover's Workshop display, which shows John Shakespeare's trade.



SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
20 min	**The family rooms** · 20 min here · in the entry ticket **DON'T MISS** — The rooms where the Shakespeare family lived, on two floors. They are furnished with period pieces and modern copies. Guides in the key rooms tell stories of family life.
30 min	**Glover's Workshop** · 10 min here · in the entry ticket — A display about John Shakespeare's trade as a glovemaker, in the house where he worked and sold his goods.
55 min	**The Becoming Shakespeare exhibition** · 25 min here · in the entry ticket — An exhibition in five spaces, with pictures, sound, objects from the Trust's collection and Shakespeare's own words. It shows how Stratford shaped him.
65 min	**The garden** · 10 min here · in the entry ticket — A garden behind the house. The Trust lists live performances in the gardens, so check what is on for your date.
75 min	**The Parlour floor** · 10 min here · in the entry ticket — The original stone floor of the Parlour, with a piece of cow bone from the days when a butcher owned the house still visible in it.

TOILETS	Yes, at the house. There are toilets at Visitor Reception, and an accessible toilet at the back of the gardens, both with baby changing. Don't worry if you need a Changing Places toilet: the nearest is at Bell Court, 55 Ely Street (checked 30 October 2026).
FOOD	Not at the house, where eating and drinking are not allowed on site, so a drink in town beforehand is a good idea. The Trust's Garden Cafe is opposite Anne Hathaway's Cottage, a 30 to 35 minute walk from the town centre (checked 30 October 2026).

Warwick Castle

Towers, state rooms and live shows

WHY STOP HERE

Warwick Castle is a medieval castle on the River Avon, begun by William the Conqueror in 1068. You can climb its walls and towers, look at the Norman mound, and visit the grand State Rooms. The castle runs live shows and tours. On the Oxford and Stratford day trip it is one stop among several.

DON'T MISS

Two great towers of the 1300s

The two towers on either side of the gatehouse, and the narrow slits in the walls.





SO FAR	YOUR ROUTE · STOP WHEN "SO FAR" REACHES YOUR TIME
40 min	**The Great Hall and State Rooms** · 40 min here · in the entry ticket — The Great Hall is the castle's largest room. The State Rooms include a dining room, drawing rooms, the Queen Anne Bedroom and a blue room with waxwork figures of Henry VIII and his six wives.
85 min	**Towers and Ramparts** · 45 min here · in the entry ticket DON'T MISS — A path along the top of the castle walls. You pass the battlements and arrow slits, and climb the towers for views over the grounds and town.
115 min	**The Conqueror's Fortress** · 30 min here · in the entry ticket — The Norman mound from 1068, the oldest part of the castle. From the top you see over the town of Warwick.
145 min	**The Legend of the Trebuchet** · 30 min here · in the entry ticket — A live show on the bank of the River Avon, built round the castle's trebuchet, a siege machine that weighs 22 tonnes and is almost 60 feet tall.
165 min	**The Peacock Garden** · 20 min here · in the entry ticket — A formal Victorian garden of clipped hedges and shaped bushes, with a fountain in the middle and peacocks living there. It has views across the Pageant Field.
205 min	**The Castle Dungeon** · 40 min here · **own ticket** — A live, acted show in dark rooms, with a jester, a judge, a plague doctor and a torturer, telling grim stories from over 300 years of Warwick's past.

Allow at least 40 minutes here: the first stop is The Great Hall and State Rooms.

TOILETS	Yes, inside the castle. The castle's accessibility page places toilets at the main entrance in the Stables Courtyard, with a wheelchair accessible toilet beside the women's. Another accessible toilet and an adult changing room are next to the Conservatory Tea House in the Peacock Garden.
FOOD	Inside the castle. The Conservatory Tea House in the Peacock Garden serves light lunches, cream teas, ice cream and hot drinks, with seats inside and out. The Undercroft Café, under the castle's high vaulted ceilings, has hot and cold snacks and takeaway sandwiches.

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Stonehenge & Roman Bath

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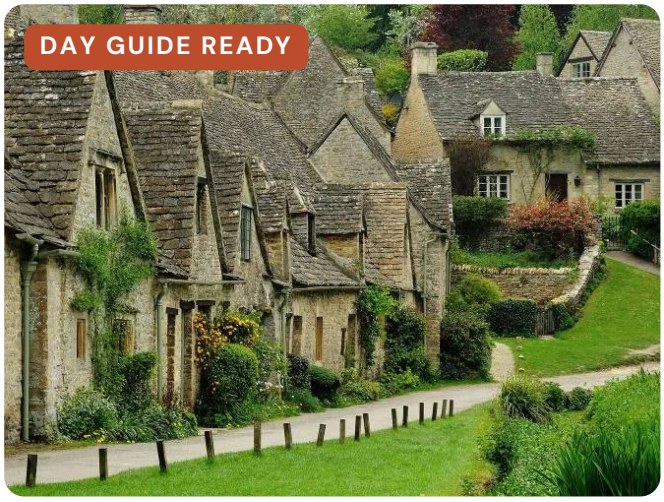

THE COTSWOLDS

Cotswold villages & market towns

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

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HATFIELD



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Sources

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

OXFORD

Bodleian Libraries: history of the Bodleian
Christ Church: visit
University of Oxford: visiting the colleges
University Church of St Mary the Virgin: tower visit
Sheldonian Theatre: opening hours
Hertford College: visit us
Ashmolean Museum: plan your visit
Oxford City Council: public toilets

RADCLIFFE CAMERA

Bodleian Libraries: history of the Bodleian
Bodleian Libraries: spaces to visit
Historic England: Radcliffe Camera (list entry 1099146)
Bodleian Libraries: Radcliffe Camera and City of Oxford Walking Tour
Bodleian Libraries: plan your visit
Bodleian Libraries: accessibility
Bodleian Libraries: café and shops

BODLEIAN LIBRARY

Bodleian Libraries: history of the Bodleian
Bodleian Libraries: our spaces
Bodleian Libraries: accessibility
Bodleian Libraries: cafe and shops

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Holy Trinity Church: William Shakespeare
Holy Trinity Church: opening times
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: Shakespeare's New Place
Royal Shakespeare Company: your visit and the tower
Historic England: Clopton Bridge
Stratford Society: the historic spine
Royal Shakespeare Company: your visit

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: Shakespeare's Birthplace
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: the Birthplace now
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: Becoming Shakespeare
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: visiting FAQs
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: access at Shakespeare's Birthplace
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: food and drink

WARWICK CASTLE

Historic England: Warwick Castle (list entry)
Warwick Castle: Great Hall and State Rooms
Warwick Castle: Towers and Ramparts
Warwick Castle: The Conqueror's Fortress
Warwick Castle: The Legend of the Trebuchet
Warwick Castle: The Castle Dungeon
Warwick Castle: The Peacock Garden
Warwick Castle: accessibility
Warwick Castle: places to eat

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3	**Oxford: The Bridge of Sighs**	Bridge of Sighs Oxford 2021	Julian Herzog (Website)	CC BY 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
4	**Radcliffe Camera**	Radcliffe Camera, Oxford	Photograph by Mike Peel (www.mikepeel.net).	CC BY-SA 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
4	**Radcliffe Camera: The dome from Radcliffe Square**	Radcliffe Camera Oxford 2018 03	Julian Herzog (Website)	CC BY 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
5	**Bodleian Library**	Oxford - Catte Street - Great Gate of the Bodleian Library 1613 - View inside the Old Schools Quadrangle towards the Proscholium and Statue of William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke (1580-1630) by Hubert Le Sueur	TxllxtTxllxT	CC BY-SA 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
5	**Bodleian Library: The Old Schools Quadrangle**	Oxford - Bodleian Library 1602 - Old School Quadrangle - Statue of William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke (1580-1630) by Hubert Le Sueur 01	TxllxtTxllxT	CC BY-SA 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
6	**Stratford-upon-Avon**	Royal Shakespeare Theatre south	DeFacto	CC BY-SA 4.0	Wikimedia Commons
6	**Stratford-upon-Avon: Holy Trinity Church and Shakespeare's grave**	Stratford-Upon-Avon, Holy Trinity Church, Eastern aspect	Michael Garlick	CC BY-SA 2.0	Wikimedia Commons
7	**Shakespeare's Birthplace**	Shakespeare's Birthplace	PAUL FARMER	CC BY-SA 2.0	Wikimedia Commons
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8	**Warwick Castle**	Warwick Castle - 19802046766	paultomlinson78	CC BY 2.0	Wikimedia Commons
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