



## ONLY ON THE GREAT WEST WAY

The Great West Way offers visitors the ultimate English experience, combining the best that the country has to offer: world-renowned visitor attractions, iconic sights and the greenest, most pleasant landscapes. Here are just a few examples of what visitors – whether British or overseas - can only find along this 125-mile touring route from London to Bristol:

- The one and only **Stonehenge**. This prehistoric monument, cared for by English Heritage, is a source of much mystery: how did the stones get there and why? No-one really knows, and that's part of the appeal. The stones are famous the world over and attract over more than 1 million visitors a year
- The Roman Baths, the **UK's only natural hot springs**, which have been soothing aching muscles for over 2000 years and which feed the open-air rooftop pool at Bath's Thermae Bath Spa
- **The country's only National Arboretum**, Westonbirt
- **The world's largest collection of plants** bloom in the gardens of Kew, the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Royal Botanic Garden. Within the 300 acres of grounds, you'll also find: The largest Victorian glasshouse in the world, recently reopened after extensive restoration and home to 1500 species of plants, some of which are extinct in the wild; an extensive arboretum of some 14,000 trees, many of which cannot be found anywhere else in Britain; the newest addition, The Hive, an utterly unique 17m-high honeycomb structure that takes you inside the world of honeybees using 900 LED lights and the sound of 40,000 bees
- Bristol, at the start (or end) of the route is an English city unlike any other. As the birthplace of global phenomenon and complete enigma, **Banksy**, Bristol has become an epicentre of street art and other graffiti artists flock to decorate the city's walls. Amongst them might well be the next Banksy, whose artworks sell for millions and is a favourite amongst celebrities (Kate Moss, Brad Pitt and Drake all own one of his pieces)
- Bristol is also home to the **Bristol Old Vic**, the English-speaking world's oldest continuously working theatre and its theatre school has borne some of the world's greatest actors, including Daniel Day-Lewis, Peter O'Toole, Jeremy Irons and Sir Patrick Stewart. To see a play here is to be part of history
- Malmesbury is **England's oldest borough** and Marlborough boasts our **widest high street**
- The "Prettiest Village of England", **Castle Combe**. With its honey coloured stone houses, 13<sup>th</sup> century church, traditional English pubs and a delightful country inn, complete with four-poster beds, the village of Castle Combe is picture postcard perfect. No surprise then that it has appeared on screen numerous times – in Stephen Spielberg's War Horse and the original Dr Doolittle film to name just two
- Talking of perfectly preserved villages, **Lacock**, largely owned by the National Trust, is another corker and so pretty that it is the go-to set location for any big-budget period film or costume drama. It has featured in Pride & Prejudice, Harry Potter and of course, Downton Abbey...
- ...talking of which, **Downton Abbey**, one of the UK's biggest TV exports, with more than 100 countries airing the show, is actually **Highclere Castle**, a Jacobean-style working estate with

5,000 acres of land, including a park designed by the great Capability Brown. It can be found five miles from Newbury in Berkshire and is a highlight of the Great West Way

- The **Ridgeway** is believed to be the country's oldest road and has been trodden since prehistoric times, when herdsmen and soldiers used it to pass through the rolling chalk downland that is now protected as the Chilterns AONB and North Wessex Downs AONB
- The country's only 3 Michelin-starred restaurants outside of London – **The Waterside Inn** and **The Fat Duck**, both in the village of Bray
- The country's only pub to have been awarded 2 Michelin Stars, **The Hand & Flowers** in Marlow
- In a country renowned for its industrial heritage, none is more exciting or glamorous than **Concorde**, the iconic supersonic passenger jet that was a testament to British (and French) engineering. At Aerospace Bristol, the site that built every British Concorde ever made, visitors can climb onboard the last one built
- Another feat of engineering is **Caen Hill** on the Kennet & Avon Canal. Consisting of 105 locks, Caen Hill is the longest continuous series of locks in the country, climbing 72 metres (237ft) in just two miles
- Last, but by no means least, the greatest genius of engineering, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, has his stamp all over the Great West Way, from Clifton Bridge, SS Great Britain and London Paddington

Find out more about the Great West Way at [GreatWestWay.co.uk](http://GreatWestWay.co.uk)

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For further information, imagery or to arrange a press visit please contact Rebecca Lowe, Head of PR, [rebeccalowe@GreatWestWay.co.uk](mailto:rebeccalowe@GreatWestWay.co.uk) Tel: 07444 601421

**Note to editors:**

### **About the Great West Way**

The Great West Way is one of a number of successful projects to receive funding from the UK Government's £40 million Discover England Fund, administered by VisitEngland. VisitWiltshire are the Destination Organisation leading the project. For further information go to [discoverenglandfund.org](http://discoverenglandfund.org)

Further information and link to The Story of the Great West Way booklet, a guide for businesses and destinations, is available at [visitwiltshire.co.uk/GreatWestWay](http://visitwiltshire.co.uk/GreatWestWay)

The Great West Way Ambassador Network gives access to a wide range of additional Great West Way consumer, travel trade and media marketing activity; connecting businesses and destinations along the route

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For further information on or to join the Great West Way Ambassador Network please contact Claire Margetts, Head of Ambassador Network, [ClaireMargetts@GreatWestWay.co.uk](mailto:ClaireMargetts@GreatWestWay.co.uk) Tel: 07850 080679

For further information or to find out more about becoming an Official Tour Operator please contact Florence Wallace, Head of Travel Trade, [FloWallace@GreatWestWay.co.uk](mailto:FloWallace@GreatWestWay.co.uk) Tel: 01722 341309 or 07436 588860

## **About VisitBritain/VisitEngland**

VisitBritain/VisitEngland is the national tourism agency – a non-departmental public body funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)

Working with a wide range of partners in both the UK and overseas, our mission is to grow the volume and value of inbound tourism across the nations and regions of Britain and to develop world-class English tourism product to support our growth aspirations. For further information and to access the latest in-depth market intelligence and statistics visit [visitbritain.org](http://visitbritain.org) or [visitbritain.com](http://visitbritain.com) and [visitengland.com](http://visitengland.com) for consumer information.

## **About Discover England Fund**

In November 2015, the Government announced a £40 million Discover England Fund; an unprecedented opportunity for English tourism. The Fund aims to deliver world-class bookable tourism products joined up across geographies and/or themes; including integrated transport solutions to provide an end-to-end customer experience.

The Fund supports the growth of one of England's most successful export industries, inbound tourism. Tourism is an industry that delivers jobs and economic growth across the English regions – contributing some £106bn each year to the economy and supporting 2.6 million jobs.

The Fund supported a number of pilot projects in year one (2016/17) that tested product development approaches. In years two and three, 2017-19, the fund will support:

- A number of large-scale collaborative projects to be delivered over the two-year period 2017-2019 that will create a step-change in bookable English tourism product for international consumers,
- 2 rounds of smaller funding for piloting new ideas (in year two), and delivering on new themes/ target markets (in year 3)
- There have also been opportunities for existing smaller projects to receive support in each following year to upscale their activities