

Destination England

Throughout its long history, it's been a green and pleasant land, a sceptred isle and a nation of shopkeepers. It's stood as a beacon of democracy and a bastion of ideological freedom, as well as a crucible of empire and a cradle of class oppression. The Magna Carta, the King James Bible and the welfare state were all dreamt up here, but then again so were beer bellies, Bovril and *Mr Bean*. It's a nation of tea-tipping eccentrics and train spotters, of dog lovers and footy fanatics, of punk rockers, gardeners, gnome collectors, celebrity wannabees, superstar chefs, free-wheeling city traders, pigeon fanciers, cricket bores and part-time Morris Dancers. To some it's Albion. To others it's Blighty. To many it's the most eccentric, extraordinary and downright incomprehensible place on earth. Welcome to England.

Few places can boast such a muddle of conflicting characters as this tiny country. It's a place where contradiction is soaked into the fabric of the landscape. For every green field and rolling dale, there's a flat fen or wind-battered stretch of coastline, and for every faded seaside resort, historic castle and thatch-topped village there's a gleaming new skyscraper, concrete office block or carbuncular car park to match.

It's a nation in thrall to its history but also addicted to a constant process of reinvention. Shiny new cappuccino bars, chain pubs and out-of-town shopping centres have plugged the gap left behind by closing post offices, country inns and village shops. Rural villages are filling up with second-homers and urban refugees, while the old smog-blackened cities of England's northern heartland are finding new leases of life as centres of cultural adventure and artistic innovation. But while change is rampant in some corners, others remain stubbornly resistant to progress: despite huge investment, the trains haven't improved that much, the National Health Service still doesn't work and England still can't string a few wins together at cricket (or football, or rugby, or tennis). Even the old North-South divide is still alive and well: ask any northerner what they think about having to foot the multi-million-pound bill for London to host the 2012 Olympics, and chances are the answer won't be all that complimentary.

After a decade of unprecedented growth, soaring house prices and booming profits, underpinned by some dubious financial wheezes in the City, it looks like England's financial bubble has finally popped. As we go to press in late 2008, the property market is in freefall, petrol prices had gone through the roof and unemployment, food prices and inflation are all on the rise. And no one – neither the cabbies nor the newspaper commentators, and certainly not the mandarins and spin-doctors in Whitehall – seems to have the foggiest idea where England is headed as the global downturn bites and the shadow of recession looms.

But beyond the dreaded return to boom-and-bust economics, there are deeper schisms at work. In the wake of continuing devolution of power from the central government to regionally elected assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, England's own identity has become a subject of fierce debate. There's even the possibility that the centuries-old Union could be at risk of breaking up – with consequences not just for England's bank balance, but also for the nation's fundamental sense of self. This cuts to the heart of some profound questions about what the notion of Englishness means in a globalised, homogenised world, about the values, beliefs and institutions that bind the country together. Ever nervous about causing unnecessary conflict between the country's increasingly polarised

FAST FACTS

Population: 51 million

Size: 50,000 sq miles
(130,000 sq km)

Inflation: 5.2%

Unemployment: 5.7%

Average number of cups
of tea drunk per person
per day: 3

Hours spent commuting
per year: 139

Number of divorces
granted per year: 132,500

Number of Jedis in official
census: 390,000

Total number of televi-
sions: 30,500,000

Average number of days
when it rains: 1 in 3

communities – black and white, Muslim and Christian, North and South, town and country – England finds itself stuck in a kind of ideological limbo, with people wary of taking a stance that might be misinterpreted or misrepresented by the headline-hungry jackals of the British media.

This national process of soul-searching chimes in with a growing sense of unease about where English society is headed. A recent spate of stabbings and shootings coupled with the growing gang culture in many English cities, plus the continuing divisiveness of the wars in the Middle East and the fallout from the 7/7 tube bombings (committed by British-born extremists) all hint at the disaffection and disillusionment felt by many English communities. Even the most unbiased observer would have to admit that there's something slightly awry in a country that has more CCTV and speed cameras than anywhere else in Europe and where the nation's kids have been dubbed 'the unhappiest in the Western World' according to a recent Unicef poll.

It's perhaps unsurprising that record numbers of people are giving Blighty the boot in favour of pastures new. But others are opting to stay in England and go back to the land, quitting the cities for slower, greener, more sustainable lives in the countryside. Transition towns, organic farms, yurt campsites, rooftop wind-generators and grow-your-own vegetable patches are all the rage in England. In a world staring down the barrel of irreversible climate change, England's newfound eco-consciousness might have arrived in the nick of time.

So while there may be choppy waters ahead, if there's one thing this plucky little nation has proven down the centuries, it's resilience (so long as there's a nice hot mug of tea to hand, of course). More than 2000 years of history are packed into this pocket-sized island, and no matter what the future may hold, the true jewels in England's crown – its country houses, castles and chocolate-box villages, its landmark monuments and buzzing music scene, its sweeping countryside, revitalised cities and extraordinary coastline – remain as bright and untarnished as ever. The wars are still raging, the economy's looking dicey and the weather's as reliably awful as ever, but one thing's for certain – England hasn't had her day just yet.

Getting Started

If there were an international league table measuring sights per square acre, this proportionally challenged country would top the charts. England's diminutive dimensions might be a recurrent headache for its residents, but they're a boon for travellers: you're pretty much guaranteed to be no more than a day's journey from the next must-see sight, historic monument or landmark town.

But despite its small size, England doesn't always do its best to make travelling easy (spend a few days negotiating the public transport network and you'll see what we mean). So some pretrip planning is really worthwhile, allowing you to access cut-price hotel rates, cheap train fares and out-of-season deals that you won't find if you leave everything to the last minute. One thing's for sure – there's an English adventure to suit all tastes and budgets, whether that means camping under country skies, bunking down in a boutique B&B or splashing out on a swish metropolitan pad.

WHEN TO GO

When you travel will depend on the type of holiday you're looking for, but regardless of when you arrive, the good old British weather is bound to play a part in your plans. The English have long been preoccupied with the nation's weather, and things look set to become even more unpredictable thanks to climate change (just look at the devastating summer floods of 2007 for a sign of things to come). But despite the unpredictability, there are a few rules that underpin the seasons. Winters tend to be cold and wet, with the hottest and driest weather generally reserved for July and August. The shoulder seasons often produce the best weather: sunny spells jostle for space with sudden showers between March and May, while balmy 'Indian summers' often pitch up between September and October. Snow in England generally arrives either end of winter, especially in November and February.

All things considered, late April to September is the best period to travel. Summer sees England at its liveliest: holiday traffic increases substantially during the peak period between late July and August (when the schools are on holiday), especially in seaside areas, national parks and popular cities such as Oxford, Bath and York. Opening hours tend to be reduced between October and Easter, and some places shut down altogether for the winter. But in the big cities – especially London – you'll find plenty to do no matter when you travel.

COSTS & MONEY

There's no getting around it – England isn't cheap. Public transport, admission fees, restaurants and hotel rooms all tend towards the expensive end. A recent survey concluded that Britain's hotels were on average more expensive than those of any other European country. But that doesn't mean an English trip has to break the bank. Staying in B&Bs, prebooking your travel arrangements, and looking out for cheap (or free) attractions will bring your trip budget down to a reasonable level. And don't forget that you won't have to stump up a penny to enjoy England's best asset: its wonderful countryside and coastline. For those on less measly budgets, it's worth noting that restaurant and hotel standards have gone up a lot recently, and there's better value for money than even a few years ago.

In terms of costs, London occupies its own price bracket. Backpackers could scrape by for about £50 a day: £20 on a dorm bed, £10 on self-catering

There's more information about British weather (including average temperatures and rainfall) in the climate charts on p794.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

Travelling in England is hardly a voyage into the wilderness, but there are a few essentials that are worth bringing along.

- a rain jacket (and a broolly!)
- comfy walking shoes, and maybe some sturdy boots for tackling the countryside trails
- a shoulder-bag or rucksack
- a travel adaptor
- an understanding of imperial measures
- a taste for warm beer
- an ironic sense of humour

supplies, £8 to £10 on admissions and £7 for a one-day travelcard. Anything under £80 for a double room could be considered budget accommodation. Upwards of £150 nudges into the top-end bracket. A decent cafe or bistro lunch can be had for between £10 and £15 per person, while dinner is more likely to approach £30 not including wine. Spend upwards of £50 and you should expect something special; shell out £100 and nothing less than celebrity chef standard will do.

Prices outside the capital city vary depending on where you're heading. Top hotels and restaurants in provincial cities such as Manchester, Newcastle, Bath and Bristol can be every bit as expensive as their London counterparts, but there's usually more latitude in the price ranges. The further you travel from the big cities, the more affordable things become. In general, budget travellers should manage on £30 a day including hostels and food; midrangers will travel comfortably on £100 per person, allowing £40 to £50 for B&Bs, £20 to £30 for food, and £20 on travel and admissions.

Travel costs can make a hefty hole in your budget if you don't book ahead – train fares can double or even triple if you buy on the day of travel. Long-distance buses (coaches) are substantially cheaper, often costing half as much as a comparable train fare. Car drivers should remember that petrol in England is heavily taxed; count on 15p to 20p a mile, plus £5 to £10 for parking, and £25 to £50 for a day's car hire.

Many national and municipal museums are free. Parents travelling with kids should keep a lookout for family tickets to sights and attractions, and family rooms in B&Bs. If you're staying in one area for a while, renting self-catering accommodation is by far the most cost-effective option.

TRAVELLING RESPONSIBLY

Eco-initiatives have cropped up all over the country, from transition towns and green B&Bs to yurt campsites and even Britain's first plastic bag-free town (Modbury in North Devon). While there's still a way to go, it's perfectly possible to travel around the country while keeping your carbon footprint to a minimum.

In a country as tiny as England there's no need to fly anywhere (using trains and buses is much greener, despite the challenges of timetables and pricey fares). There's also no need for a car in the main cities, although public transport is admittedly patchier in more rural areas. Cycling is worth considering (especially in the flatter and more pedal-friendly counties of the southeast); a huge investment in the **Sustrans** (www.sustrans.co.uk) cycle network has recently been announced, promising a great expansion in England's bike lanes over the next few years.

HOW MUCH?

Double room in a
B&B £60

The Times (newspaper)
60p

One-way train ticket from
London to Manchester
£115

Pot of tea £4

Pint of beer £3

Food is one of the areas where England's setting the pace. There's been an explosion of interest in locally sourced food in recent years, and every restaurant worth its salt is keen to tout its green credentials. Farmers markets and small food shops are more likely to source their produce locally than the big supermarket chains. Keep your eyes peeled for ecofriendly accommodation, too; the UK has several green accreditation schemes, including the Green Business Award, given to businesses that can prove their commitment to sustainability.

Car Share (www.carshare.com) Catch a lift practically anywhere in England.

Enjoy England (www.enjoyengland.com) Search for 'green tourism' for information on ecotravel in England from the tourist board.

Environment Agency (www.environment-agency.co.uk) Advice from the UK's main environmental body.

Green England (www.green-england.co.uk) Searchable directory of ecofriendly businesses in England, from restaurants to clothes shops.

Green Tourism Business Scheme (www.green-business.co.uk) Accreditation for green businesses, with searchable listings for accommodation and attractions.

One Planet Future (www.wwf.org.uk/oneplanet/) WWF campaign for making Britain greener, with practical tips on ecotravel.

READING UP

What better way to get acquainted with England than by reading someone else's adventures? Here are some of our favourite books about English travel, along with a few tomes exploring the quirkier side of this sceptred isle.

Notes from a Small Island is a bestselling memoir by the American-born author Bill Bryson, based on trips around Britain in the 1970s and '80s. Employing Bryson's trademark fussy style and self-deprecating wit, it's incisive, observant and very funny.

In Search of England by HV Morton is one of the classic prewar English travelogues, written by a veteran *Daily Express* columnist in the 1920s. The language is old-fashioned, but it makes a fascinating companion to more modern texts.

Nigel Cawthorne's *The Strange Laws of Old England* explores lots of weird and wonderful laws on the English statute book. Required reading if you're planning on entering Parliament in a suit of armour or transporting corpses in a London cab.

In England: 1000 Things You Need To Know, Nicolas Hobbes examines lots of quintessentially English things, from the people, legends and events that have shaped the nation's history through to the origins of stilton, roast beef and the Royal Mail. Another investigation into 'Englishness' is *In Search of the English Eccentric* by Henry Hemming – a poised, perceptive and frequently hilarious exploration of some of the nation's eccentrics, including crop-circle makers, a man who thinks he's the reincarnation of King Arthur, and Captain Beany, who likes to spend his days bathing in baked beans.

Pies and Prejudice: In Search of the North is a whimsical journey through England's northerly counties by British radio DJ Stuart Maconie, a 'Northerner in exile', who returns to his roots to discover the truth about life Up North.

Paul Gogarty's *The Water Road* travels along England's canals between London and the Humber, Severn and Mersey, colloquially known as the 'Cut' or the 'Grand Cross'. It's a mix of historical account and modern-day travelogue; Gogarty relates a similar trip around English shores in *The Coast Road*.

TOP PICKS



MUST-SEE MOVIES

English cinema has had its ups and downs over the last century, but against all the odds home-grown directors are still carving out a niche for themselves. Here are a few key English movies. For a more in-depth overview, see p62.

- *Brief Encounter* (1945) David Lean
- *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949) Robert Hamer
- *This Sporting Life* (1963) Lindsay Anderson
- *The Wicker Man* (1973) Robin Hardy
- *Chariots of Fire* (1981) Hugh Hudson
- *Withnail & I* (1987) Bruce Robinson
- *Hope & Glory* (1987) John Boorman
- *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994) Mike Newell
- *Secrets & Lies* (1996) Mike Leigh
- *Shaun of the Dead* (2004) Edgar Wright
- *This Is England* (2006) Shane Meadows

RAVE READS

England has produced a formidable line-up of literary giants down the centuries. We've picked out a few tomes exploring various aspects of the complex English character. See p59 for more recommendations.

- *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) Jane Austen
- *Oliver Twist* (1838) Charles Dickens
- *Wuthering Heights* (1847) Emily Brontë
- *Sons and Lovers* (1913) DH Lawrence
- *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) George Orwell
- *Brighton Rock* (1938) Graham Greene
- *Cider with Rosie* (1959) Laurie Lee
- *London Fields* (1989) Martin Amis
- *The Remains of the Day* (1989) Kazuo Ishiguro
- *Last Orders* (1996) Graham Swift
- *White Teeth* (2000) Zadie Smith
- *Atonement* (2001) Ian McEwan
- *Small Island* (2004) Andrea Levy
- *Black Swan Green* (2006) David Mitchell

SOUNDS OF THE SUBURBS

Here's a (highly subjective) pick of some albums we think have played a key part in shaping the nation's musical landscape.

- *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) – The Beatles
- *The Village Green Preservation Society* (1968) – The Kinks
- *Led Zeppelin IV* (1971) – Led Zeppelin
- *Exile On Main Street* (1972) – The Rolling Stones
- *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (1972) – David Bowie
- *Never Mind The Bollocks* (1977) – The Sex Pistols
- *London Calling* (1979) – The Clash
- *The Queen Is Dead* (1986) – The Smiths
- *The Stone Roses* (1989) – The Stone Roses
- *Protection* (1994) – Massive Attack
- *Different Class* (1995) – Pulp
- *What's The Story Morning Glory* (1995) – Oasis
- *OK Computer* (1997) – Radiohead
- *Franz Ferdinand* (2004) – Franz Ferdinand
- *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not* (2006) – Arctic Monkeys

INTERNET RESOURCES

Here are some top sites to check out before you hit the road.

BBC (www.bbc.co.uk) News and entertainment courtesy of the nation's much-loved broadcaster.

British Council (www.britishcouncil.org) National body dedicated to promoting British culture, arts and science.

eFestivals (www.efestivals.co.uk) Latest news, dates and gossip from the UK's top music festivals.

Enjoy England (www.enjoyengland.co.uk) England's official tourism website; accommodation, attractions, events and much more.

i-UK (www.i-uk.com) Information on living, working and visiting the UK.

Lonely Planet (lonelyplanet.com) Destination guides and travel tips from our own good selves.

National Rail (www.nationalrail.co.uk) Online resource for train timetables and fares.

Sustrans (www.sustrans.org.uk) Sustainable travel advice from England's largest green travel charity.

UK Tea Council (www.tea.co.uk) Everything you ever wanted to know about the nation's favourite tipple (including how to make the perfect brew).

Which (www.which.co.uk) Reviews ranging from travel insurance and consumer rights to sat nav and vacuum cleaners.

Itineraries

CLASSIC ROUTES

THE FULL MONTY

One Month / London to Cambridge

Kick off the grand tour in the nation's capital, **London** (p91), before heading down to buzzy **Brighton** (p204) and the picturesque **New Forest** (p289).

Cut inland to **Stonehenge** (p320) via the cathedral cities of **Winchester** (p278) and **Salisbury** (p315), then head west via Hardy's hometown, **Dorchester** (p305), en route to **Exeter** (p373) and wild **Dartmoor National Park** (p387). Head northwest via historic **Wells** (p351) en route to Georgian **Bath** (p341) and the southwest's big little city, **Bristol** (p329).

Then it's across the **Cotswolds** (p240) to England's original seat of learning, **Oxford** (p222), and Shakespeare central in **Stratford-upon-Avon** (p546), before journeying north via the **Peak District** (p512) to cultural **Liverpool** (p676). Detour via the scenic **Lake District** (p704) and follow **Hadrian's Wall** (p769) east to revitalised **Newcastle-upon-Tyne** (p746), with a swift side trip into wild **Northumberland** (p774). Then it's into the home stretch via **Durham Cathedral** (p758), the windswept **North York Moors** (p641) and the Viking city of **York** (p621) en route to journey's end in scholarly **Cambridge** (p427).

England's essentials wrapped up in one whistlestop package. It's a hefty journey of at least 1200 miles from start to finish: cut some sights if you're time-strapped, and allow room for a few unexpected detours to make the most of this classic English journey.



THE WILD SIDE

One Month / Northumberland to Land's End

'Our England is a garden that is full of stately views', wrote Rudyard Kipling, and who are we to argue? In honour of Mr Kipling and the countless other writers, poets and painters who have drawn inspiration from the English landscape, this north-south route strings together some of the stateliest views.

Start off in **Northumberland National Park** (p774), England's final frontier, dotted with fortified castles, breathtaking coastline and wind-lashed hilltops. Then it's west via the crumbling **Hadrian's Wall** (p769) to the radiant **Lake District** (p704), spiritual mecca for the Romantic poets, littered with dramatic hikes, cosy inns and the country's highest peak, **Scafell Pike** (p729).

Travelling east from the Lakes carries you across 'England's backbone', the Pennine Hills. To the south lie the green hills and valleys of the **Yorkshire Dales** (p605), and to the east are the heather-clad **North York Moors** (p641), where humpbacked hills smack into the grey rollers of the North Sea.

Travelling south through the **Peak District** (p512) and Elgar's beloved **Malvern Hills** (p560) brings you to the southwest's doorstep. Savour the epic dimensions of Salisbury Plain, home to **Stonehenge** (p320) and archaeological interests, followed by the rolling fields and sandy coves of **Exmoor** (p361) or the stunning rust-red sweep of Lyme Bay and the **Jurassic Coast** (p305). Further west, the eerie granite tors of **Dartmoor** (p387) and **Bodmin Moor** (p404) offer some of England's most bleakly beautiful views, rivalled only by the gorse-clad cliff tops and sparkling bays of Cornwall's **North Coast** (p396). Last port of call on this scenic excursion is **Land's End** (p415), where the English mainland finally runs out of steam and plunges headlong into the restless Atlantic. Toodle-pip, England – next stop, America...

A top-to-bottom journey through England's most unforgettable landscapes, covering about 900 miles. The trip lasts around four weeks, or closer to six if you're a dedicated hiker or a real view junky – just don't forget to bring along that camera...



ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND

Three weeks / London to Cumbria

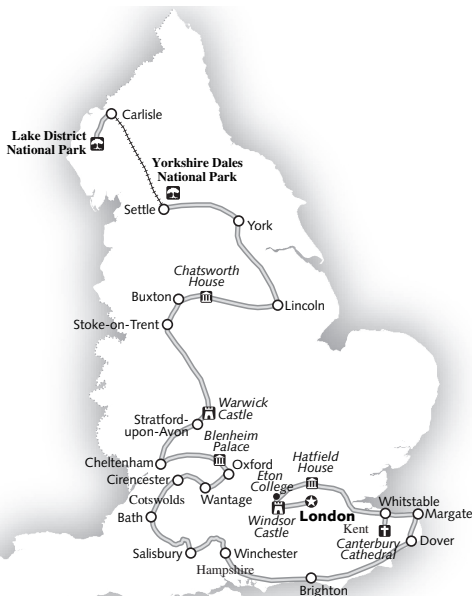
This journey through England's heart and soul starts in London, with a host of quintessential English sights: **Trafalgar Square** (p114), **Westminster Abbey** (p115), the **Tower of London** (p122), **St Paul's** (p122) and the Queen's city-centre pad, **Buckingham Palace** (p117). The gorgeous gardens at **Kew** (p133), **Eton College** (p271) and regal **Windsor Castle** (p269) are also must-see landmarks.

Beyond the capital you'll move into old England proper, especially around the market towns and sleepy villages of **Kent** (p173), **Hampshire** (p278) and **Hertfordshire** (p263). **Hatfield House** (p265) and **Canterbury Cathedral** (p175) jostle for top spot in the architectural stakes, while the southeast coastline hosts a string of classic seaside resorts, from **Whitstable** (p182) and **Margate** (p184) round to **Brighton** (p204) via the **White Cliffs of Dover** (p190).

Out to the west, the cities of **Winchester** (p278), **Salisbury** (p315) and **Bath** (p341) are crammed with landmark English architecture, while the picture-perfect idyllic **Cotswolds** (p240) conceal a host of pretty villages.

Nearby **Oxford** (p222) has been educating the country's elite for centuries, while **Stratford-upon-Avon** (p546) gave the world one Will Shakespeare. The surrounding countryside is littered with traditional English towns, including **Gloucester** (p248), **Wantage** (p239) and **Cheltenham** (p254), as well as the grand estate of **Blenheim Palace** (p236) and historic **Warwick Castle** (p544). Further north, you'll find the home of English pottery in **Stoke-on-Trent** (p553).

Detour via stately **Buxton** (p516) and **Chatsworth House** (p525) en route to another dazzling medieval cathedral in **Lincoln** (p490), before arriving in England's prettiest provincial city, **York** (p621). From here it's a scenic trundle across the rugged **Yorkshire Dales** (p605) via the **Settle–Carlisle railway** (p609) all the way into **Cumbria** (p701).



From the well-to-do south to the windswept north, this itinerary delves into contrasting sides of the national character, travelling via thatched villages, seaside resorts, historic cities and national parks. It's a trip of between 700 and 900 miles depending on your precise route.

ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

NORTHERN SOUL

Two Weeks / Leeds to Newcastle

If you're after a glimpse of where England's at, step outside the self-centred capital and take a spin round England's revitalised north.

Start in **Leeds** (p593), where textile factories and warehouses have been replaced by sleek shops, loft apartments and ritzy boutiques (especially around the restored Victoria Quarter, p599). Take time to explore Bradford's **National Media Museum** (p599) and Claphouse's **National Coal Mining Museum** (p601).

Jockeying with Leeds for the 'England's second city' title is **Manchester** (p653), famous for its music and all-conquering football team (sorry City, we're talking about United). Kip in style at the **Lowry** (p663) or the **Yang Sing Oriental Hotel** (p663) and visit the **Imperial War Museum North** (p659).

Nearby **Liverpool** (p676) has finally stepped out of The Beatles' shadow, reinventing itself as a cultural capital. Stroll its historic waterfront, **Albert Dock** (p680), down a pint at the shipshape **Philharmonic** (p686), indulge at fantastic **Hope Street Hotel** (p684) and check out the **Ropewalks** (p686) club scene.

Long tainted with the smudge of coal and steel, **Newcastle-upon-Tyne** (p746) has given up heavy industries in favour of art and architecture. Cross the wonderful **Millennium Bridge** (p748) to Gateshead and the **Baltic** (p751), a former grain factory turned cutting-edge art gallery, before catching a show at the Sir Norman Foster-designed **Sage Gateshead** concert hall (p755).

Conclude your tour with a visit to England's most popular piece of public art, the iron-winged **Angel of the North** (p757).

It's grim up north (so the saying goes), but this itinerary shows how much things have changed in England's upper half over the last decade. It's barely 100 miles from end to end, so you'll have ample time to explore off the beaten track.



THE EDGE OF ENGLAND

Two Weeks / Suffolk to Northumberland

England's popular national parks are certainly beautiful, but they're hardly a well-kept secret. If you like your landscapes a little less hectic, try this backwater route through England's less-travelled corners.

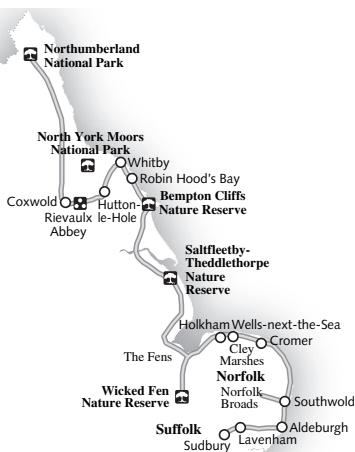
Start in sleepy **Suffolk** (p446), once a centre for the medieval wool industry, now a favourite getaway for painters, boaters and bird lovers. Quaint villages and stout market towns such as **Sudbury** (p449) and **Lavenham** (p449) dot the landscape, while along the coast there are bird reserves, shingly beaches and fishing ports such as **Aldeburgh** (p453) and **Southwold** (p455).

Things get quieter northwards into **Norfolk** (p456), especially around the misty fens and rivers of the **Broads** (p463), crammed with rare butterflies and birdlife, and the bogs and reed beds of the **Cley Marshes** (p465). For a flavour of the faded English seaside, dig out the crab net and head for **Cromer** (p464) and **Wells-next-the-Sea** (p465), or for something classier, try the beaches and boutique hideaways around **Holkham** (p466).

Across the border into Lincolnshire are the eerie, pan-flat **Fens** (p500), drained during the 17th century and now a haven for otters, red deer and all kinds of bird life, especially around the nature reserves at **Wicken Fen** (p500) and **Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe** (p499).

Beyond the massive seabird colonies roosting at **Bempton Cliffs** (p621) are the breezy **North York Moors** (p641), which get far fewer visitors than the nearby Dales. Browse the scenic coastline from **Robin Hood's Bay** (p649) to **Whitby** (p646), before venturing inland to villages such as **Hutton-le-Hole** (p645) and **Coxwold** (p644), and the moody ruins of **Rievaulx Abbey** (p644). Round things off with a blustery stroll across the Cheviot Hills in the heart of **Northumberland National Park** (p774).

Covering around 350 to 450 miles from the flats of Suffolk to the cliffs of Northumberland, this trip along England's under-explored eastern edge is for people who like their landscapes big, wild and empty.



TAILORED TRIPS

ERUDITE ENGLAND

Literary landmarks are scattered across the English landscape. Open the book in London at the home of pioneering dictionary-maker, **Dr Samuel Johnson** (p124), before exploring the literary history of **Bloomsbury** (p120; see more about the Bloomsbury group in the boxed text, p201) and Dickensian **Clerkenwell** (p121). Pay your respects to some of the nation's most illustrious writers, interred in Poet's Corner in **Westminster Abbey** (p115). Round your tour off at Shakespeare's **Globe** (p126), a replica of the original theatre where many of the Bard's plays were premiered.

Outside the capital, the spires of **Oxford** (p222) inspired JRR Tolkien, CS Lewis and Philip Pullman, while Shakespearean connections continue at the Bard's birthplace, **Stratford-upon-Avon** (p546). The **Midlands** (p527) is classic DH Lawrence country, while Philip Larkin laboured at the university library in **Hull** (p615). Further north, Brontë fans flock to the south Pennines, especially **Haworth** (p602), and diehard Romantics follow in the footsteps of Wordsworth, Coleridge, de Quincey and co in the **Lake District** (p704).

West of London you'll find Jane Austen locations dotted around **Bath** (p341). Nearby **Dorset** (p297) doubled as Thomas Hardy's fictional Wessex, Arthur Conan Doyle set his classic *Hound of the Baskervilles* on **Dartmoor** (p387), and the poet laureate of English ordinariness, John Betjeman, regularly holidayed around the cliffs of **North Cornwall** (p396).



NATIONAL TREASURES

This trip explores England's heritage sites, from prehistoric coastlines and grand cathedrals to the nation's most notorious lock-up. The sounds of the Industrial Revolution echo around Derbyshire's **Derwent Valley Mills** (p511) and **Ironbridge Gorge** (p574), recently joined on Unesco's World Heritage List by the minestacks and pumphouses of **Cornwall and West Devon** (p395).

England's seafaring heritage lives on around **Liverpool** (p676) and London's **Greenwich** (p131), and architectural splendour abounds throughout the Georgian crescents of **Bath** (p341), baroque **Blenheim Palace** (p236) and the cathedrals of **Durham** (p759) and **Canterbury** (p177), plus **Westminster Abbey** (p115).

Top political prisoners were once banged up at the **Tower of London** (p122), and Victorian plant hunters helped turn Kew's **Royal Botanic Gardens** (p133) into one of the world's foremost horticultural centres. More landscaped splendour graces the water gardens of **Studley Royal** (p634) and the Cistercian **Fountains Abbey** (p634).

You could also head northwards to **Hadrian's Wall** (p769), swing west to the stone circles of **Stonehenge** (p320) and **Avebury** (p326), or travel back in time along the **Jurassic Coast** (p303) – the prime spot for dedicated fossil hunters and amateur archaeologists.



OFFBEAT BLIGHTY

If there's one thing the English are famous for, it's eccentricity; this trip picks out some of the country's more peculiar attractions.

Start out in Cornwall with a clamber through the enchanted **Men-an-tol stone** (p416) and a visit to extraordinary **Wayside Folk Museum** (p415) in Zennor. Browse voodoo poppets and magic skulls at the Boscastle's **Museum of Witchcraft** (p398), visit King Arthur's legendary birthplace, **Tintagel Castle** (p398) and participate in a 19th-century murder trial in **Bodmin** (p404).

In Devon, you could dine amongst Damien Hirst exhibits in **Ilfracombe** (p395) or go to Exeter to stay at a **converted eye hospital** (Hotel Barcelona, p376), wander around spooky underground **catcombs** (p375) and check out England's most extraordinary DIY project, the 16-sided cottage of **A La Ronde** (p378).

Over in Dorset, check out the nation's rudest piece of public art, the **Cerne Giant** (p307), and mix with bongo players, white witches and part-time druids in England's hippie capital, **Glastonbury** (p356), before discovering the nation's largest **stone circle** (p327) and the mysterious hummock of **Silbury Hill** (p328), both near Avebury.

In the Cotswolds, you could participate in the **Pooh Sticks World Championships** (p237), hurtle downhill in pursuit of a runaway block of Double Gloucester in Cranham's **cheese-rolling competition** (p253), and test your mettle in Chipping Campden's **Cotswold Olimpicks** (p245), with a spot of welly-wanging, pole-climbing or shin-kicking. Only in England...



GO SLOW

England is slowly waking up to the ecological agenda, and the southwest is doing its green bit better than anywhere else.

Start in the seaside town of **St Ives** (p416), which brims with ecofriendly B&Bs and local-produce restaurants, including the fantastic **Primrose Valley Hotel** (p418). Then head (by public transport, or even cycling) to England's ecological flagship, the **Eden Project** (p406), with three space-age greenhouses (the world's largest) and pioneering environmental initiatives from recycled rainwater to wind generators and composting loos. Explore the coastline and beaches around **Padstow** (p399) and the north coast along the **Camel Cycle Trail** (p399), and book yourself a tepee in **Fowey** (p406).

Catch the scenic railway to England's original transition town, **Totnes** (p382), long-known for its hippie-ish vibe and eco-chic credentials. Wholefood restaurants and organic cafes line the town's cobbled streets, and you can sample fantastic home-grown produce at the **Riverford Field Kitchen** (p382) and Devon chardonnays at **Sharpham Vineyard** (p382). Ferries putter from Totnes to the harbour of **Dartmouth** (p380), from where you can hike the scenic estuary or catch a boat to Agatha Christie's house at **Greenway** (p380), now winning green tourism awards. Lastly, head north for some hiking and biking around **Dartmoor** (p387). And all without an automobile in sight...



The Authors



DAVID ELSE

Coordinating Author; History; Food & Drink; Environment; Directory; Transport; Glossary

As a full-time professional travel writer, David has authored more than 20 books, including Lonely Planet's guides to *Great Britain* and *Walking in Britain*. His knowledge of England comes from a lifetime of travel around the country (often on foot or by bike), a passion dating from university years, when heading for the hills was always more attractive than visiting the library. Originally from London, David has lived in Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and is currently based on the southern edge of the Cotswolds. For those interested in domestic matters: David is married with two young children, who already find themselves on the back of their dad's tandem whenever the sun shines.



OLIVER BERRY

Destination England; Getting Started; Itineraries; The Culture; Cumbria & the Lake District

A born and bred Brit, Oliver has been seeking out England's more eccentric corners for the last 30-odd years, and it was an absolute pleasure to do a bit more exploring for this book. Having worked on several previous editions of the *England* guide, for this book Oliver clambered down into the murky slate mines of Honister, tackled the trails of the Cumbrian fells, and stuffed himself silly with tattie hotpot, Grasmere gingerbread and Bluebird ale. When he's not out on the road, Oliver lives and works in Cornwall as a writer and photographer.



FIONN DAVENPORT

The Northwest; The Northeast

Dublin-based Fionn has been visiting and writing about northern England for about a decade, which is a good thing considering that it's his favourite bit of the country – mostly because the people remind him of the folks across the puddle in Ireland. When he's not traipsing around Newcastle or Manchester – or watching his beloved Liverpool FC at Anfield – he's juggling his commitments to Irish radio and TV, where he doles out travel advice and gives out about globalisation fatigue. And when he's not doing that, he spends most of his time wondering where he'd like to go next.

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BELINDA DIXON

Wessex; Devon & Cornwall

Belinda was drawn to the southwest in the 1990s to do a postgrad (having been impressed there were palm trees on the campus) and, like the best west-country limpets, has proved hard to shift since. She spends as much time as possible in the sea, but can also be seen and heard writing and broadcasting in the region. Personal highlights for this latest Lonely Planet adventure are sitting in the stone circle at Avebury, rigorously testing the new wave of Cornish cuisine and exploring utterly exhilarating Exmoor.



PETER DRAGICEVICH

London

After a dozen years working for newspapers and magazines in New Zealand and Australia, London's bright lights and loud guitars could no longer be resisted. Like all good Kiwis, Peter got to know the city while surfing his way between friends' flats all over London. Now, living an even more nomadic life as a Lonely Planet writer, London is one of three cities that he likes to think of as home. He has contributed to nine Lonely Planet titles, including writing the Thames Path section of *Walking in Britain*.



NANA LUCKHAM

**The Southeast; The East Midlands;
The West Midlands & the Marches**

Nana spent most of her childhood in Brighton, aside from a few years in Tanzania, Ghana and Australia. After university, she worked as an editorial assistant in London and a UN press officer in New York and Geneva before becoming a full-time travel writer. Now based in London, she spends most of her time on research trips in exotic faraway climes, so she jumped at the chance to rediscover her home region of the southeast and relive her university days in the Midlands, during which she developed a new-found enthusiasm for the old country.



ETAIN O'CARROLL

Oxford, the Cotswolds & Around; East Anglia

Travel writer and photographer Etain O'Carroll grew up in small-town Ireland and regular childhood trips to England were tinged with the excitement of eating gammon and pineapple in motorway service stations, examining the countless sparkly pens in swanky Woolies and meeting all those cousins with funny accents. In between were the trips to the chocolate-box villages, stately homes, massive castles and ruined abbeys. Now living in Oxford, Etain's childish awe has become a long-term appreciation for the fine architecture, bucolic countryside and rich heritage of her adopted home. Work often takes her far away but she cherished the excuse to traipse around her own back yard searching for hidden treats.



NEIL WILSON

Yorkshire

From rock-climbing trips to Yorkshire gritstone in his university days, to weekend getaways in York and Whitby in more recent years, Neil has made many cross-border forays into 'God's own country' from his home in Scotland. Whether hiking across the high tops of the Yorkshire Dales, savouring Britain's best fish and chips on the Whitby waterfront, or worshipping at the fountainhead of Theakston Ales in Masham, he's never short of an excuse for yet another visit. Neil is a full-time travel writer based in Edinburgh, and has written more than 40 guidebooks for various publishers.

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