

Shakespeare's ENGLAND

Market Towns

We invite you to come and explore the market towns of Shakespeare's England. Shakespeare's England is of course, famous for being home to the greatest playwright in history, William Shakespeare but beyond this connection is a stunning region packed with historically significant market towns.

Lazy walks in beautiful countryside and quirky inns entice, unique shopping opportunities, glorious gardens and historic houses and a variety of welcoming pubs and restaurants all await you.

Alcester

A hidden gem only 8 miles from the world famous Stratford Upon Avon, Alcester is a charming market town that offers something for everyone – history, culture, shopping, accommodation, food and drink – all mixed in with a good measure of flowers, festivals and fun!



Meander through its ancient streets, a mix of half-timbered Tudor merchants' houses - splendid Georgian houses and cosy Victorian workers cottages. In the summer these are adorned with thousands of flowers.

Marvel at architectural wonders such as the magnificent St Nicholas Church with its 14th century tower standing proudly looking down the High Street. The nearby 17th century Town Hall, built as a colonnade of 18 pillars of Cotswold stone by the Lord of the Manor as an open market.

Step back even further in time and check out Alcester's Roman roots at fascinating The Roman Heritage Centre or simply discover the secret gardens of many in the summer and the log fires in the winter.

Take a break from your visit by popping into one of the many inviting shops, public houses, cafés or restaurants.

Bidford-on-Avon

Bidford sits on a stunning riverside setting just 6 miles from Stratford-upon-Avon and has been a tourist destination for well over a hundred years, when residents from Birmingham would come and enjoy a day out by the river!



Legend even has it that no less a figure than William Shakespeare enjoyed a visit to a local hostelry and then slept under a tree on his way back to Stratford one night after a skin full of ale! The setting has not changed much since then. The River Avon still flows majestically to the south of the village and the Parish Church of St. Laurence, which recently celebrated 800 years, still dominates the centre of the village and is well worth a visit: from its vantage position you can enjoy spectacular views of the River Avon.

Take the kids to experience the Big Meadow - a 26 acre recreational area boasting a large play area catering for all ages, a multi use game area and a skate ramp with picnic tables and benches. From the Big Meadow you can cross over Bidford Bridge, a national heritage site, to the High Street which offers a variety of local shops, riverside restaurants, and traditional English pubs all set in a conservation area of mostly post medieval buildings with spectacular views of the river.

Henley-in-Arden

Come and enjoy eating at a 16th century coaching inn or in a 15th century timber framed building, walk in the beautiful Warwickshire countryside where a 12th century motte and bailey castle used to be. Why not discover for yourself the one mile picturesque High Street where you will find numerous shops, antiques, restaurants, wine bars, pubs and tearooms.



Experience the famous Henley Ice Cream Parlour or discover local history with a visit to the 1448 St. John the Baptist Church or the 1170 St. Nicholas Church. During your visit you will be immersed by buildings covering every period in history going back to the medieval times.

Henley-in-Arden is an idyllic rural town which showcases medieval history and architecture in the 21st century.

Shipston-on-Stour

Situated just 11 miles from Stratford-upon-Avon and located on the river Stour, is the historically renowned market town of Shipston-on-Stour. An attractive market town Shipston preserved its medieval roots seen all too clearly in the architecture of its shops, commercial buildings and houses.



The name Shipston resides from the Old English 'Scepwaeisctune' or rather "Sheep Wash Town" and is home to a museum, many welcoming pubs and restaurants, shops and markets and numerous festivals throughout the year. Highlights include the well established Wool Fair which celebrates Shipston's historic wool trade, the annual Shipston Proms a fantastic 'Last Night of the Proms' style celebration in the High Street and the annual Victorian Fair brings a traditional Christmas welcome each year.

Come and discover a working market town, rich in heritage.

Southam

Southam boasts some unusual claims to fame: not least a holy well with reputedly healing waters and the fact that the town minted its own coins in medieval times – the 14th-century building is now an atmospheric pub.

Designated a conservation area, Southam retains many interesting historic buildings. Visit The Olde Mint, where Charles I is said to have made coins for his troops or maybe stretch your legs walking to the Holy Well in the beautiful Stowe Valley

Several scenic attractions are within easy reach, including the unique 17th-century Chesteron Windmill perched on its six stone pillars, and Napton-on-the-Hill where the Grand Union and Oxford canals meet. Explore wildlife-rich Ufton Fields Nature

Reserve, home to 28 different types of butterfly, or the rugged ridges of Burton Dassett Hills Country Park.

Suggested Accommodation

There are a number of accommodation options for exploring the market towns of Shakespeare's England:

Ardencote Manor – Wonderful manor hotel with sporting and other excellent facilities ideal for families -
www.ardencote.com

Billesley Manor – An elegant 4-star hotel near Stratford upon Avon and Alcester. AA Rosette Restaurant with a 100 year old listed Garden.
www.pumahotels.co.uk/hotels/billesley-manor-hotel-stratford-upon-avon/

Best Western Henley Hotel – A hotel with personality, style and great service located in the pretty market town of Henley in Arden
www.bestwestern.co.uk/towns/henley-in-arden.aspx

Knightcote Farm Cottages - five star luxury self-catering cottages -
www.farmcottages.com

The Bell, Alderminster – a boutique B&B with historically themed rooms –
www.thebellald.co.uk

Wroxall Estate – Luxury 4 star hotel nestled in 27 acres of open parkland, occupies a unique setting amidst the peace and tranquillity of the Warwickshire countryside.
www.wroxall.com

For more accommodation ideas visit
www.shakespeares-england.co.uk

For more information on the details on this itinerary please email
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*Shakespeare's England has endeavoured to provide the correct information about the places contained within this itinerary. All information was correct at the time of print but may be subject to change