



West Midlands

Warwickshire

WARWICKSHIRE REVEALED: THE VERY BEST OF WARWICKSHIRE

England's best castle, the world's most famous playwright, literary stars, award winning local produce and some rather special motorcars.

## Day One

Morning	Depart London to Stratford-upon-Avon to begin your journey – train time approximately 2hrs15mins. Alternatively you may prefer to take a car as this itinerary involves some rural destinations that are not easily accessed on public transport.
Afternoon	<p>Stratford-upon-Avon is beautifully situated on the river Avon with a wealth of black and white timber framed buildings. It is, of course, most famous for being the birthplace of the world's greatest playwright, William Shakespeare.</p> <p>Meet up with a local walking guide and join the <a href="#">Stratford Town Walk</a>. As you walk in William Shakespeare's footsteps from cradle to grave, along the historic spine of ancient Stratford, your guide will unravel the Shakespeare story. You will see Shakespeare's Birthplace, Nash's House and the site of New Place and the beautiful Hall's Croft. Other highlights include the picturesque River Avon, the Royal Shakespeare Theatres, Shakespeare's grammar school and Holy Trinity Church. You may wish to see where William Shakespeare is buried in the Chancel with a curse on his grave.</p>
Evening	<p>In the evening treat yourself to a night at the theatre. This isn't just any theatre; this is the <a href="#">Royal Shakespeare Theatre</a> in Stratford-upon-Avon. Have dinner in the stunning roof top restaurant giving panoramic views over the town, then enjoy one of the RSC's internationally renowned performances in the newly refurbished theatre.</p> <p>Overnight in Stratford-upon-Avon.</p>

## Day Two

Morning	<p>This morning leave Stratford and head for the utterly tranquil, nearby <a href="#">Compton Verney</a>. Few historic mansions undergo such an unusual transformation as Compton Verney: from a derelict Georgian home into an inspirational gallery of international standing. Combine a look around restored Grade 1-listed buildings and new spaces, as you browse the diverse art collections. And enjoy the classical park landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. Sweeping grassland, ornamental lakes and Cedars of Lebanon offer the perfect backdrop.</p> <p>(Stratford-upon-Avon to Compton Verney – 9miles)</p>
Late morning	Continue onto the <a href="#">Heritage Motor Centre</a> at Gaydon, home to the world's largest collection of historic British Cars. Find out about the British motor industry and marvel at icons such as Lady Penelope's Cadillac and James Bond's Aston Martin – officially the UK's coolest brand! . You might even enjoy taking the Land Rover 4x4 all terrain challenge.

Afternoon	<p>Spend an electrifying afternoon exploring a thousand years of jaw-dropping history at nearby <a href="#">Warwick Castle</a>. Experience the heat of battle, dank dungeons, the terrifying dragon tower and castle warfare – or you may prefer a ‘lighter’ visit – become a pampered princess for the day, uncover the secrets and scandals of the Royal Wedding Weekend or stroll through the delightful Victorian Rose Garden. Warwick Castle has been visited by Kings and Queens throughout the centuries including our own Queen Elizabeth II just a few years ago, and today offers a truly, interactive, fun and enlightening experience. Lunch suggestion: The medieval Undercroft at Warwick Castle.</p> <p>(Heritage Motor Centre to Warwick– 10miles)</p>
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Evening	<p>Overnight in Warwick, famed for its medieval Castle. You may wish to continue your ‘medieval experience’ and dine at a <a href="#">Medieval Banquet</a> at Warwick Castle. Alternatively enjoy some good pub grub in a great traditional inn, <a href="#">The Rose and Crown in Warwick</a>.</p>
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## Day Three

Morning	<p>Start your day in Royal Leamington Spa, Warwickshire’s Royal town, one of only three in England. This elegant spa town was given its ‘Royal’ title during a visit by Queen Victoria. Spend a little time admiring the splendid Regency architecture and browsing around the delightful shops and drop into <a href="#">The Pump Rooms</a>, a restored Victorian Turkish baths room that now house a museum and art gallery. If you adore fine food then don’t miss two of Warwickshire’s finest food producers - Aubrey Allen Meats (Warwick Street, Leamington Spa) and Sweet As, award winner confectioner (Warwick Place, Leamington Spa).</p> <p>Leamington is closely associated with the founding of <a href="#">lawn tennis</a>. The first tennis club in the world was formed in 1872 by Major Henry Gem and Augurio Pereira who had started playing tennis in the garden of Pereira. It was located just behind the former Manor House Hotel and the modern rules of lawn tennis were drawn up in 1874 in Leamington Tennis Club</p> <p>(Distance from Warwick to Royal Leamington Spa – 2.5miles)</p>
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Late morning	<p>On departing Leamington, drive through Kenilworth town centre. Here you will see the majestic sand-stone ruins of <a href="#">Kenilworth Castle</a>. Continue into Coventry to see <a href="#">Coventry Cathedral</a>, a 20<sup>th</sup> century cathedral, built after WWII, which sits majestically next to the blitzed ruins of its 12<sup>th</sup> century predecessor. The Cathedral has become an international symbol of peace. Located nearby you may also like to visit the <a href="#">Coventry Transport Museum</a>, the largest collection of British road transport in the world, or the <a href="#">Herbert Art Gallery</a> and Museum with eight permanent galleries and The History Centre.</p> <p>Try lunch at <a href="#">Turmeric Gold</a>, an award winning Indian restaurant on medieval Spon Street, Coventry.</p>
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Afternoon	After lunch had to north Warwickshire as you follow in the footsteps of another literary favourite, George Eliot. Take a tour <a href="#">in the steps of George Eliot</a> to places the author knew from growing up in the area. Highlights include inspirations for her <i>Scenes of Clerical Life</i> : <a href="#">Arbury Hall</a> , (Cheverel Manor) and Astley Church, still recognisable as Knebley Church 'with coats of arms in clusters on the lofty roof'. Podcasts are available. Driving tour takes approximately 2 hours.
Overnight	Stay in one of the Landmark Trust's latest properties. The Landmark Trust restores fabulous, heritage buildings into beautiful holiday accommodation. <a href="#">Astley Castle</a> will open in early 2012 and is the perfect way to end 'a tour with George Eliot'.  There are two other stunning Landmark Trust properties in Warwickshire which offer a truly authentic taste of British Heritage. They are; <a href="#">The Bath House</a> and <a href="#">Lengthman's Cottage</a> .

## Day Four

Morning	<p>Spend the morning at one of Warwickshire's finest National Trust Houses, <a href="#">Baddesley Clinton</a>. Unlock the secrets of a home that offered a haven to Catholics persecuted in the Elizabethan era. Atmospheric interiors throughout the house conjure the comforts of the times, yet this moated medieval manor also conceals no fewer than three priest's holes. Stretch your legs in the delightful garden complete with stew-ponds and lake, find out what's fresh in the vegetable garden, or follow the lovely nature walk.</p> <p>(Distance from Astley Castle to Baddesley Clinton – 25miles – 35mins)</p> <p>If time permits and you are a garden lover, don't miss the nearby <a href="#">National Trust Packwood House</a>. Here you'll find romantic herbaceous borders, and a spiral path leads to the extraordinary Yew Garden whose bulging, cylindrical and conical topiary is said to represent the Sermon on the Mount, including The Master, 12 Apostles and four Evangelists.</p> <p>(Distance from Baddesley Clinton to Packwood House - 2.5miles)</p>
Afternoon	Return to London approximately 2hrs by car and about 1h30mins by train from Warwick station.
	<p>If you can spend another day in delightful Warwickshire, stretch your legs, breathe some lovely fresh air and take to the countryside.</p> <p>The village green in picturesque Ilmington, overlooked by <a href="#">The Howard Arms</a>, is your start and finish for a 4.3-mile jaunt that takes you up onto Ilmington Down: at 854 feet the highest point in rural Warwickshire. Head out of the village and through fields and soon enough you are on top of the world. Catch your breath and find it taken away again by fantastic views over the Vale of Evesham! When you've drunk your fill of the vistas, descend down along lanes and bridleways back into the</p>

village.

This favourite local walk is a moderately challenging route but full of rewards, not least the afterglow in the award-winning, 400-year-old Howard Arms. Treat yourself to a reviving drink and lunch: menus feature fine dining alongside pub favourites, using local suppliers for produce wherever possible. Find route details at [Ilmington & the Cotswolds](#).

(Stratford-upon-Avon to Ilmington – 10miles)