

SHAKESPEARE COUNTRY LEISURE DRIVES



STONELEIGH TOUR

(Driving directions are shown in red)

Tour details

Approximately 47 miles

The Stoneleigh tour starts from St Nicholas' Park in Warwick and takes you through the historic town and the north of Royal Leamington Spa. It then leads you through the rolling countryside and picturesque villages of central Warwickshire and the market town of Southam before heading north to take in Stoneleigh and Kenilworth. It returns via Honiley and the craft and antiques centre at Hatton Country World – before bringing you back past the Racecourse into Warwick.

The historic town of **Warwick** is well worth exploring. Here you can browse antique, china and gift shops and visit a number of museums. For refreshment there are some good pubs, fine restaurants and tearooms in the town.

Leaving the car park at St Nicholas' Park in Warwick, turn right onto the A425 signed Birmingham. Keep in the right hand lane as you approach the roundabout and go straight on. You immediately come to another junction with traffic lights where you turn right into Smith Street signed Leamington A445. At the bottom of Smith Street get into the right lane. Keep straight on at the traffic lights.

St John's House (1) is on the right at the traffic lights. St John's has displays of Warwickshire social history, including costume. It also houses the **Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum (2)** which tells the story of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment from its origins in 1674 to the Fusiliers of today.

*Continue along the Emscote Road, past Tesco on the right crossing the **Grand Union Canal** and then the **River Avon**. Keep in the left lane and take the left fork into Rugby Road signed Rugby A445. Continue straight on at the traffic lights and then at the roundabout take the second exit signed Rugby A445. Keep straight on at the traffic lights signed Rugby, Lillington and Cubbington.*

(Should you wish to visit Quarry Park Disc Golf, nearby, turn left at these traffic lights towards Kenilworth on the A452. After 1 mile, take the first exit at the roundabout, down Old Milverton Lane. The Golf Centre is on the right. Afterwards, retrace your steps back to the traffic lights and turn left to rejoin the route).

At the next roundabout take the first exit signed Lillington and Cubbington. Then at the next roundabout take the third exit onto Cubbington Road. Drive for approximately 1 mile, passing the Rugby Tavern on the left, and then at the Shell petrol station turn right on the mini roundabout into Windmill Hill (signed Offchurch). At the Stag's Head in Offchurch follow the road to the left, signed Long Itchington and Southam. Keep straight ahead at the staggered crossroads, signed Bascote and Southam (the Offchurch Greenway – an old railway line converted into a cycle trail and footpath, is on your right). Keep straight on

at the next set of crossroads, crossing the Fosse Way on the Welsh Road, heading towards Bascote and Southam. After about 3 miles you will enter Southam. At the T-junction with the main road, turn left. Should you wish to go into Southam town centre, turn right.

An historic coaching and market town, **Southam** has some interesting old coaching inns. The Old Mint Inn is a stone building dating from the 14th century and is so named because Charles I is said to have minted coins here for his troops after the nearby battle of Edgehill.

*At the roundabout take the first exit signed **Long Itchington** and Coventry A423. Drive through the village of Long Itchington. Cross the Grand Union Canal with Two Boats Inn on your right. Drive through the village of **Marton** passing the Black Horse public house. Drive through the village of **Princethorpe**. At the roundabout take the first exit onto the A445. Pass NPIA (formerly Ryton Police College).*

Ryton Pools Country Park is on your left should you wish to stop for a walk or a picnic. Pay for car parking at the barrier.

*Continue on main road through Bubbenhall. At the crossroads turn right signed Baginton. At the crossroads turn left signed Stoneleigh. At the T-junction turn right opposite a large stone gateway and drive past the golf course and the bridge. At the Give Way sign keep straight on over the red stone bridge over the **River Stowe** then immediately turn left signed the University and Kenilworth cycle route.*

If you turn left before the bridge the entrance to Stoneleigh Park is 1 mile down this road. **Stoneleigh Park(3)** is home to the Royal Agricultural Society of England, where the **Royal Show** is staged in early July.

Drive through Stoneleigh village. At the crossroads turn left signed Stoneleigh Abbey. The entrance to Stoneleigh Abbey is further along this road on your left.

Established in 1154, **Stoneleigh Abbey (4)** offers an insight into the last 800 years. During her stay, Jane Austen was inspired to write *Mansfield Park*. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert also stayed here. See Victoria's bed and bathroom, magnificent state rooms and 690 acres of parkland.

Go to the end of this road and at the junction opposite Chesford Grange Hotel turn left (only option). At the next roundabout go all the way round to come back on the same road (signed Kenilworth). At the large roundabout, crossing the A46 dual carriageway, take the second exit into Kenilworth. Take the right hand lane on approach to the roundabout and St.John's Church and then the left lane on exiting the roundabout. Follow the signs towards the town centre and castle.

*As you drive through **Kenilworth**, if you wish to stop the car parks are signed to the right.* With a fine selection of small shops, restaurants and tea rooms, **Kenilworth** is a great place to stop and explore.

At the roundabout by the Clock Tower take the first exit in front of the De Montfort Hotel, signed Stonebridge A452. The Tourist Information Centre and Library are on your left. Follow the road until you come to the car park for Kenilworth Castle on your left (immediately after a sharp right hand bend).

Explore **Kenilworth Castle (5)**, the ruined glory of Elizabethan England. One of the greatest strongholds in England, it was used by Henry I, II and V. It was here, too, that Robert Dudley entertained Elizabeth I for 19 days – during which time those at the Castle consumed 190 oxen and 45,000 gallons of wine and beer!

The area around the Castle is particularly worth exploring. A circular walk around the Castle offers some magnificent views. **Abbey Fields** is also good for a gentle stroll – see the ruins of Kenilworth Abbey and glimpse the thatched cottages of ‘Little Virginia’ where Sir Walter Raleigh is thought to have planted some of the first potatoes he brought back from Virginia.

From Kenilworth Castle, turn left back onto the main road, signed Balsall Common, and continue for just over 2 miles. At the junction with the A4177, turn left towards Warwick. Turn left off the main road, opposite the Honiley Court Hotel. Follow the road round past Honiley Hall. At the T-junction turn left opposite the Paddocks Livery. At the T-junction turn right signed Hatton and Warwick. At the T-junction turn right signed Solihull A4177, then right again.

As you go up the hill, a turning on the left, signed **Hatton Locks**, takes you to the famous **Hatton Locks (6)** – a flight of 21 locks on the **Grand Union Canal**. It is well worth stopping and taking a walk along the canal to see the locks. It is also a great place for a picnic and there is a canalside café for light refreshments. To get back on the tour, turn left as you get out of Hatton Locks.

Pass the Waterman pub on your left. Take the left fork, signed Hatton Country World. At the crossroads turn left towards Hatton Country World. Take care as the road is narrow in places. Turn left into Hatton Country World.

Hatton Country World (7) is home to Hatton Shopping Village, with an antiques centre, factory outlet for fashions and two restaurants. It is also home to Hatton Farm Village, with animals and an adventure play area.

On leaving Hatton Country World, turn left and drive with care as this is a single track lane with passing places. Take the right fork signed Claverdon and Henley. At the T-junction turn left signed Warwick A4189, going back over the M40. Enter Warwick by the racecourse. There is a turning to Warwick Castle on the right which takes you to the main Castle car parks, otherwise continue straight on.

Enjoy Britain’s Ultimate Castle at **Warwick Castle (8)**. Experience a mediaeval household preparing for battle. There’s also a dungeon, magnificent towers and ramparts, state rooms, mill and engine house, plus 60 acres of grounds to explore.

To take you back to the starting place of the tour, turn right at the T-junction, into Bowling Green Street signed Stratford and Stow. You will immediately come to another T-junction. Turn left into West Street and pass the Lord Leycester Hospital on your left.

Robert Dudley founded the **Lord Leycester Hospital (9)** in 1571 as a home for retired servicemen and it is still used as such today. This delightful group of 14th century timber framed buildings is clustered around the original Norman gate into Warwick. During the summer months be sure to visit the stunning **Master's Garden**.

Discover another garden treasure in Warwick at **Hill Close Gardens (10)**. These secret Victorian gardens have been lovingly restored to their former glory. Also well worth a visit in Market Place is the **Warwickshire Museum (11)** housing collections of Warwickshire past and present. **St Mary's Church (12)** contains the Beauchamp Chantry, the finest mediaeval chapel in England, with tombs of the Earls of Warwick and Queen Elizabeth’s favourite, Robert Dudley.

At the traffic lights at the end of the main street, and opposite the East Gate (a small church above a stone archway) bear right onto the A425 Banbury Road . At the roundabout go straight ahead. Almost immediately you come to the starting point of the tour, St Nicholas' Park, just on the left.

