

Twelve Day Trips from London

A simple guide for visitors who want to see more
than the capital

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Bookline & Thinker Ltd

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Introduction

Why take any day trips from London? After all London has so much to see and do. Who could ever be bored here?

But escaping London is not about being bored. It's about visiting the quieter parts of England, experiencing a different type of history, seeing the countryside and discovering the smaller towns of this most interesting land. For instance, many visitors are often surprised to discover that London wasn't always the nation's capital.

And getting out of the city is easy to do. The UK has a fairly good public transport system – both by bus or train. As a result, all the journeys in this book can be made after breakfast and you can be back in your hotel room and tucked up in bed by night time.

But train and bus schedules do change. As a result, we've resisted including any departure and arrival times. However we have included website links for the most up-to-date information.

Train travel is frequently cheaper after 10am but check that any cheap ticket does not restrict your return journey to after 6 pm or later. Please buy a ticket before you board the train, ticket inspectors are not the most sympathetic of creatures. Tickets can be bought from sales desks and machines around most stations.

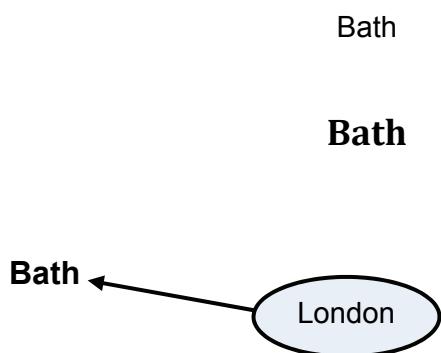
If there are two adults, and especially if you are travelling with children, one of the adults should buy a

Network Card. This allows family discounts on train travel to and from London if your journey is outside commuting time. The discount can be sizable, with children often travelling free and each adult ticket reduced by approximately one third.

Coach travel is often, although not always, cheaper than train. We tend to use the term 'bus' to refer to travel within a city. A 'coach' refers to buses that travel between towns – much like the old coach and horses of times gone by. Most coaches from London leave from Victoria Coach Station, not far from the Victoria train and tube stations.

Please note that this book is not an in-depth guide. Instead, we hope to provide information on where you can go from London in a day, how to get there and a brief taste of what each place might offer. Longer trips out of London require more extensive, and expensive, guide books.

Have fun with your explorations.



Distance from London: 100 miles or 160 kilometres

Why visit?

Bath is a compact Georgian town that is probably most famous for its Roman Baths. However, its Georgian architecture means it has been the setting for many Jane Austen novels and films based on her work.

Brief history

Mineral hot springs have made the area attractive to people since prehistoric times. The ancient Celts worshipped the Goddess Sulis at the springs, and King Bladud, father of King Lear, is said to have cured himself of leprosy by rolling around in the mud where the hot springs bubbled to the surface.

The Romans built a fort, Aqua Sulis, here in AD 60 and dedicated it to the Roman Goddess Minerva. As the Roman settlement grew, the springs were plumbed to

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create public baths with plunge pools, drainage, heated rooms, beautiful terraces and temples.

The area has a strong connection with King Arthur, who fought to keep the Celtic tribes free from being overrun and over-ruled by the Saxons. Eventually the Saxons did make a successful invasion, and Bath grew in such importance that Saxon kings were crowned here. Large monasteries accrued wealth, and the city had to have large fortifications to protect its riches from Viking invasions.

The settlement grew further in medieval times as a market centre for the wool and cloth trade, attracting both small and large farmers.

However, the town became truly fashionable in the 18th century when a wealthy benefactor sought to improve the city. Ralph Allen was a post master who achieved prominence by developing a new system for delivering mail. He wanted Bath to be beautiful. Two architects, a father and son team known as John Woods, the elder and younger, gave Bath its wide spacious streets. This offered a sharp contrast to the overcrowded lanes in London. Local quarries of Bath stone were used to create the beautifully curved buildings with their perfect symmetry and proportions. The style was copied from a 16th century Venetian architect, Andrea Palladio, hence the style now known as Palladian architecture.

The new architectural style brought the city a refined air, which duly attracted a refined populace. The city's Master of Ceremonies at this time was Richard Nash, better known as 'Beau'. He was an Oxford University drop-out, a gambler and a dandy. But he knew how to

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attract stylish people to the city. Many rented rooms, floors and even whole houses so they could spend the social season here. Bath became a place to see and be seen. As a result, Bath is the setting for many of Jane Austen's wealthier characters.

Today Bath is a World Heritage Site and one of the most beautiful cities in England with Roman, Georgian, Victorian and modern attractions.

How to get here

Train

From London Paddington Station, trains run approximately every 30 minutes and the journey takes 1 hour and 40 minutes.

Visit www.thetrainline.com

Train info. tel: 08457 48 49 50

On arrival, walk $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north on Manvers Street, past the Southgate shopping area, to reach The Roman Baths and The Pump Rooms. Other sites are within walking distance.

Bus

The coach journey takes more than 3 hours in each direction.

For information visit

www.nationalexpress.com

Walk north on Southgate Street and onto Stall Street, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, to reach The Roman Baths and The Pump Rooms.

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Places to see

Roman Baths

Much of the Roman building was lost to the city until the 1720s when sewers were being dug and workers uncovered the huge bronze head of the Goddess Minerva. Archaeological work has since revealed the full workings of the Roman baths.

Allow approximately two hours to tour the spring, temple and the baths. Despite its two thousand year history, the site is remarkably well preserved with reservoir, drainage and treatment pools. The baths contain the only mineral hot spring in England, and its temperature, a cosy 46°C or 115°F.

www.romanbaths.co.uk

Admission includes free audio tours in several languages.

If you are planning to visit the Fashion Museum then you can combine tickets and save money.

Fashion Museum

Both men and women's clothing from the 17th century to present day are on display. In addition, visitors can try on replica 18th century corsets and crinolines, while children can dress themselves in Victorian costume. Those who want to see more than the fashion collection can book ahead and visit the Fashion Museum Study Facilities – email fashion_bookings@bathnes.gov.uk

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In addition to historic fashions, the museum hosts contemporary looks from famous designers. As expected, this collection is constantly changing.

Audio guides are available.

www.fashionmuseum.co.uk

The museum can be found at the Assembly Rooms, Bennett Street, a monumental building in its own right as it was the gathering place for Georgian parties and balls.

Bath Abbey

Construction began in the 15th century, but it was built over an older Norman church. The honey-coloured stone supports a wonderful fan-shaped, vaulted ceiling.

You can climb to the top of the Abbey tower for a wonderful view over Bath (however, you must pay for this access).

The Pump Room

This was the fashionable place to ‘take the waters’ in the 18th century. The mineral waters that come from the local spring were said to have health benefits, and Georgians flocked here to enjoy the benefits. A fountain here still provides drinking water from the mineral springs – 50p a cup. A restaurant offers traditional food and often a musical trio provides entertainment.

Pulteney Bridge and weir

This 18th century bridge is one of only four bridges in the world with shops bordering both sides. Small cafes and bars sit immediately beneath the bridge and give a terrific view of the River Avon and the boats that pass

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there. A rare Victorian post box sits on the east bank of the river.

Crossing the bridge will take you to Great Pulteney Street. The Georgian architecture here has made it the perfect backdrop for period films, including *Vanity Fair* with Reese Witherspoon.

Tourist boats leave from here in decent weather.

Jane Austen Centre

Jane Austen lived in Bath in the early 19th century. As a result, the city features in two of her novels, *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*. Much of Bath's architecture remains Georgian and it is easy to imagine Austen's heroines in the city streets.

The Jane Austen Centre celebrates everything about Jane Austen novels and the era. You can see reproductions of Regency clothing, dances, musical instruments and learn the social norms of her time. Exhibits also tell visitors about the author's life and family, bringing the writer herself to life.

<http://www.janeausten.co.uk/>

American Museum

This is only museum of Americana outside the USA. The aim is to improve Anglo-American understanding, and the display of maps, furniture, quilts and other ephemera certainly does that. The museum is set in a 19th century manor house.

To visit, by bus from the city centre: Take the Orange bendy bus – no 18 or 418; or the blue bus to the university, U18. Get off at the university campus and walk

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downhill for about half a mile. The museum is well signposted.

A taxi from the train station to the museum takes about 15 minutes.

www.americanmuseum.org

Sally Lunn's Refreshment House and Museum

This is oldest house in Bath, built in 1483, and it is now a living museum showing the original kitchen used by Sally Lunn, a refugee who arrived in Bath in 1680. She brought her baking skills and introduced townspeople to a brioche-style bun, which became popular for breakfasts and mid-afternoon tea. A tea shop and restaurant serve Sally's bun. However it is the old kitchen that Sally would have used that is well worth a visit.

The kitchen is in the basement and forms part of the free museum.

Bath's beautiful architecture

The Georgian streets around Royal Crescent can be viewed by walking north from the station or west from the Pulteney Bridge toward The Circus (or by taking one of the tours).

No. 1 Royal Crescent – this restored house is open to the public and provides a wonderful window on life in 18th century Bath. Each room has authentic furnishings, paintings, wall hangings and carpets. The kitchen, below the stairs, is fully decked in Georgian manner. In every room there are story-telling guides who bring the house, and the era, to life.

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Tours

Bus

A bus tour of the city on an open-topped bus takes you to the main sites and to the outskirts of the city. The ticket allows you to get off and on the bus at each site.

Tel: 01225 330444

Email: hg@bathbuscompany.com

www.bathbuscompany.com

Guided Walking Tours

A free daily tour last two hours. It leaves from outside the Abbey Churchyard at the entrance to the Pump Room.

Times are Sunday to Friday at 10.30 am and 2 pm; Saturday at 10.30 am.

www.bathguides.org.uk

Jane Austen Walking Tours

Guides take you to the places where Jane lived and the settings for her novels. This tour begins at the Abbey Churchyard at 11am each day and takes around 1½ hours.

http://www.janeausten.co.uk/walking_tours.shtml

Tel: 01225 443000

Boat

A tour of Bath from the River Avon, takes 1 hour and leaves from Pulteney Bridge

<http://www.bathcityboattrips.com/>

Bookings Tel: 07974 560197

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Interesting facts

Jane Austen did not enjoy Bath. Social etiquette of the time meant that, as a relatively poor relative and unmarried, she had little status. In addition, she had to suffer the pretentious customs which gave rank to those from prominent families.

Bath has given its name to many inventions, including:
Bath chairs – the early wheelchair.
Bath buns – a sweet baked dough, topped with sugar.

Tourist Office

Bath Tourist Information Centre
Abbey Churchyard
Bath
BA1 1LY
E-mail: tourism@bathtourism.co.uk
<http://visitbath.co.uk/>

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