

Destination Wessex

The heart of ancient England



Corsham Court



Historic Houses of Wessex



WESSEX was the Saxon kingdom that conquered its rivals and created England. Its core was the area that is now Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire. As can be seen from the map on the right, it is readily accessible from London, its airports and the Eurotunnel.

The area has a great variety of historical, outdoor and cultural attractions that can offer memorable holidays to suit a very broad range of interests, in what is a relatively compact area. Travel between attractions is never very far and there is certainly no need to change hotels every night.

This e-brochure will introduce you to some of the "Historic Houses of Wessex". To obtain more detailed information on any or all of them, please contact us at the e-mail address shown below or check the website of the houses concerned.

Call +44 (0)1 258 489444 or email: info@destinationwessex.org.uk

A selection of Wessex houses



Bishop's Palace, Wells

Athelhampton House & Gardens, nr. Dorchester. Athelhampton is one of the finest 15th century manors in England. Built in 1485, it is an exceptional example of early Tudor architecture, set in an award winning garden. www.athelhampton.co.uk.

Beaulieu, nr. Brockenhurst, Hampshire. The Palace House, once the gatehouse of 13th century Beaulieu Abbey, became the home of the Montagu family following the dissolution of the Abbey by Henry VIII in 1539. www.beaulieu.co.uk

Bishop's Palace, Wells, Somerset. The Palace has been the residence of the Bishop of Wells since the 13th century when King John granted the land. It is moated and in a very restful setting. www.bishopspalacewells.co.uk

Bowood House and Gardens, Calne, Wiltshire. Construction began in 1720. The present owners, the Lansdowne family took it over in 1754. It is a beautifully proportioned Georgian home. Especially notable is the Robert Adam wing. www.bowood.org

Breamore House, Fordingbridge, Hampshire. This fine Elizabethan manor house was completed in 1583 and has been largely unchanged over the years. It contains a fine collection of 17th and 18th century works of art. www.breamorehouse.com

Clevedon Court, Clevedon, North Somerset. The house was built in 1320 by St. John de Clevedon incorporating a massive 13th century tower and great hall. Much of the original house is still evident. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Corsham Court, Corsham, Wiltshire. The present Elizabethan house was built in 1582. It was altered in the 18th century to house a collection of Italian and Flemish paintings and other works of art. www.corshamcourt.co.uk

Cothay Manor, Wellington Somerset. Often regarded as one of the finest small classic medieval manor houses in England, Cothay Manor has remained almost unchanged since it was built in 1480 during the reign of Edward 1V.

Dyrham Park, nr. Bath. Dyrham Park was built in 1691-1702 by William III's Secretary of War. Much of its original furnishing remains in the great rooms, including fine paintings. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Forde Abbey, Chard, Somerset. Founded by Cistercian monks over 800 years ago, Forde Abbey was converted into a house in 1649. It contains fine paintings, furniture and outstanding Mortlake tapestries. www.fordeabbey.co.uk



Dyrham Park, East Front

Picture courtesy National Trust Photographic Library/Rupert Truman

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More historic houses to enjoy

Great Chalfield Manor, Melksham, Wiltshire.

Completed in 1480, the manor house is enhanced by a moat and a gatehouse. It has beautiful oriel windows and a great hall.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex.

Kingston Lacy, Wimborne Minster, Dorset.

Home of the Bankes family for 300 years, this 17th century house contains an outstanding collection of paintings and other works of art.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex



Spanish Room,
Kingston Lacy

Picture courtesy National Trust Photographic Library/Richard Pink

Longleat, nr Warminster, Wiltshire.

Longleat is regarded as one of the finest examples of Elizabethan architecture in Britain. The house was built in 1568 and is the home of the 7th Marquess of Bath. www.longleat.co.uk

Lytes Cary Manor, Charlton Mackerell, Somerset.

This attractive 16th century manor house has a 14th century chapel and a 15th century Great Hall. Its period interiors are complemented by a charming garden. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Mompesson House, Salisbury. An elegant and spacious 18th century house in the Cathedral Close that was featured in the award winning film, Sense and Sensibility. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Montacute House, Montacute, Dorset. An outstanding Elizabethan house set in a beautifully landscaped park. The splendid state rooms are full of period furniture, textiles and works of art. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Sherborne New Castle, Sherborne, Dorset.

Built by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1594, it is full of history and contains a fine collection of pictures, porcelain and furniture of the Tudor, Jacobean and Georgian periods.

www.sherbornecastle.com

Stourhead, Stourton, Wiltshire.

This Palladian house dates from the 1720's. It contains an outstanding Regency library, picture collection and Chippendale furniture.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Tyntesfield, North Somerset.

This Victorian mansion is an extraordinary Gothic Revival extravaganza. It offers a unique insight into nineteenth century life.

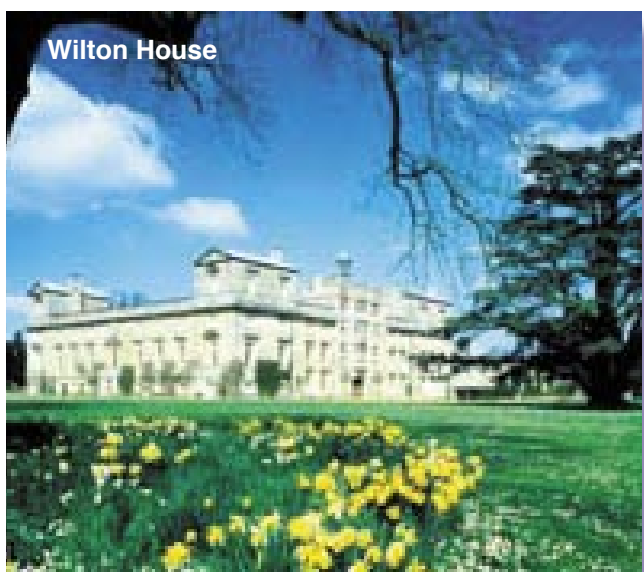
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Wilton House, Wilton, Salisbury.

The mid 16th century house was remodelled in the Palladian style by Inigo Jones and John Webb in the 1630's. The magnificent state rooms contain an outstanding collection of paintings. www.wiltonhouse.com

Wolfeton House, nr. Dorchester, Dorset.

This is a fine Elizabethan manor house with a medieval gatehouse. It contains splendid plaster ceilings, fireplaces and panelling from that time.



Wilton House



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A 3-day tour to some of these beautiful historic houses



Day 1

Leave London for the cathedral city of Salisbury. Today's tour will begin in the medieval period. When you check into your hotel, you will find it has been serving its customers for over 700 years. Your first visit will be to the 13th century Medieval Hall in the cathedral close.

Return to the hotel for lunch. Leave for nearby Wilton House, the home of the Earls of Pembroke for 450 years.

Much of the Tudor building was destroyed by fire in 1647. Inigo Jones and John Webb rebuilt the house in the Palladian style. The house has magnificent 17th century state rooms and a fine art collection.

Return to Salisbury when there will be time to visit Salisbury cathedral and take a stroll in the old city centre.

Day 2

Leave for Longleat, one of the best examples of Elizabethan architecture, set in 900 acres of parkland. It was completed in 1580 and has been home to the Marquesses of Bath and their fine art collection ever since.

Continue to Corsham Court, a fine Elizabethan house built in 1582 and substantially altered in the Georgian period. It houses a collection of 16th and 17th century Italian and Flemish paintings. Lunch will be taken in pictureque Lacock which has a magnificent abbey founded in 1232.

After lunch and a stroll in the village, the next stop will be at Dyrham Park, built in 1691-1702 by William III's Secretary of War and set in 274 acres of garden and parkland. Its rooms contain much of the original furniture plus fine paintings and textiles.

Continue to Bath and check into your hotel.

Day 3

Begin with a visit to the Building of Bath Museum and a presentation on the creation of Georgian Bath.

After that, a tour of the city will include a walk from the Royal Crescent down through the Circus to Queen Square.

Featured will be No.1 Royal Crescent, a carefully restored Georgian house, the Assembly Rooms and the Jane Austen Centre.

After lunch there will be a tour of the world renowned Roman Baths, opened almost 2,000 years ago. You will then visit the famous Pump Room.

After a short break back in your hotel you will return to London.

Longleat House



About Destination Wessex

DESTINATION WESSEX is a private sector non profit organisation that brings together an area which, in terms of quality and variety, has one of the greatest concentrations of English heritage.

It is an area that, with the exception of Bath and Stonehenge, has not been marketed as extensively overseas as its attractions warrant. Our aim is to change this.

Destination Wessex is a group of leading attraction and accommodation providers in the Wessex area. It is supported by the National Trust, English Heritage and the Historic Houses Association and is headed by a team of senior tourism professionals.

Our role is to interest you in what Wessex has to offer, invite you to come and visit us and put you in touch with business partners in Wessex. It is to assist you in whatever way we can to provide what you need to attract your clients and send them home happy.

If you have any questions about Wessex, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Michael Mounde,
Chairman



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