



Home of honeyed towns, rolling hills and dramatic valleys, the Cotswolds is a stunning region to explore by both foot and car. Touring the Cotswolds by car is a quick way to explore a lot of the region whilst soaking up much of its natural beauty. Continue reading to discover some of the region's most popular driving routes, as well as some hidden gems too.

The Best Cotswolds Drives for Exploring the Region:

The Cotswolds' landscape is beautiful; full of romantic honey-coloured buildings, old traveller's pubs, village ponds and the bustling market squares. The rich and diverse history of the Cotswolds is perfectly captured within the many towns that encompass this region. You have [Stow-on-the-Wold](#), which dates back to Roman times, and parts of Gloucester that herald from the Anglo-Saxon era. There really is something for everyone in the Cotswolds. So whether you prefer the busy town centre of regency Cheltenham, the village atmosphere of [Bourton-on-the-Water](#), or the peace and quiet of [Woodstock](#), check out our driving roads to help you get the best out of touring the Cotswolds.

1. Painswick & Laurie Lee Countryside

Painswick is a small Gloucestershire village and a great starting point to travel around the Cotswolds. Taking the A46 from Painswick, you can travel up the valley where you have great views of Cheltenham and Gloucester. Alternatively, head south towards [Stroud](#) and enjoy spectacular views, as you get closer to the royal residence of Gatcombe Park.

There are many smaller country roads leading off from the A46 that will take you to the tiny villages such as Slad, Edge and Bisley, offering traditional pubs and great shops. Slad (and The Woolpack pub) is especially noteworthy given its link to Laurie Lee and the famous book "Cider With Rosie". The local pub serves very good food and on a clear day, the views are simply stunning.

2. The Medieval Town of Burford

Described by Forbes Magazine as “one of the best places in the world to live”, [Burford](#) is perhaps the most recognisable of Cotswold locations. In terms of the touring options and villages to see, there is the A40 which runs across the top of Burford, forming a good framework with the A44. This particular route will take you through Woodstock and Chipping Norton, to the beautiful towns of Moreton-in-Marsh and Stow-on-the-Wold.



Those from outside the Cotswolds like to call this collection of locations as “the Golden Triangle”. Here you will find some of the most idyllic chocolate box villages of the entire region. Places such as Kingham, Churchill, Broadwell, Bledington, Oddington are all very ‘sought after’ villages too.

3. Broadway & the Northern Cotswolds

Taking the A44 from Broadway and heading up to Evesham, you can then drive back down towards Tewkesbury via the A46. You’ll pass beautiful stately homes, historical churches and charming villages such as Bishop’s Cleeve, Woodmancote and the Saxon borough of Winchcombe. Situated at the foot of Cleeve’s Hill, you can stop and take in the breath-taking views of Cheltenham and Gloucester. Carry on back to Broadway or you can divert across to Northleach, from there you can travel down to Cirencester and the Cerneys, renowned for their water parks.

Unlike “The Golden Triangle”, this area is perhaps a little less known. The villages are still very typical of the Cotswolds, offering some stunning charm with some of the most untouched architecture. Villages such as Stanton (be sure to check out The Mount pub), Paxford, Buckland Laverhill and Snowhill are such examples.

4. Cheltenham, Winchcombe & the Western Cotswolds

Cheltenham is another ideal starting point for your tour around the Cotswolds. Located on the western fringes of the Cotswold Hills, you can take the A40 towards Charlton’s Kings towards Andoversford. Here you’ll pass wonderful landscapes that include forests, wooded areas and reservoirs. Carry on through to Shipton and then take the A436 to Crickley Hill Country Park, set against the beautiful backdrop of the Cotswolds Hills. You can divert off this track and explore the

many villages and towns above this road, such as Leckhampton and Shurdington, or carry on through to Brickhampton, ending back at Cheltenham town centre.



An alternative route would be to head north towards Winchcombe on the B4632. Just as you enter Winchcombe, take the turning towards Charlton Abbots, which will eventually bring you to the A40. Turn off at any time and you will head deeper into the Cotswolds Hills – and who knows what you will find.