

# Best beds: The Cotswolds

Location, vibe or price? Whatever you want, we've got it sussed. Here's the how and why

	
<b>The sprawling estate: Lucknam Park</b>	<b>The B&amp;B: Calcot Peak House</b>
<b>PRICE</b> No two rooms are the same at this centuries-old pile, so there are <b>six different tariffs</b> , from £340, B&B. Check for offers, mind: you can get that down to £255 (01225 742777, lucknampark.co.uk).	There are three bedrooms: a double and a twin (from £95, B&B), and a single (from £75, B&B). Only one party can book at a time — so if you're a couple, <b>you'll have the place to yourself</b> (01285 721047, sawdays.co.uk).
<b>LOCATION</b> Right on the Cotswolds' southern, less pretty, tip. The hotel has <b>200 glorious green hectares of its own</b> , though — that's practically a whole Cotswold!	<b>Surrounded by walkable fields</b>
<b>THE VIBE</b> Leather-bound volumes in the library, livery at the stables, a Michelin star for the restaurant... <b>it ought to be stuffy here</b> , but the young staff and sleek new spa/brasserie wing keep things feeling fresh.	Stylishly homely: <b>tartan carpet and antler lampshades</b> inside; hill-view patio for a glass of wine outside. You're in owners Alex and Tom Pearson's home, but the private living room and landing ensure privacy.
<b>ROOMS</b> <b>Four-posters, fireplaces, swags &amp; sash windows</b>	Bedrooms are muted, with pristine white linen and <b>cashmere blankets, elegant fireplaces and botanical prints</b> on the pale grey walls. The bathroom is shared, but rooms have Art Deco sinks.
<b>FOOD &amp; DRINK</b> Dinner in the posh resto is memorable — though perhaps <b>more for its elegance than the food itself</b> — but at the brasserie, the menus barely change, so you may get bored over a long weekend.	Alex makes delicious cakes for tea, and lavish breakfasts, including her own Bircher muesli, and <b>eggs from the speckled hens clucking round the garden.</b> 
<b>BEST THING</b> The spa. Country-house hotels often pass off old basements that way, but this one's a spacious, curvaceous beauty: you could spend whole days (for free!) in its <b>theatrically steaming indoor/outdoor hot tub.</b>	The <b>well-stocked, on-the-house drinks cabinet</b> in the living room; slurp a homemade sloe gin by the log fire.
<b>WORST THING</b> There's all those hectares — and bikes to borrow, too — but when we asked about suggestions for a nice walk or cycle, we got <b>shrugs and blank looks.</b>	There's <b>no shower cubicle</b> , just an attachment on the bath (though that is huge, and thoroughly wallow-worthy). And fibre optics haven't made it this far, so wi-fi is patchy, as are phone signals.
<b>TRAVEL TIP</b> Lucknam's money shot is <b>driving up the avenue of 400 trees</b> (used to hide Spitfires in WWII). Arrive by daylight, because it's wasted in the dark. 	Go to St Peter & St Paul Church in near by Northleach on a Sunday morning and you might catch local resident <b>Steve Winwood playing the organ.</b>


<b>The country house: Buckland Manor</b>
Classic doubles start at £195, B&B; <b>pay £35 more for your own patio</b> in the small deluxe Garden room, or from £480 for the gorgeous double-aspect Vaulted room (01386 852626, bucklandmanor.co.uk).
Near Broadway, in the north of the Cotswolds. Neighbouring Stanton is the kind of village <b>you'd expect to see in a Sunday-evening Austen adaptation.</b>
<b>Old-fashioned, in a reassuringly elegant way</b> — expect tennis and croquet in summer, cosy corners and blazing fires in winter. Great for a hushed, grown-up escape. 
All 15 rooms are in the main house, and all have <b>oak panelling, heavy wools and velvets and lashings of figurines and pot plants.</b> There's no kettle, but a morning tea tray and paper are delivered to your room.
Menus impressed the AA inspectors, who awarded it three rosettes; chef Will Guthrie's dishes make <b>excellent use of local ingredients</b> — breast of Adlestrop partridge with pearl barley and mulled plums, say.
<b>Brill service — the GM is a Jeevesian pro</b>
The thermostat's set for the comfort of older guests, so the <b>bedrooms can get a bit stuffy</b> in winter.
Ask nicely and you can borrow <b>Oscar, the hotel's golden labrador</b> , for a walk round the grounds or along the Cotswold Way, which runs just behind the hotel.

WORDS: LIZ EDWARDS; ED GRENBY; PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY; MAP: ROBERT LITTLEFORD


<b>The townhouse: The Feathers</b>
Doubles start at £159, B&B, but if you're in the market for an upgrade, go for a Feature room (from £199) — No. 28 has <b>great views down Market Street</b> (01993 812291, feathers.co.uk).
On the eastern edge of the Cotswolds, <b>on the doorstep of Churchill's stately birthplace</b> , Blenheim Palace, in tourist-beloved Woodstock.
Clients are a mix of mini-breakers, booze hounds ( <b>the bar has 253 varieties of gin</b> ) — and film crews. Cast members from Bond film <i>Spectre</i> holed up here while filming at Blenheim Palace.
Antique pieces (suite 4 has a bust of Churchill) are mixed with contemporary art, patterned wallpaper and <b>funky upholstery in bold colours</b> ; beds are big and super-comfy; bathrooms spotlessly modern.
Dinner is a sophisticated affair — the tasting menu is a good-value £55. And there's the gin bar — go local (Cotswolds Distillery gin) and exotic ( <b>1724 tonic made from quinine berries picked on the Inca Trail</b> ).
Sunny day? Make a beeline for the <b>lovely sheltered courtyard.</b>
<b>The bar can feel like a waiting room</b>
The Feathers doesn't have a car park, so parking can be tricky. <b>But ignore the parking restriction signs</b> — the rules have changed and if you've bagged a space, keep it.


<b>The pub with rooms: The Porch House</b>
The Standard doubles, from £99, B&B, are small, but <b>you're away from the pub hubbub</b> . Superior and Feature rooms (from £129 and £159, B&B) have more character (01451 870048, porch-house.co.uk).
North Cotswolds, in the heart of Stow-on-the-Wold — <b>prime antiques-hunting territory</b> . Have a good rummage through the bric-a-brac in Vintage & Paint, a few doors down.
As you'd hope from England's oldest inn (it dates back to 947AD), the Porch House has <b>nooks and crannies for every mood</b> — leather-banquette dining room, games-filled snug or flagstoned bar.
<b>Comfort, charm and character</b> are the watchwords here, with handmade Feather & Black mattresses and hot-water bottles hanging from bathroom doors. 
Bring an appetite: from oozy Welsh rarebit to roast Barbary duck breast, the food is hearty stuff. A <b>stand-out breakfast spread is served in the conservatory</b> , including honeycomb and crumpets.
<b>Free tea, toast and newspaper in bed</b>
There's that usual incompatibility between old properties and accessibility: the main building is a bit of a <b>higgledy-piggledy warren of corridors and sometimes narrow staircases.</b>
Don't fancy Stow's chintzier tearooms? The retro-trendy Burrow Cafe on Sheep Street does top-notch coffee, <b>homemade cakes and vintage board games.</b>

**Or try...**

<b>£89 The Fish</b> <b>Because:</b> The family-friendly Fish, near Broadway, has 67 relaxed, Scandinavian rooms and 160 hectares of grounds to romp (or Segway) through; under-3s stay free. Doubles from £89, B&B (01386 858000, thefishhotel.co.uk).	<b>£120 The Plough Inn</b> <b>Because:</b> This lovely Kelmscott pub has recently been fancied up, with great British food, sunny garden benches and cosy bedrooms. Doubles from £120, B&B (01367 253543, theploughinnkelmscott.com).
<b>£110 Windy Ridge Estate</b> <b>Because:</b> This rambling old B&B outside Stow-on-the-Wold isn't over-polished — but that's part of the charm, along with its huge arboretum. Doubles from £110, B&B (01451 830465, windy-ridge.co.uk).	<b>£175 The Wild Rabbit</b> <b>Because:</b> The cute kid's four-poster in the Hedgehog room is a highlight in Kingham's organic, rustic-luxe village-pub-come-restaurant. Doubles from £175, B&B (01608 658389, thewildrabbit.co.uk).

**Get me there**

**Avis** (0808 284 5566, avis.co.uk) has three-day rentals from cities, including London (£94), Cardiff (£75) and Manchester (£80). For trains and coaches, check **National Rail** (nationalrail.co.uk) and **National Express** (nationalexpress.com). See [cotswolds.com](http://cotswolds.com).

