

# History & heritage

Journey back in time with England's many historic sites. This little land has been the playground for mighty empires, swashbuckling pirates, brutal monarchs and academic greats. Ponder mysterious Stonehenge, marvel at towering gothic cathedrals and bathe in the Romans' beloved hot springs.



> Ironbridge Gorge © VisitBritain



> Oxford © VisitBritain

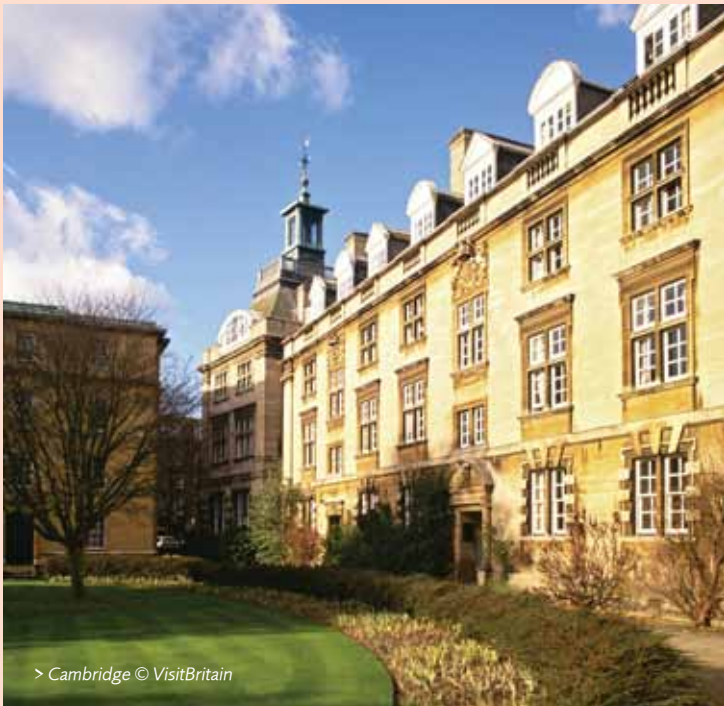


> Liverpool © VisitBritain

## 1 Ironbridge Gorge, Shropshire

Walk across the world's first cast iron bridge arching over the River Severn at this leafy gorge in Shropshire. In the 18th century, the area's iron manufacturing helped kick-start the Industrial Revolution. Today, Ironbridge is a tranquil UNESCO World Heritage Site with 10 museums documenting its heritage. Among them is Blists Hill Victorian Town: an open-air museum re-enacting Victorian life.

[www.ironbridgeguide.info](http://www.ironbridgeguide.info)



> Cambridge © VisitBritain

## 2 Cheddar Cave and Gorge, Somerset

Artefacts dating back to the Late Stone Age, as well as Britain's oldest complete skeleton, have been unearthed within the caverns of this rocky gorge in Somerset's Mendip Hills. Explore ancient limestone caves adorned with rising stalagmites, dipping stalactites, intricate rock formations and dark chambers, and browse the Museum of Prehistory for an insight into prehistoric survival.

[www.cheddargorge.co.uk](http://www.cheddargorge.co.uk)



> Stonehenge © VisitBritain

## 3 Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites, Wiltshire

There are several theories as to why hulking stones were hauled from Wales to the grasses of Salisbury Plain more than 5,000 years ago. But whatever their true purpose, Stonehenge's ring of trilithons is a truly magical spectacle. The monument is part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site that includes the stone circle at nearby Avebury, plus smaller sites such as human-made chalk mound Silbury Hill.

[www.whc.unesco.org](http://www.whc.unesco.org)

## 4 The university towns of Cambridge and Oxford

Known throughout the world for their prestigious universities, vibrant Oxford and elegant Cambridge are delightful cities to explore, fusing historic architecture and long-standing traditions with rich contemporary culture. Admire beautifully preserved college buildings, enjoy old-world pubs and pristine green spaces, and partake in the waterborne traditions of punting and rowing along Cambridge's tranquil River Cam, and the Cherwell or Thames in Oxford.

[www.visitcambridge.org](http://www.visitcambridge.org)

[www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com](http://www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com)

## 5 Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City

Historic dockland, lofty red-brick warehouses and a stone pier adorned with noteworthy architecture are celebrated as part of this UNESCO World Heritage Site in Liverpool. Spanning six locations across this rejuvenated northern city's centre, this protected area of maritime and trading heritage hails back to Liverpool's days as a busy global trading centre and one of England's most important ports.

[www.visitliverpool.com](http://www.visitliverpool.com)

# History & heritage



> Leeds Castle © VisitBritain



> Hadrian's Wall © VisitBritain



> Durham Cathedral © VisitBritain



> Bath © VisitBritain

## 6 City of Bath

This golden-stone beauty swathed in Cotswolds countryside has been enchanting visitors for centuries. The whole of the city of Bath is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site, featuring exquisite Roman baths and an ornate abbey dating back to the 1400s. Bath is also a fine example of Georgian architecture; see sweeping terraces, stately townhouses and the formidable Pulteney Bridge bowing over the River Avon.

[www.visitbath.co.uk](http://www.visitbath.co.uk)

## 7 Hadrian's Wall

The sturdy base of the Roman Empire's mighty stone frontier Hadrian's Wall can still be found running through the windswept wilds of the north. Built in AD122, this immense feat of engineering took more than six years to complete, and in its heyday is estimated to have been over 15ft high. A 135km path follows much of the wall's original line, taking in stirring views and Roman forts along the way.

[www.hadrians-wall.org](http://www.hadrians-wall.org)

## 8 England's cathedral cities

Soaring cathedral spires dominate many historic English skylines. Find gothic cathedrals and medieval streets in the walled cities of Chester and York, while Durham is home to a colossal Norman beauty. Visit pretty and compact Chichester and see the cathedral's free-standing bell tower, and in Salisbury admire the tallest spire in the UK. Other charming English cathedral cities include Winchester and Canterbury.

[www.visitchester.com](http://www.visitchester.com)

[www.visitthecityofyork.org](http://www.visitthecityofyork.org)

[www.thisisdurham.com](http://www.thisisdurham.com)

[www.visitchichester.org](http://www.visitchichester.org)

[www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/salisbury](http://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/salisbury)

## 9 Leeds Castle, Kent

Standing astride two islands, this glorious castle in Kent is straight from the pages of a fairy tale. Leeds Castle has welcomed a bevy of English royalty across its moat – six medieval queens and Henry VIII are just some of its elite former residents. The interior sports lavish antiques and furnishings, and spacious grounds are home to a giant aviary and clipped-hedge maze.

[www.leeds-castle.com](http://www.leeds-castle.com)

## 10 Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland

High on its rocky platform by the North Sea, Bamburgh Castle is an arresting sight indeed. While the current castle exterior was built in late Victorian times, the historical significance of this site harks back thousands of years. Archaeological digs at Bamburgh show there have been settlements on this spot since prehistoric times, with excavated treasures including a seventh-century Anglo Saxon sword.

[www.bamburghcastle.com](http://www.bamburghcastle.com)



> Bamburgh Castle © VisitBritain

# History & heritage



> Greenwich © VisitBritain



> Sulgrave Manor © VisitBritain



> Sudeley Castle © VisitBritain

## 11 Sulgrave Manor, Northamptonshire

Take a guided tour around the ancestral home of George Washington, the first president of the United States. Sulgrave Manor's carefully restored rooms are bedecked with beautiful antiques and textiles, and highlights include an oak-panelled parlour, the Great Hall with its yawning Tudor fireplace, and a collection of George Washington memorabilia. Outside flourish manicured gardens and rolling countryside beyond.

[www.sulgravemanor.org.uk](http://www.sulgravemanor.org.uk)

## 12 Maritime Greenwich, London

The Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site in southeast London salutes the area's world-class architecture and scientific accomplishments. Architect Sir Christopher Wren's Baroque beauty, the Old Royal Naval College, proudly decorates the waterfront, the restored illustrious tea clipper the Cutty Sark stands tall and Anglo-Saxon burial mounds await in Greenwich Park – as does Wren's Royal Observatory, home of the Prime Meridian.

[www.visitgreenwich.org.uk](http://www.visitgreenwich.org.uk)

## 13 Tower of London

See the exquisite Crown Jewels, which have adorned England's kings and queens for centuries, on display inside this formidable ancient castle by the River Thames. The Tower of London's long and dark history is documented in its historic exhibits and restored rooms. Hear about the tales and traditions on one of the Yeoman Warders' atmospheric tours.

[www.hrp.org.uk](http://www.hrp.org.uk)



> Tower of London © VisitBritain

## Hidden Gems



> Bristol © VisitBritain

## 14 River Wey and Godalming Navigations and Dapdune Wharf, Surrey

Winding through rural Surrey, this historic set of waterways was once a vital transportation route for goods bound for London. Learn about the area's history with the interactive exhibits at the Dapdune Wharf visitor centre, and step aboard the Reliance – one of the last river barges. Join a boat trip for the best way of seeing more of the area.

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

## 15 Bristol Pirate Walks

Learn about Bristol's pirate history on a fun, family-friendly pirate walk. Pirate Pete leads this one-hour tour around Bristol's revitalised harbourside, hunting out Blackbeard's Lair and Long John Silver's Treasure Chest, and revealing time-worn secrets about the city's maritime past. The tour includes a potted history of Bristol's pirates, press gangs and the city's role in the slave trade.

[www.piratewalks.co.uk](http://www.piratewalks.co.uk)

## 16 Sudeley Castle, Cotswolds

The marble tomb of Henry VIII's sixth and final wife, Catherine Parr, lies in the church at Sudeley Castle, a historic Gloucestershire residence encircled by nine contrasting gardens. Travel back to the 15th century in the castle's west wing, with its coach house and banqueting hall, and see inside the family's private rooms on a guided tour. Sudeley Castle is open April to October.

[www.sudeleycastle.co.uk](http://www.sudeleycastle.co.uk)