

Astronomy in the South Downs

Destinations: South Downs & England

Trip code: AWWAB



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Join our professor to learn about stars and how they evolve into objects like pulsars – the ‘lighthouses’ of the universe - and black holes, with their incredible gravitational pull. You’ll learn amazing facts about the eight planets in our solar system plus the myriad now being found further away. We will discuss the various on-going studies seeking to discover whether or not life exists elsewhere in the universe. Enjoy free afternoons to explore the local area; our Discovery Points are full of ideas. Each evening (weather permitting), you’ll observe the night sky with an eight-inch telescope from the grounds of the house. The scope is powerful enough to see our nearest planets, including Saturn.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- High-quality Full Board en-suite accommodation and excellent food in our country house
- Guidance from a knowledgeable HF Holidays Leader, to ensure you get the most from your holiday
- All essential transport on a comfortable, good-quality mini-coach or other mode of transport, e.g. boat
- Entrance fees to venues included as part of your holiday's itinerary

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Morning talks and discussions from your expert leader

- Free afternoons to explore the local area independently
- Discover and view objects in the night sky each evening, weather permitting

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

You can check-in to your room from 2.30pm onwards (better rooms from 1pm). We invite everyone to afternoon tea. This is the first occasion when everyone in the country house meets together – an opportunity to meet your leader and fellow guests, and find out more about your holiday.

Day 2: Stars & Galaxies

On the first morning we learn about the different types of stars, how they evolve in to exotic objects like pulsars and black holes, and how they are arranged in galaxies. In the evening (weather permitting), we will observe the night sky from the grounds of the House.

Day 3: Planets & Life

On the second morning we will learn about planets, both in our solar system and the myriad of planets being found around other stars. We will discuss the various on-going studies to discover if life exists elsewhere in the universe.

Day 4: Departure Day

Depart after a leisurely breakfast.

ACCOMMODATION

Abingworth Hall

Tucked away in the village of Thakeham at the foot of the South Downs, Abingworth Hall has stood in one form or another since the 13th century. Gutted by fire, it was rebuilt in 1910 in its current distinctive style. As well as 27 ensuite rooms the house has all the ingredients you need for the perfect country house stay: three comfortable lounges with squishy sofas to kick back in, the largest of which opens onto an attractive conservatory and bar in which to dally, great food and super-comfy rooms to retire to. You're spoilt for choice when it comes to walking here; go for a lazy amble around the wildlife rich chalk Downlands to discover a colourful tapestry of historic villages, thatched cottages, pastoral landscapes and vibrant market towns. Highlights of your stay might include the Seven Sisters, the Glorious Goodwood estate, the Devil's Dyke and Chantonbury Ring, as well as Arundel and the National Trust property at Petworth. Take your pick.

Matchless Country House Accommodation

Accommodation Info

Need To Know

Important Covid-19 Steps We Have Taken For Guest Safety: Please Read

As we slowly reopen in the wake of the Coronavirus lockdown, our country house stays are set to be organised a little differently; extra steps have been taken to keep our guests, house teams and leaders safe while we return to action. We ask all our guests to respect the measures put in place.

Initially the overall capacity of the houses has been reduced. Guests must wear face coverings in public spaces. To adhere to social distancing guidelines, we have taken the necessary steps to space out furniture and seating in public areas. In addition, a one-way system will be in place around the house. Adequate signage will be displayed to support the direction of travel to be followed by guests and house teams.

As a temporary measure, we will not be servicing rooms during a stay. Extra tea, coffee, milk, and toiletries will be made available on request for all guests. It is recommended that guests bring their own toiletries for the duration of their stay. We have removed all non-essential and reusable items from our rooms for the meantime including cushions, hairdryers, bathrobes, bed throws, and printed materials to reduce the number of items that need to be disinfected. Hairdryers will be available on request. Clean towels will be available on request. We will though be increasing the frequency of cleaning in our public areas providing particular attention to frequently touched items including door handles and handrails.

For now, there is no cream tea on arrival day. We have also adapted our food offering to remove all buffets and open food items. Different sittings may be required for breakfast and dinner due to the occupancy and size of the house. Picnic lunches will now be pre-ordered the night before from an order form in the room. The bar in each country house will be open, and we will be offering a table service for drinks. At this time there is no, or only a very limited, evening social programme available. Outdoor swimming pools at those houses that have them will re-open throughout August, except at Freshwater Bay House, where the pool will remain closed for 2020. Indoor swimming pools will remain closed.

For more information and to see all the steps taken, [visit our page on how house stays will be adapted](#).

Rooms

Tea & coffee-making facilities, TV, Hairdryer, Toiletries, Wi-Fi

Stay in one of the Hall's smartly presented rooms, which make use of every nook-and-cranny in the interesting architecture of this characterful house. With 27 bedrooms, Abingworth Hall has plenty of space and there's a range of Good and Better Rooms to choose from. Clean and bright, with accent colours to offset the simple palette, the rooms are airy and light. Better Rooms might have a feature wall or strong print wallpaper as well as pretty tiles in the ensuite bathroom.

All 'Good' rooms are ensuite and furnished to a high standard. There are also several 'Better' Rooms that are either larger or have a desirable view, a more luxurious mattress and larger television – upgrade your stay for just an extra £15-25 per person per night. You can choose a specific room for an extra £30 per room, subject to availability. Upgrade supplements still apply.

Facilities

Free Wi-Fi, boot room and drying room, extensive garden, outdoor swimming pool, multi-purpose activity room, three lounges, library and board games to borrow

After a day strolling on the South Downs, come back to the house and its specially tailored walkers' facilities. Relax in the large gardens and sit by the pretty pond, turn your hand to croquet or practice on the putting green. Ease through a couple of lengths of the heated outdoor pool if you've still got energy to burn. Hole up in the light-filled conservatory with pretty views of the gardens or retire to the Drawing Room with its wood-panelled walls, log burner, library of books to browse and comfy seats to sink in to; there's a telescope for you to scour the night sky too. In the evening, take your seat in the bar or join fellow guests in the large ballroom for the evening activity.

Food & Drink

As at all our country houses, holidays are full board, from afternoon tea served as a welcome treat through that evening's meal to a hearty breakfast on the day of departure. Lunch is a chance to stock up on our famous picnic snacks. Food at Abingworth Hall is varied and tasty and has a strong emphasis on ingredients from the area and seasonal produce. Once a week the dining room, which has a giant brick fireplace at its heart, hosts a Local Food Night, when, over a sociable evening, you might try a five-course feast of local Sussex flavours. Look out for the Sussex Churdle, a traditional, meaty ploughboy lunch, local Chiddingly beef cooked with black olives and Sussex smokies, smoked haddock served in a prawn sauce. Cap it all with a Sussex Pond Pudding, a pud that's part of the honourable tradition of British dishes with names to pique the interest more than the appetite, which is actually bright and zingy, suety and syrupy all at the same time

Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on 020 3974 8865

TRAVEL DETAILS

Our address is: Abingworth Hall, Storrington Road, Thakeham, West Sussex, RH20 3EF
Tel: [01798 813636](tel:01798813636)

BY TRAIN:

The nearest railway station to Abingworth Hall is Pulborough. Please note that Pulborough station has a short platform, check the departure boards for which carriage to sit in. For train times and route planning by train visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or phone 03457 48 49 50.

BY TAXI:

The 6-mile journey from Pulborough railway station takes approximately 15 minutes. Please try to avoid arriving at Pulborough station between 2.45pm and 3.20pm, as there may not be taxis available for your onward journey to Abingworth Hall due to school pick-ups. You can pre-book a taxi from our recommended taxi company, MJ Cars. The price for a 4-seat taxi is around £16. 8-seat taxis are also available at a higher rate. Please pre-book your taxi at least 7 days in advance by contacting:

MJ Cars*
Tel: +44 (0)1903 745414
Email: mjcars@btconnect.com

The return journey can be arranged on your behalf by the Abingworth Hall Manager.

*MJ Cars is not owned or managed by HF Holidays.

BY CAR:

From the M25 take either the A24 or the M23 and then the A264 towards Horsham. At the Great Daux roundabout go south on the A24 towards Worthing. Go straight over 2 roundabouts and then at the traffic light cross roads turn right onto the A272 signposted to Billingshurst and Petersfield. After 3 miles turn left onto the B2139 (The Selsey Arms on left). After 3.5 miles pass the turning for Thakeham on the left. After half a mile,

Abingworth Hall is on the left, directly after the national speed limit signs.

From the M27 continue onto the A27 and around Chichester. At Fontwell Park roundabout take the first exit to continue on the A27 and at the next roundabout take the first exit on to the A29. After approx. 4 miles, at a roundabout, take the 2nd exit on to the B2139 to Storrington. At the mini roundabout in Storrington, take the 2nd exit onto the A283. Continue through Storrington and take the first exit at the mini roundabout by the Anchor Inn on to the B2139 towards Thakeham. Take the 2nd exit at the next mini roundabout and then take the 1st exit at next mini roundabout (by Steyning Grammar School). Continue down this road until you see 30mph signs. Abingworth Hall is just before these signs, on the right

LOCAL AREA

DISCOVER SUSSEX AND THE SOUTH DOWNS

Abingworth Hall is situated amidst gentle rolling farmland at the foot of the South Downs.

The nearest facilities are in the village of Storrington, about two miles away. Here you'll find a small supermarket, post office, newsagent, pubs and a bank.

During your stay at Abingworth Hall you may enjoy visiting the following places of interest:

Arundel

The quaint town of Arundel, about 30 minutes' drive away, is dominated by its castle, the home of the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk. During your visit you may enjoy a walk in the Castle's extensive grounds, or beside the river Arun. www.arundelcastle.org

Uppark House

Completely restored after an extensive fire, this stately National Trust property has ornate rooms and gardens. Uppark is around 50 minutes' drive from Abingworth. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/uppark

Brighton

The cosmopolitan seaside city of Brighton is about 40 minutes' drive from Abingworth Hall and has an excellent range of specialist shops, entertainment, and its famous beach. You may also enjoy a visit to the Royal Pavilion, built in the early 19th century by George IV. www.brighton-hove-rpml.org.uk

Amberley Working Museum

Just 15 minutes' drive from Abingworth Hall, this large open-air museum tells the industrial story of the downs, complete with a steam railway, vintage buses and restored quarry machinery. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Parham House

Just 10 to 15 minutes' drive away, Elizabethan Parham House is surrounded by an extensive deer park. www.parhaminsussex.co.uk

Chichester

The historic cathedral city of Chichester, about 45 minutes' drive away, has plenty of interest. Just a couple of

miles away is the fascinating Fishbourne Roman Palace, uncovered in 1960, which has many superb mosaics. www.chichestercathedral.org.uk or www.sussexpast.co.uk/fishbourne

Petworth House

A large late 17th century mansion, now run by the National Trust with extensive grounds that were landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. Around 30 minutes' drive from Abingworth. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/petworth-house

Weald & Downland Museum

Located on the Downs, near the village of Singleton, this excellent open-air museum contains many restored buildings that bring the history of Sussex to life. These include a working watermill and a re-creation of a typical downland village. The museum is around 45 minutes' drive from Abingworth. www.wealddown.co.uk

Bluebell Railway

One of Britain's premier steam railways with an impressive collection of 50 locomotives, representing the Southern Railway and its predecessors. The line runs through rolling countryside from Sheffield Park to East Grinstead, about 40 minutes' drive from Abingworth. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

What To Bring

- Warm clothing for night-time observation, including a hat and gloves
- A telescope (if you have one) and binoculars
- Small torch

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday: 9am – 1pm Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday: closed

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £20 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62

IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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