

6-Night South Downs Christmas Guided Walking Holiday

Tour Style: Guided Walking

Destinations: South Downs & England

Trip code: AWXFW-6

1 & 2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Spend the festive season in the beautiful South Downs, socialising and walking in this stunning corner of England. There's something magical about walking in winter. Whether it's the frosty footsteps, the clear crisp air, or the breathtaking views, it's a wonderful time to go walking. Join our festive breaks and choose from a guided walking holiday in the company of one of our knowledgeable leaders. We pull out all the stops on our festive holidays, with fabulous food, lots of seasonal entertainment and great walks and activities. The walks are tailored to the time of year and will remain flexible to suit the weather conditions. Each day three grades of walk will be offered. So wrap up warm, lace up your boots and go for an invigorating walk.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Wonderful meals – full selection at breakfast, your choice of picnic lunch, an excellent evening meal and plenty of festive treats
- A programme of organised walks and activities
- The services of experienced HF Holidays' guides

- A packed programme of evening activities offering something festive for everyone, including some old HF favourites
- Any transport to and from the walks

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Plenty of exercise to walk off the festive excesses
- Admire panoramic sea and cliff views
- A choice of guided walks in spectacular winter scenery
- Let a local leader bring classic routes and offbeat areas to life
- Relax, soak up the party atmosphere, enjoy wonderful festive fare and leave all the organising to us
- Look out for wildlife, find secret corners and learn about the rich history
- A relaxed pace of discovery in a sociable group keen to get some fresh air in one of England's most beautiful walking areas
- Cosy Country House and a special festive cheer
- Evening activities keep the festive atmosphere going through the evening

TRIP SUITABILITY

The walks are tailored to the time of year and will remain flexible to suit the weather conditions. Each day three grades of walk will be offered. Typically, easier walks are up to a maximum of 8 miles (12km), medium walks are up to a maximum of 10 miles (16km), while harder walks can be up to a maximum of 12 miles (19km).

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

You're welcome to check in from 4pm onwards.

Day 2: Scenic South Downs

Today's walks all head for the ancient market town of Steyning, a conservation area with more listed buildings on its High Street than almost any other town in the UK. The harder walk starts near Findon and works its way up the Downs to the Iron Age hill forts of Cissbury and Chanctonbury Rings. Starting from Washington, the medium walk also has the chance (depending upon weather and time) to see Cissbury Ring, while the easier walk pays a visit to Chanctonbury Ring.

Day 3: Through Cowdray Park To Petworth

Today's walks all finish at Petworth, a picturesque old town centred on Petworth House, built in 1688 and owned by the National Trust since 1947. The harder walk starts along a stretch of the River Rother to the west of Midhurst, passing through Cowdray Park with its ruins and polo grounds. The easier and medium walks follow some of the same route, the easier starting from the edge of Cowdray Park, the medium from the east side of Midhurst.

Day 4: Around Abingworth

The immediate area around Abingworth Hall has some fine-looking hamlets and villages like Thakeham, Warminghurst and West Chiltington. This is a great way to celebrate, why not wear some festive colours?

Day 5: Devil's Dyke And Ditchling Beacon

The High Downs provide some of the best views along the whole of the South Downs Way. We'll all see the

impressive Devil's Dyke, the starting point for our medium and harder walks which lead us through Pyecombe and along parts of the South Downs Way to end at Ditchling. Our easier walk, also ending at Ditchling, takes us past the distinctive 'Jack' and 'Jill' windmills overlooking Hassocks and Keymer.

Day 6: Amberley And The South Downs

Today we start near the picturesque village of Amberley and walk back to Abingworth Hall. Our easier option follows field paths at the foot of the Downs, passing through the grounds of Parham House, whilst the medium and harder options follow parts of the South Downs Way across the tops of the Downs.

Day 7: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

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

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 [Arundel Castle's](#) extensive grounds, or beside the tranquil river Arun.

Arundel Wetlands Centre

This 60-acre nature reserve is run by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and provides a protected habitat for a wide range of swans, geese, ducks and other wetland birds. A network of paths takes visitors to a number of viewing areas to enjoy watching the wildlife. [Arundel Wetlands Centre](#) is just outside Arundel town, about a 30-minute drive from Abingworth Hall.

Bignor Roman Villa

[Bignor Roman Villa](#) was discovered in 1811 by a man ploughing a field. This Roman home clearly belonged to a family of some consequence and features many fine mosaic floors of intricate design. It is located just outside Pulborough, about 10 miles from Abingworth Hall.

Pulborough Brooks Nature Reserve

Just 4 miles from Abingworth Hall, [Pulborough Brooks](#) is a large nature reserve in the Arun Valley managed by the RSPB. A network of nature trails take visitors into the reserve where there a range of habitats from ponds and ditches to woods and meadow. The site is an important place for over-wintering wildfowl and for nesting waders. The reserve can be reached either by road or on foot from Abingworth Hall.

Uppark House

Completely restored after an extensive fire in 1989, this stately National Trust property has ornate rooms and lovely gardens with surrounding woodlands. [Uppark House and Garden](#) is around 50 minutes' drive from Abingworth.

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 pier. You may also enjoy a visit to the [Royal Pavilion](#), built in the early 19th century by George IV.

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. [Amberley Museum](#) is just outside Amberley village which is also well worth a visit with its sleepy streets lined with thatched cottages and flower-filled gardens. The village is also home to a small [pottery](#).

Parham House

Just 10 to 15 minutes' drive away, Elizabethan [Parham House](#) is surrounded by an extensive deer park. Some of our guided walks go through the deer park.

Chichester

The historic cathedral city of Chichester, about 45 minutes' drive away, has plenty of interest. Visit the impressive [Chichester Cathedral](#) and take a walk which follows the old city walls.

Fishbourne Roman Palace

Just a couple of miles outside Chichester lies [Fishbourne Roman Palace](#), the largest residential Roman building

found in Britain. It was discovered in 1960; excavations revealed many superb mosaics.

Petworth House

A large late 17th century mansion, now run by the National Trust with extensive grounds that were landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. The surrounding deer park is home to a large herd of fallow deer. [Petworth House](#) is around 30 minutes' drive from Abingworth.

Weald & Downland Living 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 [Weald & Downland Living Museum](#) is also home to the popular BBC TV programme 'The Repair Shop'. The museum is around 45 minutes' drive from Abingworth.

Bluebell Railway

[The Bluebell Railway](#) is one of Britain's premier heritage 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.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Essential Information

"There's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong type of clothing!" goes the adage. Come prepared for all eventualities and you'll walk in comfort as well as safety. Britain's famous for its changeable weather, so here's our advice on what to wear and bring.

Essentials

- Walking boots providing ankle support and good grip.
- A waterproof jacket and over-trousers
- Gloves and a warm hat (it can be chilly at any time of the year)
- Rucksack
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
- A small torch (everywhere in winter, year round in mountains)

Recommended

- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed
- Specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- A first aid kit inc plasters– your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication
- Sit mat (insulated pad to sit on when you stop for a break)

You Might Also Want

- Walking poles, particularly useful for descents.
- Insect repellent
- Flask for hot drinks
- Rigid lunch box
- Gaiters
- Blister kit (eg Compeed) just in case
- Waterproof rucksack liner
- Sun hat and sunscreen (we may just get lucky and have some festive sunshine!)

Denim jeans and waterproof capes are not suitable on any walks.

Safety On Your Holiday

Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and minimum number of guests. Leaders always consider the safety of the group as a whole, and may need to alter or curtail the walk if the conditions dictate. Your leader may refuse to accept a guest while clothing, equipment or behaviour is unsuitable. In the event of a problem all leaders carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, group shelter, spare maps and a compass.

Please note: If you choose to leave the group your leader is no longer responsible for you.

If you have a particular health condition or disability please put this on your guest registration form. This information will be confidential to your leaders and the house manager, but leaders do need to take account of any issues when planning walks.

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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