

HF Book Club in The Cotswolds: Secrets & Spies

Destinations: Cotswolds, United Kingdom & England
Trip code: BNABC



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

For fans of fiction writing that focuses on espionage and intrigue, our Secrets & Spies Book Club break seals the deal. Not only will you get to dive deeper into this genre and explore its ever-evolving narratives, but you'll be staying in the comfort of Harrington House - our characterful country house in Bourton-on-the-Water. These holidays are the perfect way to connect with like-minded spy-fiction fans and fabulous for solo travellers looking for friendship-forming experiences.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Free-flowing literary discussions throughout your holiday
- Transport to and from venues on your excursion day
- Entry to Bletchley Park
- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee

- Easy-to-follow routes, maps, and information available in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Meeting like-minded book lovers
- Discussing a variety of literary works
- Enjoying a guided sightseeing visit
- Group discussions with our expert leaders
- Connecting with other spy fans

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 4pm. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea on arrival.

Day 2: Bletchley Park

This holiday wouldn't be complete without a visit to Bletchley Park, home of Britain's wartime code-breaking efforts, and a venue which embodies all things secrets and spies. We'll have plenty of time to explore all that Bletchley Park has to offer. Entry to the site is included in the price of this holiday.

Day 3 - 4: HF Book Club

This Book Club break will explore the shadowy world of spies and secrets as represented in literature. Your leaders will facilitate discussions about the themes and topics featured in their chosen titles and there'll be an open forum to discuss opinions.

Reading List

Agent Sonya by Ben McIntyre

Recounting the life of Ursula Kuczynski, *Agent Sonya* tells the true story about a German woman who becomes a Soviet spy. The story follows Ursula from her homeland to China, Switzerland, and finally the Cotswolds where she settles down to bake scones and run an intelligence network.

Star of the Sea by Joseph O'Connor

Set aboard an emigrant ship from Dublin to New York during the harsh winter of 1847, at the height of the potato famine *Star of the Sea* follows the stories of some of the key passengers on board whose lives, we discover, are intertwined. It is a novel full of secrets to be revealed, with a dark air of menace as a murderer tracks his victim, while all the time being spied upon himself.

Julia by Sandra Newman

Julia Worthing works in the Fiction Department at the Ministry of Truth. She knows how to survive under the iron rule of the Party and its leader, Big Brother. It is a world of constant surveillance and closely guarded secrets. But when she meets Winston Smith, she begins to lose her grip and can no longer safely navigate her world. A retelling of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, by George Orwell, this book may be read independently of the original, and there is no expectation to do so for this holiday.

Day 5: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

ACCOMMODATION

Harrington House

You get the best of all worlds at this Grade II-listed retreat just a skip away from the heart of Bourton-on-the-Water – the impossibly pretty Cotswolds town with chocolate-box cottages, old-fashioned tearooms, and low-arched stone bridges that span the River Windrush. Not only will you be within walking distance of the Cotswold Motoring Museum, the Model Village, and Birdland Wildlife Park & Gardens, but it's an easy drive from village beauties Broadway and Bibury. For walkers and hikers, there's no shortage of thrills, especially for those keen to explore the well-trodden trails and paths around the Windrush Valley, Lower and Upper Slaughter, Gloucestershire Way, Cotswold Way, and Monarch Way.

Country House Accommodation

Rooms

Designed with your comfort in mind, Harrington House has 27 well-appointed guest rooms available in three categories: Classic, Premium, and Superior.

Classic Rooms are comfortable en-suite guest rooms, ideal for a peaceful night's sleep. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, and shower gel), and a TV.

Premium Rooms are more spacious en-suite guest rooms*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

Superior Rooms are even more spacious en-suite guest rooms offering upgraded views of the surroundings*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

We love: Rooms 1 and 2 on the first floor for their master bedrooms, original Palladian design, and lovely views. Room 24 in the Windrush Cottage is a large twin room with its own private garden.

The **Choose Your Room** service is available at our UK country houses, allowing you the option of choosing and confirming a specific room for an extra charge of £30 per room. This is subject to availability. Upgrade supplements apply.

Check in & check out

You are welcome to check in from **4:00pm at the earliest**. On arrival, you'll enjoy a complimentary cream tea and get to meet your fellow guests, our HF Holidays Leaders, and the rest of the friendly team.

On the day of departure, we kindly ask all guests to check out by **10:00am**. You'll be asked to settle your bill prior to leaving. You may, of course, make a charitable donation to our HF Holidays Pathways Fund if you wish. Please note that we only accept card payments.

Room supplements

Superior	Premium single	Premium double/twin	Choose your room
£25 pppn	£20 pppn	£20 pppn	£30 per room

*Views and layout reflect each properties unique character and location

About Your Stay

A warm welcome

We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, the HF Holidays Big Pub Quiz held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays Leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Walks talks

Our HF Holidays Leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's walking delights (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

The walking day

Prior to setting off on walks, your HF Holidays Leader will run you through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure you have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.

Food & Drink

Led by experienced chefs, we serve a wide range of dishes made with fresh and seasonal ingredients. We always aim to source the best produce available and use home-grown herbs and vegetables from our own gardens whenever possible. Additionally, we have a licensed bar with beers, soft drinks, and a superb selection of spirits. Full-board comes as standard and includes a cream tea on arrival and a hearty breakfast on departure day.

HF Holidays understands the importance of managing allergens effectively to ensure food is safe for guests with food allergies. Whilst we are always able to confidently inform guests which allergens are present in our ingredients and dishes, we are unable to guarantee absolute freedom from the 14 main allergens in our kitchens. Vegetarian and vegan menu choices are available. If you have allergies, food intolerances, or any special dietary requirements, please inform our reservation team at the time of booking.

Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on [020 3974 8865](tel:02039748865) or view the accessibility information online for [Harrington House](#)

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

Harrington House
Sherborne Street
Bourton-on-the-Water
Gloucestershire GL54 2BY

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1451 821213](tel:+44(0)1451821213)

By Train

The nearest station is Moreton-in-Marsh.

However, the nearest mainline station is at Cheltenham Spa.

Check National Rail for train times and routes.

By Taxi

From Moreton-in-Marsh, it's a nine-mile journey taking 20 to 30 minutes.

From Cheltenham Spa, it's an 18-mile journey taking 35 to 45 minutes.

For pricing, please contact Limozena taxis directly.

Limozena

You can pre-book a taxi from our recommended company, Limozena*. We recommend booking your taxi at least seven days in advance by contacting:

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1451 820972](tel:+44(0)1451820972)

Email: denwalmsley@yahoo.co.uk

A return journey can be arranged on your behalf by the HF Holidays House Manager at Harrington House.

*Limozena is not owned or managed by HF Holidays.

By Bus

The 801 bus goes from Moreton-in-Marsh to Bourton-on-the-Water and takes about 30 minutes. Alight next to the Edinburgh Woollen Mill Shop from where it's a short walk to Harrington House.

By Car

There's free car parking at Harrington House if you decide to drive.

Directions

From the A429 take the road into the centre of Bourton-on-the-Water. At the war memorial by the village green, turn into Sherborne Street. Cross the narrow bridge and continue to just before the road forks. You'll find Harrington House on the left.

By Air

The nearest airport is London Heathrow Airport.

From the airport

Take the train to London Paddington station from where there are direct trains to Moreton-in-Marsh, which takes just over two hours. Then you can get the bus or a taxi to Bourton-on-the-Water.

LOCAL AREA

Whether you're enjoying a guided or self-guided walking holiday, there's always the opportunity to linger for longer. Here's our pick of the very best things to see and do within easy travelling distance of Harrington House.

Bourton-on-the-Water

For chocolate-box cottages, old-fashioned tearooms, and low-arched stone bridges that span the River Windrush, this Cotswolds town is only 100 metres away. Highlights include the Cotswold Motoring Museum, the Model Village, and Birdland Wildlife Park & Gardens.

Chipping Campden

A 30-minute drive north of Bourton-on-the-Water, this small market town was once at the heart of the Arts and Crafts Movement. A not-to-be missed highlight is the National Trust-owned Hidcote Manor Gardens in the nearby village of Hidcote Bartrim.

Bibury

Described by William Morris as 'the most beautiful village in England' for good reason, this charming town is just a 20-minute drive away. Don't miss the National Trust-owned Arlington Row – England's most photographed street.

Broadway

A 30-minute drive away, this lovely town is best known for its horse chestnut tree-lined High Street, Broadway Tower, Broadway Museum & Art Gallery, and Lygon Arms Hotel where Oliver Cromwell spent the night before the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

Cotswold Farm Park - Home Of Adam Henson

Established in 1971 by Joe Henson, father of farmer and BBC's Countryfile presenter Adam, this fun-filled park is just a 10-minute drive away. There's over 50 flocks and herds of farm animals, including Gloucestershire Old Spot Pigs and Highland cattle.

Stratford-Upon-Avon

The birthplace of William Shakespeare, this attractive market town is a 40-minute drive away. Highlights include The Swan Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Shakespeare's Birthplace, Shakespeare's Distillery, and Anne Hathaway's Cottage.

Blenheim Palace

Home to the 12th Duke of Marlborough and the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill, this designated UNESCO World Heritage Site is set in extensive parkland. Don't miss the famous Marlborough Tapestries (the 'Victories Series') in the Green Writing Room.

Cotswold Wildlife Park And Gardens

A 25-minute drive away, this 160-acre park is home to over 260 species of animals. It also has one of the largest reptile collections in the UK; expect to see crocodiles, lizards, frogs, snakes, such as green anacondas, and venomous snakes including black mambas.

Cheltenham

A 25-minute drive away, this Gloucestershire spa town is most famous for its horseracing, festivals and Regency heritage. Highlights include the award-winning Pittville Park for its magnificent pump room and Montpellier for its independent boutiques.

Gloucester

Home to one of the UK's most stunning cathedrals, this lovely city on the River Severn is a 35-minute drive away. Don't miss the Gloucester Docks, Robinswood Hill Country Park, Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, and the Gloucester Quays.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway

This volunteer-operated and lovingly-restored steam and diesel heritage railway uses part of the former Great Western Railway's main line route from Birmingham to Cheltenham (it used to run via Stratford-upon-Avon). It is just a 30-minute drive away.

Oxford

An hour's drive away, this famous university city offers a wealth of historic attractions and museums. Some of the city's best vantage points can be found at St. Martin's Tower, the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin, and St. Michael Northgate.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Essential Information

Please bring along your own copy of the books we'll be discussing either in paper format or on a tablet/e-reader if you prefer. The full reading list will be shown on the itinerary tab as soon as it is confirmed.

We'll also be heading out sightseeing so please be sure to bring comfortable shoes that you can wear when we're out and about. And given the UK's famously unpredictable weather, you may also want to pack waterproof clothing and/or sun cream.

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.

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