

# South Downs Railway and Canal Walks Holiday

**Destinations:** South Downs & England  
**Trip code:** AWRCL-4  
**Trip Walking Grade:** 2



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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Enjoy walks on level ground of up to 10 miles plus a canal boat trip to explore the beautiful South Coast and Wealden countryside. There's also the opportunity to delve a little into the history of the railways and canals which were once the lifeblood of the local economy. The routes have now become havens for wildlife from where picturesque views of ancient woodland, agricultural land and the coast can be enjoyed. There is huge variety in the landscapes visited but no hills! The wildlife and history behind the areas visited will be brought to life by the Walking Leader and there's the chance to visit a country pub or two as well!

## HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

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- Enjoy a boat trip on a restored section of canal and see some of the work needed to bring other parts of the canal system back to life
- Walk the historic railway line to Hayling Island, which brought hundreds of thousands of holiday makers each year to this delightful seaside location
- Revel in the tranquility of canalside walks and spot the wildlife which has made its home here
- Walk on level terrain throughout - no hills to climb!

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## ACCOMMODATION

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### 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. Gunned by fire, it was rebuilt in 1910 in its current distinctive style. As well as 27 en-suite 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 Chanctonbury 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

We are continuing to take extra steps to keep our guests, leaders, and staff safe in our HF country houses. We ask all our guests to respect the measures put in place.

The English, Scottish and Welsh governments are not in sync, so measures in our country houses will vary between the nations. With the relaxation of social distancing in England, from 19 July we will be allowing larger groups to dine and relax in the bar together. However, we will still give guests space e.g. we will seat 6 people at a table where pre-pandemic we may have seated 8. We will ensure our public rooms are well ventilated by opening doors and windows wherever possible. If you have any concerns about distancing, please speak to the House Manager. The government recommendation for England is to wear face coverings in crowded areas. You must wear a face covering by law in public areas in hotels in Scotland. This is mandatory in public spaces; however, face coverings will not be required whilst eating and drinking in the restaurant and bar areas or whilst you are outside our houses. In Wales face coverings will remain a legal requirement indoors, with the exception of hospitality premises.

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 will though be increasing the frequency of cleaning in our public areas providing particular attention to frequently touched items including door handles and handrails.

Menus for the week will be available in your room on arrival. A self-service breakfast will be served from 7.45am – 9am. Picnic lunches will now be pre-ordered the night before from an order form in the room. Evening meals will be table service. A dinner order form will be available in each room for completion. Dinner is served at either 7.15pm or 7.30pm. Please check at the house for details. The bar will be open. We will be offering a table service but guests can also come to the bar to order (depending on local restrictions).

Join our team after dinner on Wednesday evenings for the HF Big Pub Quiz. There will be one other evening of entertainment at the start of the week, which will vary depending on the country house that you are staying at. Our Walk Leaders will also be on hand in the bar or lounge for individual or small group walks talks briefings, which allow guests to talk through the following day's walk options and ask any questions. Swimming pools will be operated in line with maximum capacities.

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 Classic and Premium Rooms to choose from. Clean and bright, with accent colours to offset the simple palette, the rooms are airy and light. Premium Rooms might have a feature wall or strong print wallpaper as well as pretty tiles in the ensuite bathroom.

*All 'Classic' rooms are ensuite and furnished to a high standard. There are also several 'Premium' 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. Food at Abingworth Hall is varied with a strong emphasis on the use of seasonal British produce. Our experienced chefs create each dish using only the freshest ingredients and, when in season, use home grown herbs and vegetables taken from our own gardens to give a true taste of the local area.

## Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on 020 3974 8865 or [view the accessibility information online for Abingworth Hall](#)

## 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](http://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

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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

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### 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

- Waterproof 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)
- Sun hat and sunscreen

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

#### 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

## HOW TO BOOK

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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 – 5.30pm, 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 £30 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit [hfholidays.co.uk/membership](http://hfholidays.co.uk/membership) for details.

### **BACS PAYMENTS**

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: National Westminster Bank, Account Name: HF Holidays Limited, Account Number: 48904805, Sort Code: 60-00-01, IBAN: GB90NWBK60000148904805

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](http://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](http://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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