

# 7 Night Discover More of the South Downs

**Trip style:** Small group holidays

**Destination:** 📍 South Downs

**Trip code:** ABW07-HCH05

**Carbon Footprint:** 🌳 135kg CO2



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Explore Sussex and the South Downs like a local with this fascinating small-group tour. From visiting the legendary Devil's Dyke and discovering its rich folklore to delving into the Arts and Crafts heritage of Ditchling, your adventure begins in spectacular fashion. Over the course of 5 days, you'll get to taste award-winning wines at the Wiston Estate, walk through the wildlife haven of Pulborough Brooks, and uncover Roman history at Bignor Villa. There'll also be a trip to historic Hever Castle, a chance to watch traditional crafts in action at Amberley Museum, plus a scenic ride on the Bluebell Railway.

## WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Exclusive small-group tours with expert guides
- Exploring Pulborough Brooks and Devil's Dyke on foot
- Discovering the area's rich heritage
- Wine tasting and tour at the Wiston Estate
- Soaking up views of the High Weald from the Bluebell Railway
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 15 people)

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked and continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided sightseeing with an experienced HF Holidays leader
- All transport included in the itinerary
- All entrance fees (other than National Trust & English Heritage properties)
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps and information in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently

## TRIP SUITABILITY

This holiday is active and busy with visits throughout the day. You will need to be able to get on and off minibuses with ease, and be able to walk up to 2 miles, across uneven, grassy terrain where the ground can be slippery underfoot. It is important for your own and your fellow guests' enjoyment that you can maintain the pace. We've provided a simple fitness test below, which will help you assess whether this holiday is for you:

You should be able to do the following:

- Walk for one hour at a reasonable pace (2 miles per hour) without needing to take a break to rest
- Climb two flights of stairs at a reasonable pace
- Stand unaided for an hour
- Stand up and sit down ten times in one minute
- Please ensure you are able to fulfil these fitness requirements, to ensure you get the very best from your holiday.

## ITINERARY

### **Day 1:** Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

---

### **Day 2:** Devil's Dyke & Ditchling

Our holiday begins with a stop at Devil's Dyke, a site steeped in folklore and whose known history stretches back to the Iron Age. We will take a short walk along the valley to stretch our legs and gain an appreciation of the fabulous Sussex downland. Later, we shall continue on to Ditchling and join a village expert on a walking tour, highlighting the Arts and Crafts heritage of the area which continues to impact local life in the present day.

---

### **Day 3:** WWT Arundel & Wiston Estate

Our first visit today takes us to WWT Arundel, a wetlands reserve home to a wide variety of flora and fauna species. We'll take a guided tour with a site expert before enjoying some free time to explore further. Later in the day, we will visit the Wiston Estate. Spread over 6000 acres of downland, the estate covers a huge landscape of protected woods and farmland. Once there, we will visit the Wiston winery on an award-winning tour with an expert guide. The South Downs are known for their chalky terroir; one which produces exceptional English wines. So, after our tour, there will be a tutored tasting of a selection of Wiston wines before we return to Abingworth Hall.

---

### **Day 4:** Free Day - South Downs

Discover more about Abingworth Hall and the local area for ideas on how to make the most of your free day.

---

### **Day 5:** Hever Castle & Bluebell Railway

Today's trip takes us just over the Kentish border to Hever Castle, once home to the Boleyn family and its most infamous member, Anne. A site expert will join our group here for a private tour of the castle to learn about its storied past and how the team aim to conserve the site today. There will be free time at Hever to enjoy the gardens before we hop aboard the Bluebell Railway to break up our return journey to Abingworth.

---

### **Day 6:** Pulborough Brooks & Parham House

This morning, we'll pay a visit to RSPB Pulborough Brooks, a true haven for wildlife found only a stone's throw from our base in Abingworth. Here, we will join a nature expert on a guided walk of the reserve to learn more about the conservation work undertaken by the RSPB team to preserve this special landscape. In the afternoon, we will continue to Parham House. Built in 1557 and lived in as a family home to this day, Parham is one of the area's finest Elizabethan mansions. We will have some free time to explore the house, gardens, and grounds before making our way back to Abingworth Hall.

---

### **Day 7:** Bignor Roman Villa & Amberley Museum

Housing some of the most detailed and complete Roman mosaics in the UK, the exhibition and museum at Bignor shine a light on Sussex's ancient past. We'll explore the site with a specialist guide to delve into the history of the Villa and the area's Roman heritage. In the afternoon, we will leap forward over several centuries to find out more about the region's past at Amberley Museum. The site brings together a range of traditional craftspeople, heritage exhibitions, and more, so there will be plenty to explore on both a guided visit and during some free time.

---

**Day 8:** Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

---

## Abingworth Hall

Country living just got cosier at this former farmhouse. Abingworth Hall is just a skip away from the village of Thakeham at the foot of the South Downs – a landscape of ancient woodland, hidden valleys, chalky cliffs, and high-backed hills so deserving of its national park status finally bestowed in 2010. While the views from the doorstep are as wow-worthy as you'd expect, the walking opportunities around the sightseeing greats such as Devil's Dyke, Seven Sisters Country Park, Kingley Vale, Parham House, and the Clayton Windmills (known locally as Jack and Jill) are equally standout. You'll also be within easy driving distance of several historic towns and cities, most fabulously Arundel, Chichester, and Brighton.

### **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, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night 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 walk leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on guided walking holiday arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's guided walks (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

### **The walking day**

Prior to setting off on guided 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.