

# 7 Night South Downs Discovery Tour

**Trip style:**

**Destination:** 📍 South Downs

**Trip code:** ABW07-HCR05

**Carbon Footprint:** 🌳 130kg CO2



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

A 7-night South Downs Discovery Tour gives you wildlife-spotting opportunities in Petworth Park, plus a visit to Parham House to admire grand floral displays. Elsewhere, you can visit natural wonders such as Devil's Dyke, enjoy the bucket-and-spade charms of Brighton, and stop by the Roman-founded city of Chichester. But the real showstopper is Amberley Museum. This huge open-air homage to the region's industrial past has vintage vehicles, traditional craft exhibitions, and even a narrow-gauge railway ride.

## WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Exploring the Roman city of Chichester
- Spending time by the seaside in Brighton
- Wildlife-spotting in Petworth Park
- Visiting Devil's Dyke
- Discovering Sussex's industrial heritage at the Amberley Museum

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Entrance to Cowdray House Ruins
- 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
- Guided sightseeing with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from sites of interest
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps, and information in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently

**Please note** - Entrance fees are not included.

## TRIP SUITABILITY

### Trip suitability

Our Discovery holidays give you the opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture of the local area through **active sightseeing**.

On each Discovery day, you will be walking throughout the course of the day as you explore the venues and locations we visit. You'll also be hopping on and off the coach throughout - you should expect to spend the majority of the day on your feet. Most of this walking will be at attractions but some may be across country tracks or footpaths so be sure to **bring sturdy shoes**. There will also be stairs to climb in the majority of the venues you visit, though other more accessible options may be available. At some venues, there may also be uneven surfaces, such as cobbles or rocky paths.

## 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.

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### **Day 2:** Petworth & Midhurst

We begin with a visit to Petworth House, home to one of the finest art collections in the care of the National Trust, before taking a gentle walk through Petworth Park to see the large herd of fallow deer which live here. After lunch we continue to Midhurst, forever associated with HG Wells, who both went to school and then taught at Midhurst Grammar School. There will be time to explore the historic centre to see some of its most characterful old buildings. Look out for the ones with woodwork painted dark yellow, a shade known locally as 'Gold Cup', denoting properties belonging to the Cowdray Estate. We'll also visit the atmospheric ruins of Cowdray House - a large Tudor mansion whose guests included Henry VIII and Elizabeth I during its heyday. It was all but destroyed by fire in 1793 and the kitchen tower is the only part of the mansion which remained intact.

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### **Day 3:** Sussex Towns & Gardens

This morning we visit picturesque Steyning, dating back to Anglo-Saxon times when it was a port on the River Adur. Home to an impressive Norman church, timber-framed buildings and Georgian townhouses, we'll make a walking tour of the town with a chance to visit the museum and the independent shops at Cobblestone Walk. There's time for refreshments in one of the tea rooms before the journey to Bignor Roman Villa, which has some of the finest mosaics in Britain. We spend the afternoon at the fascinating Elizabethan Parham House, exploring the house and extensive gardens. The surrounding deer park is home to around 350 fallow deer which have been bred to have dark coats rather than the more usual pale ones.

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### **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.

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### **Day 5:** Brighton & The Downs

Today we head to the famous seaside resort of Brighton, made popular as a watering hole for London high society in the 18th century. There's the opportunity to visit the Royal Pavilion, remodelled in Indian style as a seaside palace for King George IV when he was Prince Regent, before wandering along the promenade or Brighton's Palace Pier. This afternoon we venture inland to explore Devil's Dyke, the longest, deepest and widest 'dry valley' in the UK, where we can enjoy spectacular views over the South Downs and to the sea.

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### **Day 6:** Amberley & Arundel

Enjoy a morning exploring Amberley Museum, set in a former chalk quarry and dedicated to the industrial heritage of England's south-east. There are over 40 exhibit areas to discover, including a narrow-gauge railway, restored buses, rural crafts and trades, and historic communications. The afternoon will be spent in Arundel, with time to visit

spectacular Arundel Castle and the formal Collector Earl's garden, Arundel Cathedral or perhaps explore Swanbourne Lake.

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### **Day 7:** Around Chichester

Our day starts in Chichester, founded by the Romans who built its city walls and featuring the 12th century gothic-style cathedral; its 61-foot spire can be seen for miles around. There are many historic buildings in the city and its Roman heritage is one of the many features of the Novium Museum, whose 500,000 exhibits include the remains of Roman baths and the burial possessions of the 'Mystery Warrior' – an Iron Age man who was buried in Chichester. From here we will travel to nearby West Dean, where you have the choice of visiting either West Dean Gardens or Weald & Downland Living Museum. West Dean Gardens date back to 1622 but much of what we see today was created in the 1800s, with Victorian glasshouses, a 300-foot Edwardian pergola, a walled kitchen garden and a sunken garden. Weald & Downland Living Museum is perhaps most famous for being the place where they film The Repair Shop. It has a rich variety of working buildings, historic rural vehicles, displays of past domestic life and furnishings, and examples of period gardens. We end the day with a scenic drive back to Abingworth Hall.

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### **Day 8:** Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

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## 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.