

A Shropshire Way Guided Trail Holiday

Trip style: Guided trails

Destination:  Shropshire Hills

Trip code: CHS07-LSE01

Grades: 1, 2, 3

Carbon Footprint:  175kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Established in 1980, the Shropshire Way was the work of the local Ramblers Association and was intended to link the Cheshire Sandstone Way with Offa's Dyke Path. As its popularity grew, so did its length, and new loops and links were added until 2016 when an official 182-mile 15-stage main route was established. Starting just south of Shrewsbury and ending in Ludlow, this trip takes in five of the best stages of this much-loved walking trail. Led by an experienced guide, you'll journey through miles of unspoilt countryside and discover the fascinating history of the Welsh Marches through its ruined Norman Castles, medieval towns, and unique geology.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Small group sizes with a maximum of 15 guests per departure
- Hearing about the unique geology of the region
- Learning about the history of this border area
- Soaking up stunning views of the surrounding Shropshire countryside
- Visiting the highlights of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape
- Spending time in historic Ludlow
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 15 people)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walks with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from walks where necessary

TRIP SUITABILITY

This Guided Walking/Hiking Trail is graded 3 which involves walks/hikes on well-defined paths, though often in hilly or upland areas, or along rugged footpaths. These may be rough and steep in sections and will require a good level of fitness. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness and equipment required to join this holiday.

Your fitness

We want you to be confident that you can meet the demands of each walking day and get the most out of your holiday. Please be sure you can manage the mileage and ascent detailed in the daily itineraries. It is important for your own enjoyment, and that of your fellow guests that you can maintain the pace.

It makes a lot of sense to spend time getting some additional exercise before your holiday. We suggest that you try to fit in a number of longer walks, including some on hilly terrain. Other exercises such as cycling, jogging and swimming are also excellent for developing increased stamina.

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: Lyth Hill to Bridges

Distance: 10 miles (16.5km) Ascent: 1,000ft (300m) Starting at Lyth Hill Country Park, we'll follow the rope walk along the crest of a hill said to be the setting that inspired the works of English Romance novelist, Mary Webb, who was once resident here. Along the way, we can admire panoramic views across the surrounding hills and plains of Shropshire. We'll follow field paths and green lanes before ascending Wilderley Hill to reach the ancient Portway. Leaving the Portway we descend through the pretty Golden Valley and follow the Darnford Brook to the hamlet of Bridges.

Day 3: Snailbeach to Bishop's Castle

Distance: 11 miles (18km) Ascent: 1,700 (520m) Starting at Snailbeach, we'll ascend through the remains of historic lead mines to reach the iconic Stiperstones ridge with its stunning views of Long Mynd to the east and the Cambrian mountains of Wales to the west. The Cambrian Quartzite rocks on the ridge become more evident and rougher underfoot as we head south, passing the 'Devil's Chair' and other craggy outcrops to reach Nipstone Rock. Our next destination is the brow of Linley Hill after which the terrain becomes gentler as we descend along the famous tree lined avenue known as Linley Beeches. Quiet lanes and field paths then take us to the hamlet of More with its rich history including the remains of a 12th century motte and bailey earthwork. We'll continue onwards to Bishop's Castle, a small quirky town with a fascinating history.

Day 4: Free Day - Shropshire Hills

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

Day 5: Bishop's Castle to Clun

Distance: 11 miles (18km) Ascent: 1,750 ft (540m) Leaving Bishop's Castle past the quirky 'zipped up' houses, we'll head towards Reilth Top before descending steeply to reach a wooded valley walk to Churchtown. Here, the Shropshire Way joins with Offa's Dyke Path, and we'll follow an undulating route along one of the best-preserved sections of the 8th century earthworks which formed the 149-mile-long Offa's Dyke, to Hergan. Our next destination is the summit of the Cefns with its panoramic views of the Clun Valley. From here we'll follow the ridgeline as it descends to the beautiful village of Clun, with its packhorse bridge and ruins of a Norman Castle.

Day 6: Clun to Stokesay Castle

Distance: 11.5 miles (19km) Ascent: 1,600ft (480m) Today's walk takes in remote valleys and two of the region's finest Iron Age Forts. Leaving Clun, the 'Way' ascends to Bury Ditches hill fort, passing through the ramparts before continuing onwards through Walcot Wood with its huge oaks. Eventually we'll descend into the ancient and

picturesque village of Hopesay. From here we'll ascend Hopesay Hill from which we'll get our first glimpse of Craven Arms and the Onny Valley. Following field paths, the 'Way' gently descends towards Craven Arms and Stokesay Castle. Built in the 13th century, it is widely regarded as the best example of a fortified manor house in the country (English Heritage).

Day 7: Craven Arms to Ludlow

Distance: 10.6 miles (17km) Ascent: 500ft (160m) From the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre we'll cross the River Onny and ascend to the small village of Aldon along what is reputed to have been a coffin road. From there, the 'Way' descends into the wooded 'dene' of Aldon Gutter which soon converges with Brandhill Gutter (a Shropshire term for a stream in a deep valley). Through the trees we will catch glimpses of Stokesay Court - best known as the location for the 2007 Oscar winning film 'Atonement'. We'll continue along quiet lanes and field paths to the village of Bromfield with its old mill on the River Teme. From here we'll approach Ludlow along a private estate road (Oakly Park). As we near the town we are rewarded with impressive views of Ludlow Castle. We enter the historic town of Ludlow, across Dinham Bridge. Once described by English poet and writer Sir John Betjeman, as 'the loveliest town in England', Ludlow, with its striking Norman castle, half-timbered buildings, historic church and cafes, is a wonderful place to end our exploration of The Shropshire Way

Day 8: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

Longmynd Hotel

For rural calm in the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, the location of this characterful country house is hard to top. Set in a wooded hillside just a short stroll from the market town of Church Stretton (nicknamed Little Switzerland for its picturesque landscape), you'll be within walking or driving distance of the Stiperstones, Caer Caradoc, Ironbridge Valley of Invention, and the historic towns of Ludlow and Shrewsbury. And then, of course, there's the Long Mynd itself – an area of registered common land that has been cared for by a group of farmers (the self-named commoners) who have grazed sheep and ponies here for generations.

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.

Walking safety - SHARED WITH ALL

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 where 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. Please carry a copy of these trip notes with you, or note down the contact phone number for your accommodation (details in the travel section) should you need them in case of emergency.

Packing list - UK Guided Walking

The UK has a famously unpredictable climate so it's best to be prepared for weather that's sunny one minute and raining the next. To make it easier, here's a list of items you should consider packing. Essentials Suitable footwear such as waterproof walking boots that provide ankle support and good grip Waterproof and windproof jacket Comfortable clothing (jeans & waterproof capes are not suitable) Mid-layer(s) to keep you warm. Fleeces make a good choice Waterproof overtrousers Gloves and a warm hat Rucksack with waterproof liner Flask for hot drinks Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity) Sunscreen UV sunglasses For holidays operating October through to the end of March, please also bring the following on your walks: spare warm clothing spare high energy food head torch and spare batteries please note for the October to March season your waterproof jacket needs to offer a high level of waterproofing and wind resistance, and a hood. Look for a waterproof jacket with sealed/taped seams and a minimum HH (hydrostatic head - this is the rating given on waterproof jackets) of 10,000mm+ Recommended Several base layers (long-sleeve or short-sleeve) Cushioned walking socks to avoid blisters First aid kit, including plasters and insect repellent Sit mat Waterproof pouch for valuables Rubbish bag (remember to always leave no trace) Wallet/purse Camera Walking poles
