

3 Night South Downs Discovery Tour

Trip style:

Destination: 📍 South Downs

Trip code: ABW03-HCR05

Carbon Footprint: 🌳 68kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Spend three nights in the South Downs discovering a selection of highlights. Stroll around the Tudor ruins of Cowdray House, see the remarkable Roman mosaics at Bignor Villa, and visit Midhurst – a charming town in the heart of South Downs National Park. There are wildlife-spotting opportunities in Petworth Park, plus a chance to admire grand floral displays at Parham House.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Wildlife-spotting in Petworth Park
- Spending time in the charming market town of Midhurst
- Visiting picturesque Steyning on the River Adur
- Marveling at the Roman mosaics of Bignor
- Exploring the Tudor ruins of Cowdray House
- Discovering the Elizabethan charms of Parham House and Gardens

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.

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.

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.

Day 4: 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.