

Bicester

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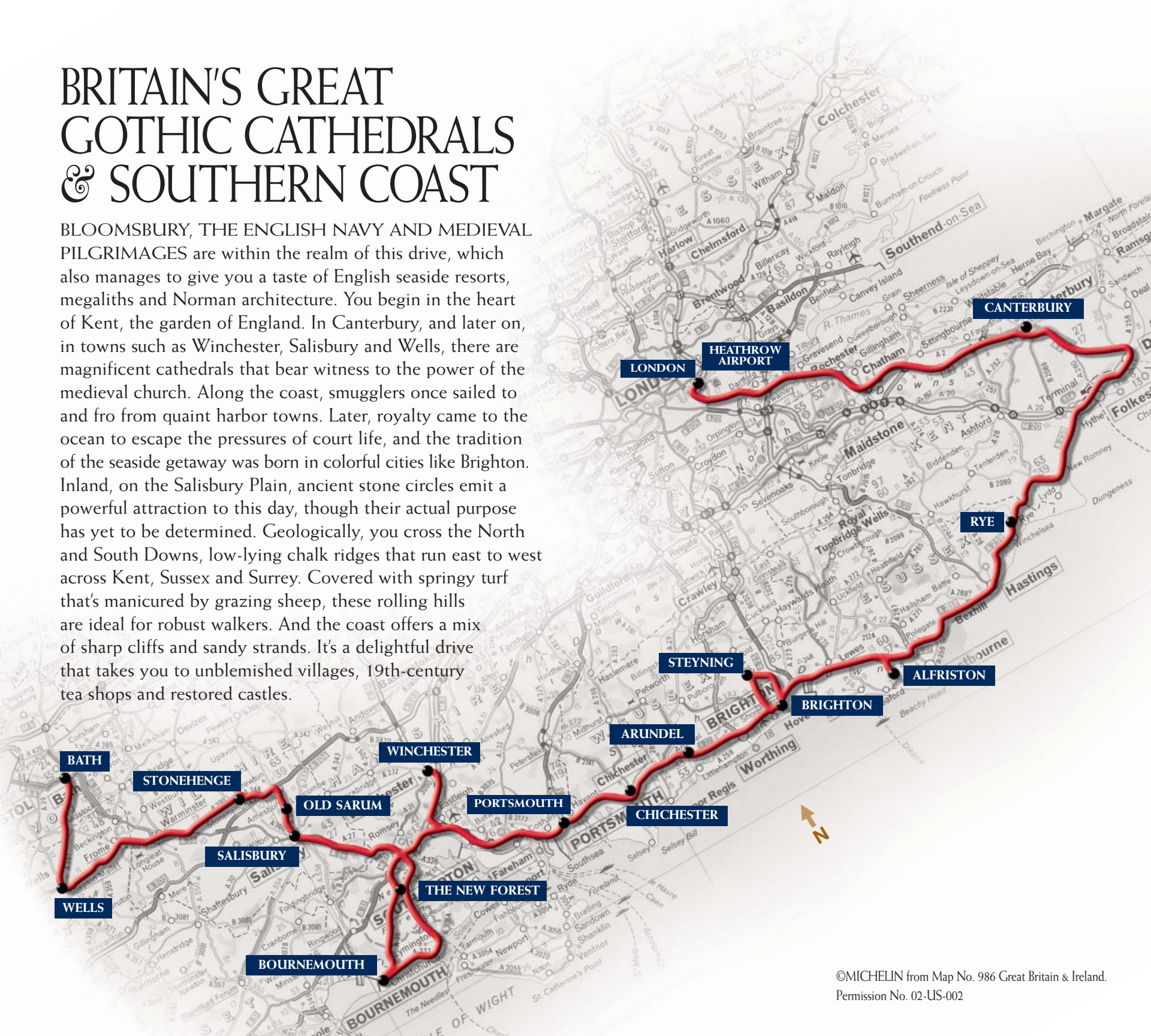


Britain's Great Gothic Cathedrals
& Southern Coast



BRITAIN'S GREAT GOTHIC CATHEDRALS & SOUTHERN COAST

BLOOMSBURY, THE ENGLISH NAVY AND MEDIEVAL PILGRIMAGES are within the realm of this drive, which also manages to give you a taste of English seaside resorts, megaliths and Norman architecture. You begin in the heart of Kent, the garden of England. In Canterbury, and later on, in towns such as Winchester, Salisbury and Wells, there are magnificent cathedrals that bear witness to the power of the medieval church. Along the coast, smugglers once sailed to and fro from quaint harbor towns. Later, royalty came to the ocean to escape the pressures of court life, and the tradition of the seaside getaway was born in colorful cities like Brighton. Inland, on the Salisbury Plain, ancient stone circles emit a powerful attraction to this day, though their actual purpose has yet to be determined. Geologically, you cross the North and South Downs, low-lying chalk ridges that run east to west across Kent, Sussex and Surrey. Covered with springy turf that's manicured by grazing sheep, these rolling hills are ideal for robust walkers. And the coast offers a mix of sharp cliffs and sandy strands. It's a delightful drive that takes you to unblemished villages, 19th-century tea shops and restored castles.

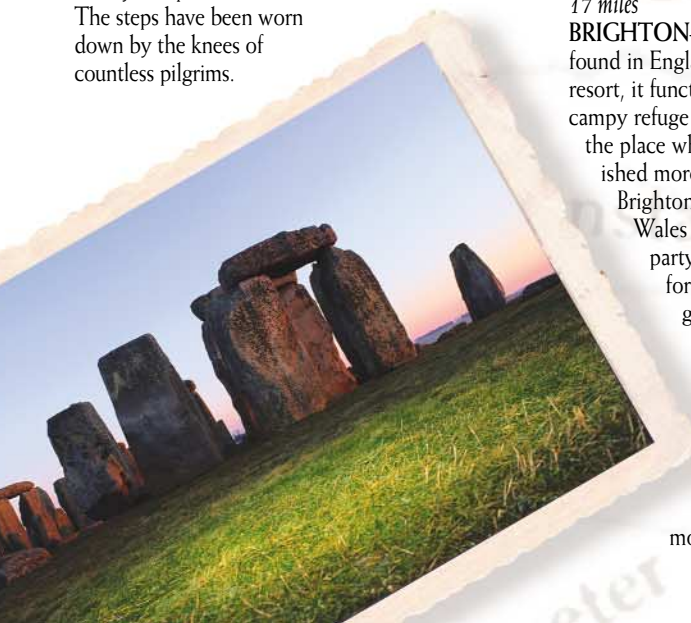


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(Mileage is estimated from each preceding city or site. Before you begin your trip, please note: For space reasons, we could not provide the most detailed map with this brochure. We recommend the use of **Michelin Map #986 Great Britain & Ireland** in conjunction with this guide.) To order Michelin maps, call 1-800-223-0987.

HEATHROW— From the gateway to the United Kingdom, head east towards Canterbury to begin your exploration.

76 miles
CANTERBURY— Canterbury was immortalized in *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer's masterpiece that chronicle 14th-century pilgrimages to Canterbury Cathedral. And it's the cathedral that continues to draw visitors to this day. It was begun in 1070, enlarged and rebuilt many times, and is therefore something of an anthology of ecclesiastical architecture. Canterbury became the focus of the struggle between church and king for control of England. In the end, it was Henry II who won, when four of his knights murdered Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1170. Canonized in 1173, the murdered archbishop was the reason for those famous Christian pilgrimages to Canterbury Cathedral. You can see evidence of those devotees on the steps of Trinity Chapel inside the cathedral. The steps have been worn down by the knees of countless pilgrims.



34 miles
RYE— For 300 years, this fortified town was one of the most important ports on this part of the coast. But as the silt built up, the sea retreated, and now this most charming of English towns is more than 2 miles from the ocean. Yet it's still a delight, especially when you stroll down the cobble Mermaid Street past 14th-century houses. Stop at Lamb House, a Georgian residence that was once Henry James' home. Later on, it was the residence of E.F. Benson, who wrote the popular Lucia novels, which were set in a fictitious town that bears a striking resemblance to Rye. Wander the labyrinth of streets, take afternoon tea in one of the myriad tea rooms and visit one of the town's famous potteries on a shopping expedition.

32 miles
ALFRISTON— Set along the Cuckmere River, with a charming High Street, Alfriston is clearly one of the most beautiful villages in England. Nearby is Glyndebourne, a hamlet that hosts the annual Glyndebourne Opera Festival every summer. This is Bloomsbury territory, for close by is Charleston, the home of writer Duncan Grant and artist Vanessa Bell. Rodmel, the house where Vanessa's sister, Virginia Woolf, and her husband Leonard lived, is but a few miles away.

17 miles
BRIGHTON— Brighton could only be found in England. England's first seaside resort, it functions as a seaside escape, a campy refuge for West End actors, and the place where English royalty flourished more than two centuries ago. Brighton attracted the Prince of Wales in the 1780s. A famous party-thriller, the prince longed for an extravagant base for his galas and thus commissioned architect John Nash to transform his house into a fantasy place. Hence the Royal Pavilion, a massive oriental-style folly, which suited the prince even more when he became King

George IV in 1820. The palace's over-the-top splendor was once ridiculed but is now cherished as an eccentric architectural classic. History aside, be sure to stroll the Lanes, a series of alleyways off North Street in Brighton's Old Town, with good shopping for antiques. And do walk along the Palace Pier. Built in 1899, it's lined with amusement arcades in the best tradition of English seaside resorts.

11 miles
STEYNING— This little gem of a town is packed with timber-framed Tudor houses and has a marvelous 12th-century church. Just outside of town is Bramber Castle, a Norman edifice. Two Iron Age forts, Chanctonbury Ring and Cissbury Ring, are nearby and worth visiting.

17 miles
ARUNDEL— When you look at Arundel Castle, a product of the Normans and later the Dukes of Norfolk, what you're seeing is largely a 19th-century restoration. No matter. With its castellated walls and turrets, it is everything a schoolboy imagines an English castle to be. No wonder it was featured in the film *The Madness of King George*. Inside, you'll be rewarded with a collection of old masters including works by Van Dyck and Gainsborough.

11 miles
CHICHESTER— A classic English market town with a marvelously preserved 16th-century market cross at its center, Chichester is best known for its splendid cathedral. Consecrated in 1108, this masterpiece of limestone and Caen stone boasts a spire that is said to be the only English cathedral spire that's visible to sailors off the coast. Centuries old it may be, but the cathedral also boasts modern work, by way of a stained glass window by Marc Chagall and a painting by Graham Sutherland. Chichester is also beloved by theater goers, thanks to the Chichester Festival Theatre, which opened in 1962 with Sir Laurence Olivier as its first director.

18 miles
PORTSMOUTH— With a name synonymous with the British Navy, Portsmouth is an important place for anyone with more than a passing interest in ships and matters nautical. At the ancient dockyard, you'll find the hull of the *Mary Rose*, Henry VIII's flagship, which capsized on its maiden voyage in 1545. You'll also see the HMS *Victory*, the ship on which Admiral Nelson was killed at Trafalgar. Pop into the Royal Naval Museum for a close look at artifacts of British Naval history. But if you tire of warfare, note that the Charles Dickens House, where the author was born in 1812, is open for tours.

31 miles
WINCHESTER— Winchester Cathedral might well be Britain's most spectacular church. Originally a Benedictine Monastery that dates from 1079, it's a stunning building with a great deal of its Norman architecture intact. Its choir stalls—the oldest in England—harken from 1308. As you walk through the vast space, look for a window that depicts Izaak Walton, the author of *The Compleat Book of Angling*. And in the nave, you will find Jane Austen's grave. William the Conqueror built one of his first castles in Winchester, though all that remains is the great hall, which dates from 1235. Inside is the Round Table, which legend dictates was built by the wizard Merlin for King Arthur. Contemporary historians date it to the 13th century.

12 miles
THE NEW FOREST— The New Forest was laid out by William the Conqueror as a private hunting preserve. But while the 145-square-mile tract later proved to be a favorite place of Henry VIII to hunt for deer, nowadays, wild ponies are all you're likely to see as you drive through. Pause at the Maritime Museum at Buckler's Hard, a charming 18th-century village, where the ships for Nelson's fleet were built from the giant timbers from the forest.



31 miles

BOURNEMOUTH— Perfectly planned and planted with acres of flowers, the pleasant city of Bournemouth came of age when Victoria was queen. It is said that about one-sixth of the city is either parkland or flower bed. Judge for yourself when you stroll past seaside villas and Victorian hotels, here in the essence of the English seaside. If you're game enough to swim in English waters, this is your perfect opportunity, as beautiful Bournemouth Beach stretches nearly 7 miles.

28 miles

SALISBURY— It's the 404-foot-high spire of Salisbury Cathedral, the tallest spire in England, that you're likely to spy many miles before you reach the town of Salisbury itself. Known as New Sarum when it was founded in 1220, Salisbury is in the valley where the waters of the Avon, Nadder and Bourne meet. It's known for its Tudor architecture, its charming tea shops, and its many pubs as well as its splendid cathedral. Begun in 1220 and built in just 38 years, the cathedral's 13th-century octagonal chapter house has one of the four surviving texts of the *Magna Carta*. The many-windowed cathedral is flooded with light, the better to see Britain's oldest working clock, which dates from 1386. Try and take a roof tour, which leads you to an al fresco viewing area at the base of the spire.

3 miles

OLD SARUM— The precursor to Salisbury, Old Sarum is set behind massive ramparts. This 1st-century Roman/British fort had a castle within this fortification. The remains survive, as do the ruins of a cathedral that has been dated to 1075.

9 miles

STONEHENGE— Arguably the most famous and most photographed prehistoric monument in the world, Stonehenge still has the power to astound the visitor. Comprised of a large circle of lintels and megalithic pillars, it is anywhere from 3,500 to 5,000 years old. The stones are believed to have been

moved from as far away as Wales, so the engineering feat alone is considerable. Through the 19th century, it was widely theorized that Stonehenge was the work of Druids. But now the boulders are thought to have been in place long before that Celtic cult ever existed. One popular theory is that Stonehenge was an astronomical observatory, a kind of Neolithic computer, if you will. That it has a connection with the sun and the seasons is almost without doubt.

40 miles

WELLS— Once an important part of the Saxon kingdom of Wessex, Wells has a glorious cathedral. It dates from the 1100s, and the façade features 365 carved medieval statues of knights and kings and saints, most of them life-sized. Inside, the 14th-century stained glass is breathtaking, and the octagonal Chapter House is a masterpiece of 13th-century fan-vaulting. The adjacent Bishop's Palace has a moat on which live swans who are clever enough to ring a bell by a gatehouse when they want to be fed. You can walk to the nearby Vicar's Close, built in the 14th century for the Vicar's Choir. It is said to be one of the oldest complete streets in Europe. The rest of Wells is delightfully sleepy, as if it still hasn't quite stepped out of the middle ages.

20 miles

BATH— Bath is a spectacularly harmonious city, thanks to architect John Wood and his eponymous son, who designed this city and stipulated that it be built with stone from the nearby Cotswold hills. Solid, substantial and pleasingly symmetrical, Bath is famed for such features as the Royal Crescent, a half-moon row of houses. The famous waters drew the Romans here, and later, in 1702, Queen Anne, who made spa-going fashionable. Visit the Roman Baths, which were dedicated to the

goddess Sulis Minerva, and the adjoining museum. Afterwards, step into the adjacent Pump Room for tea and tunes from a classical ensemble, the Pump Room Trio. You should at least try a sip of the famed mineral water itself, which is something of an acquired taste.

HOTELS

The Mermaid Inn. One of the original "smuggler's inns," the Mermaid, dates from 1156 and is replete with ships timbers, squeaky staircases and four-poster beds. The 31-room inn has a menu that celebrates the local catch. Mermaid Street, Rye. Tel: 01797 223065 Fax: 01797 225069

Blanch House. One of the hippest new hotels in decidedly eccentric Brighton, Blanch House owners Chris and Amanda Blanch have created themed bedrooms like "Snowstorm" and "Morocco." This colorful 10-room hotel is as chic and as casual as Brighton itself, and feels not unlike a private London club. 17 Atlingworth Street, Brighton. Tel: 01273 603504

Amberley Castle. At this 12th-century castle in the South Downs, the oak portcullis is still lowered each night. You can dine in the 12th Century Queens Room or the Baronial Great Room. Each of the 19 bedrooms has a four poster and antiques as well as its own jacuzzi. Amberley, Arundel. Tel: +44 0 1798 831 992 Fax: +44 0 1798 831 998

Royal Bath Hotel. This 131-room Victorian manse overlooks Poole Bay and has welcomed everyone from Oscar Wilde to Rudolf Nureyev. Set in a manicured garden, the hotel has an indoor pool, and many rooms have compelling views across to the Isle of Wight. Bath Road, Bournemouth. Tel: 44 01202 555555 Fax: 22 01202 554 158

Bishopstrow House. This charming Georgian country house, built in 1817, is surrounded by acres of beautiful English gardens through which runs the River Wylde, a trout fisherman's delight. The 32 bedrooms boast lush fabrics, and the dining is a delightful. The heated indoor swimming pool is a welcome treat. Warminster. Tel: +44 0 1985 212312 Fax: +44 0 1985 216769



Lucknam Park. This 18th-century Palladian mansion sits on 500 acres about 6 miles from Bath. A member of Relais & Châteaux, it offers a full spa and horseback riding, and the 41 rooms boast canopied beds and plush, overstuffed furniture. It's everything that a grand country house hotel should be. Colerne-near-Bath. Tel: 01225 742 777 Fax: 01225 743 536 For reservations in the USA: 800 735 2478

RESTAURANT

Ockenden Manor. Twenty minutes north of Brighton, Chef Stephen Crane has achieved one Michelin star with his understated French cooking in this Elizabethan manor house. The dining room, with its wood paneling, stained glass windows and log fire, is also a delight. Ockenden Lane, Cuckfield, W. Sussex RH17 5LD. Tel: 01444 416111 Fax: 014111 415549



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