

# The Classic Wye Valley

## Hotel-to-hotel independent cycling

- Discover the Welsh Marches, the Black Mountains and river valleys of Shropshire and Radnorshire
- Dine out in 'slow food' capital Ludlow, and browse Hay on Wye's kaleidoscope of bookshops
- Cider orchards, fields of hops, woodland bluebells and fragrant river meadows
- Explore Iron Age Forts, National Trust properties and Civil War battlefields
- Easy cycling with flexible routes between picture postcard villages



This popular independent cycling holiday (run by our local partners), takes in three counties – Shropshire, Herefordshire and Powys, and explores the pristine natural beauty of the Welsh/English borderlands. These hidden valleys seem to exist in another time zone; rivers turn lazy waterwheels, and gypsy caravans trundle along a network of pretty lanes and bridleways below ancient hilltop forts.

After a night in the slow food capital of England, Ludlow in Shropshire, whose bustling markets and specialist shops thrive in narrow half-timbered streets, you head west along the sweeping Teme and Lugg river valleys into the Welsh Marches. You overnight in Presteigne - the old county capital of Radnorshire, where ancient drovers' trails converge, (still signposted by tall Scots Pine trees that you can see marching over the hills). From here you'll coast between bird-rich hedgerows through nature reserves spotting otter and kingfisher to spend two nights in Hay on Wye, world famous for its many bookshops and acclaimed literary festival. You then cycle back through Herefordshire's apple orchards via the C16 village of Kingsland, site of the Battle of Mortimer's Cross in the Wars of the Roses.

Throughout the tour you'll stay in the finest hotels and inns available, including some exceptional half-timbered and listed properties in Ludlow and Presteigne, and a gorgeous Regency coaching inn in Hay on Wye.

## THE CLASSIC WYE VALLEY | DAY BY DAY

### Arrive in Ludlow

Visit the castle before dining out in one of the town's many restaurants.

### Ludlow to Presteigne (24km/15mi)

After being fitted out with your bike, cycle west from busy Ludlow into open country along the Teme Valley, winding through protected nature reserves along the River Lugg, where otters and orchids thrive below hilltop forests of yellow gorse. Freewheel into water meadows entering the Welsh Marches to reach the gorgeous market town of Presteigne, where your half-timbered black and white Elizabethan hotel awaits with an invitingly sunny beer garden – bliss!

### Presteigne to Hay on Wye (32km/20mi or 64km/40mi)

Choose between an easy 20 mile ride leading across the floodplains of the River Wye, or try a challenging 40 mile route looping into Wales, leading through fairytale hidden valleys where you can stop to paddle in crystal streams. On arrival in Hay take a stroll into town to enjoy the pubs and bookshops.

### Hay on Wye

Hay – a tiny market town on the Welsh English border - is world famous for its literary festival and amazing range of bookshops – some of them outdoors! Give the bike a rest and explore a local riverside walk, or spin out to visit a C9 Crannog, a Royal Celtic dwelling on an island in Llangorse Lake - a designated nature reserve full of curlew and dippers (28 miles). If you fancy a challenge, head into the Black Mountains up to Gospel Pass for incredible views over the Wye Valley, before a long freewheel back to Hay (16 miles) – we provide notes for both excursions.

### Hay on Wye to Kingsland (40km/25mi)

Cherry blossom in the hedgerows and poplar trees dotted with mistletoe lead you from Wales into Herefordshire where hills and valleys are replaced by cider orchards and hop fields! Admire the listed Georgian dovecote by the River Arrow in Eardisland, then on arriving in Kingsland, explore the church, the site of a mass grave from the Battle of Mortimer's Cross in 1461 - very spooky at night!

### Kingsland to Ludlow (13km/8mi)

An easy last day brings you back into Shropshire crossing from the valley of the River Lugg to the River Teme once again. You pass the oldest timber structure in the UK – the wooden bell tower in Yarpole dating from the C10! Visit either C14 Croft Castle for lunch in the gorgeous tea-rooms, or picnic up at Croft Ambrey – a beautifully preserved Iron Age fort dating from 390BC, and from whose ramparts you can see 14 counties!

## Dates and Prices

### Sunday departures 2012

All dates

### Tour Only

\$1,998

**Singles:** Add \$89 per night.

**Holiday type:** Independent cycling, hotel-to-hotel, no minimum group size.

**Departs:** Selected Sundays from Mar 25 to Sep 23. Other departure days and dates available on request - please phone for prices.

**Duration:** 6 days (5 nights).

**Meals:** Breakfast.

**Other details:** Please contact us for room upgrade and child prices.

**Hotels:** ★★ (4), 🍷 (1)

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