

BATH

Steeped in history the World Heritage Site of Bath is set in the rolling Somerset country side. Visitors to Bath can take advantage of the many waterside walks from the gentle tow paths of the beautiful Kennett and Avon Canal to the banks of the River Avon. To the south are the Midsomer Valleys and close by chocolate-box villages, picturesque scenery and lakes of the Chew Valley.

Bath is surrounded hills and honey-stoned villages of the Cotswolds and South Gloucestershire. These areas offer walking trails and national cycle networks - the perfect pace from which to discover the countryside.

Walk in the footsteps of the Romans at the Roman Baths and hear the stories from the people who lived and worked there 2,000 years ago. See the waters source that still flows with natural hot water today. Built around Britain's only hot springs these baths are very well preserved Roman site of public bathing.

After a morning's work most Romans enjoyed spending the afternoon at the *thermae* or public bath and they were also a social meeting place. Woman as well as men came to the baths to enjoy meeting with friends, exercise, or to read at the library.

Still using the warm, mineral-rich waters which the Celts and Romans enjoyed over 2000 years ago, The *Thermae Bath Spa* is Britain's original and only natural thermal Spa. Visit The Spa Visitor Centre and learn about its history, culture and traditions that grew round this most famous of Britain's spa towns.

The Pump Rooms have been the social heart of Bath for more than 200 years the neo classical salon is where Spa water is still being drunk. Now also a Restaurant it is the perfect place to rest and take afternoon tea. Relax in the tearooms and listen to the Pump Room Trio or the pianist who play each day.

Begun in 1499, Bath Abbey is the last of the great medieval churches of England. During the past twelve centuries, three different churches have occupied the site of today's Abbey: An Anglo-Saxon Abbey Church dating from 757, pulled down by the Norman conquerors of England soon after 1066. A Norman cathedral begun about 1090. It was larger than the monastery could afford to maintain and by the end of the 15th century was in ruins. The present Abbey church founded in 1499, ruined after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539 by order of Henry VIII.

The Royal Crescent, Bath is one of the world's best known landmarks. Built between 1767 and 1775 it was designed by John Wood the younger. Containing 30 houses, one of which is now the Royal Crescent Hotel and Number 1 which is opened to the public. It is believed that John Wood took inspiration from the nearby Stanton Drew Stone Circle, the ancient standing stones placed there by ancient Britons, for the designs of Bath's Royal Crescent and Circus.

For fashion lovers the Fashion Museum hosts a world-class collection of contemporary and historical dress. Included in the display are 150 dressed figures to illustrate the changing styles in fashionable clothes.

One of Bath's most famous residents was Jane Austen and you can see a snapshot of her life at The Jane Austen Centre. Explore how living in this magnificent city affected Jane Austen's life and writing. Bath was her home from 1801 to 1806 and life in the city is reflected in two of her novels *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, which are largely set in Bath.