



time
for us



48 hours in...

...South Downs - Hampshire Area

The Hampshire area of the South Downs - around Chawton where Jane Austen lived – has quite a different feel from the rest of the new National Park.

With its steep wooded hills, hidden valleys of watercress farms, lavender fields, vineyards, hop gardens and trout streams, its picture-perfect villages and peaceful market towns, it is a lovely part of England.

Hidden away between the cathedral cities of Winchester and Chichester, this is great walking, cycling and riding country. Invigorating long-distance trails and circular routes dip and rise through ancient woodlands, and out onto the tops of the Downs.


Getting to East Hampshire

Road

Portsmouth is 25 miles to the South (M27 access) and London (A3M, M25 access) is 25 miles to the North. The new Hindhead tunnel on the A3 between Petersfield and Guildford means that the journey time from London is even quicker.

Rail

Frequent daily services from Portsmouth and London. Main stations at Rowlands Castle, Petersfield, Liss and Liphook. Alton is approximately 1 hour from Waterloo on a different line.



Top 5 must see places

Historic Market Towns

The market towns of Alton and Petersfield are perfect places to base yourself to explore the area and are full of interest. visitpetersfield.com and altonevents.co.uk

Jane Austen's House Museum, Chawton near Alton

Jane Austen's home for the last eight years of her life where she wrote or revised all her novels. jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk

Gilbert White's House & Garden and the Oates Collection, Selborne

Home of the 18th century naturalist and father of ecology. gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk

Butser Hill

Highest point of the chalk ridge that runs along the South Downs National Park, with stunning views to the coast.

Staunton Country Park

Farm, ornamental gardens and grounds hants.gov.uk/staunton

the Beautiful South

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Day one

Start the day at Staunton Farm, Gardens and Country Park, with its stunning tropical glass houses, restored Victorian walled garden and sensory garden, near Rowlands Castle.

You then have a choice. You could visit Butser Ancient Farm, north of Staunton, signposted from the A3 – effectively an open air research lab giving a fascinating insight into the lives of Ancient Celts and Romans.

Or go for a stroll – there are gentle walks at Rowlands Castle, or for something more strenuous, climb Butser Hill with its views over the stunning countryside to the coast. For Butser Hill, park at the pay and display car park at Queen Elizabeth Country Park, off the A3.

Then continue along the A3 to the market town of Petersfield, where there is a choice of places to eat.

Spend the afternoon exploring Petersfield. There is a Museum, the Flora Twort Gallery, Physic Garden, a variety of shops, Heath and boating lake. For a map and information visit the Tourist Information Centre in the Library on the Square.



Day two

A day centred around Chawton, where Jane Austen lived. The Jane Austen trail, a walk of 1 km runs from Alton to Chawton. Make sure you allow time for some shopping in Alton first. Then follow the trail to Chawton where you can visit Jane Austen's House Museum. Also of note is Chawton House and St Nicholas church.

Lunch in Chawton at the Greyfriar or Cassandra's Cup, then stroll back to Alton.

From Alton, drive to Selborne, a picturesque village, home to Gilbert White, the 18th century naturalist. Gilbert White's House & Garden and the Oates Collection is well worth a visit. There are delightful walks from the village as well as a pottery, art gallery and tea room.

For an evening with a difference, ride on a Watercress Line Dining Train, or Real Ale Train, from Alton Station.

Where to stay

Old Thorns Manor Hotel
Hotel, golf and country estate
oldthorns.com
01428 724555

Langrish House
Country House Hotel
langrishhouse.co.uk
01730 266941

St Mary's Hall
Award-winning B&B
stmaryshall.com
01420 88269

The Angel
Countryside inn
citylodge.co.uk
01730 828111

Upper Neatham Mill Farm
Converted barn on River Wey
upperneatham.co.uk
01420 542908

80 Rushes Road, Petersfield
Cosy town-centre B&B rushes
-road.co.uk
01730 261638

Butts House Studio
Self-contained studio in town
butthouse.com
01420 87507

The Barn
Countryside self-catering
barfordfarmhouse.com
01420 562682

Dairy Cottage
Self-catering on a farm
cowgrove.co.uk
01962 773348

Where to eat

The Greyfriar, Chawton
Country dining pub
thegreyfriar.co.uk
01420 83841

The Royal Oak, Lasham
Traditional country pub
royaloak.uk.com
01256 381213