

## *A Day Trip to Winchester*

### Fun Facts

- ★ Winchester Cathedral is the longest (556 ft, 169.5 m) Gothic Cathedral in Europe.
- ★ The original memorial on Jane Austen's grave makes no mention of her books. Today her writings are commemorated by a brass plaque and a memorial window.
- ★ The ancient Pilgrims' Way to Canterbury starts from Winchester.
- ★ The Great Hall of Winchester Castle is famous for King Arthur's Round Table - which actually dates from the 13th century and therefore long after Arthur died - if he ever lived.
- ★ The statue of Alfred the Great has a detachable sword.
- ★ Old Boys of Winchester College are called Old Wykehamists because the school was founded in 1382 by Bishop William of Wykeham, who also founded New College, Oxford.
- ★ Fictional Wykehamists include Sherlock Holmes's brother, Mycroft, Basil Fawlty and Merlin.
- ★ Winchester has festivals devoted to Music, Jazz, Ukuleles, Poetry, Writers, Comedy, Wine, Cocktails and Cycling.

### *Winchester Cathedral*

Winchester Cathedral (£6, including optional guided tour) is the main attraction for the five million visitors who come to the city each year. The present building was begun in 1079 as a Benedictine monastery. Building and alterations continued until the sixteenth century. The 12th century font depicts a murder and a miracle. The choir stalls are the oldest in England (1308). The Cathedral also has the oldest wrought ironwork and floor tiles in the country. An imposing chantry holds the remains of Bishop Richard Fox, founder of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Another chantry is for Bishop William Waynflete, founder of Magdalen College, Oxford. A statue of Joan of Arc faces the tomb of Cardinal Beaufort - one of the judges who sentenced her to be burned to death in 1431. Izaak Walton, author of The Compleat Angler, is depicted in a stained - glass window.

Find out how William Walker used a deep-sea diving suit to save the Cathedral from catastrophe. There is a strangely haunting statue by Anthony Gormley in the crypt. There are six mortuary chests containing the bones of early kings, including those of Canute. The plain stone tomb in the choir may contain the remains of William II, murdered while hunting in the New Forest nearby. The exhibition Kings and Scribes: The Birth of a Nation explores the role of Winchester as a royal capital, the building and restoration of the Cathedral, the

Cathedral archives, monastic life and the making of the 12th century Winchester Bible. There is a second-hand bookstall in The Deanery. Photography is allowed.

### ***Keats Walk***

The poet John Keats lived briefly in Winchester in 1819. This one-mile meander through water-meadows to the Hospital of St. Cross is said to have inspired his poem To Autumn. There is also a Riverside Walk along the River Itchen and a Sunset Walk up St. Giles' Hill for a view over the city.

### ***Winchester College (Motto 'Manners Makyth Man')***

The College claims to have the longest unbroken history of any in England, taking its first scholars in 1393. Nowadays it takes 700 boys aged 13-18. (Annual fees approximately £40,000). Guided tours (£7) (1 hour) are available September - March (10.15, 11.30, 2.15 Mon-Sat, 2.15, 3.30 Sunday) and April -August (same hours plus 3.30)

### ***Alfred the Great***

Alfred (reigned 871-899) is the only English king to be called 'the Great' - but he was never king of all England. Winchester was the main city of his kingdom, Wessex, which covered most of southern England. Alfred's many achievements include preserving his kingdom from being overrun by the Vikings, founding thirty-three fortified towns to defend its frontier and created a fleet of purpose-built warships. He would, however, probably have taken greater pride in his pioneering the idea of education in English and commissioning a chronicle in the same language, making the Anglo-Saxons the first European people to write their history in their own language.

The statue of Alfred the Great on The Broadway was designed by Hamo Thornycroft and erected to mark the thousandth anniversary of the king's death. The event was important enough to be reported in the New York Times. The statue represents Alfred as mighty bearded warrior. In reality Alfred was slightly built, clean shaven, cursed with gastric problems and would probably much rather have been a monk.

***Westgate Museum*** This museum is housed in one of the four surviving gatehouses in the city wall and once served as a prison. Exhibits focus on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (wedding of Mary Tudor and Philip II of Spain; Civil Wars). It's free but only open on Saturdays.

***City Museum*** This (free) museum covers the history of the city. Exhibits include a scale model of the city as it was in 1870, some of Jane Austen's few surviving possessions and early twentieth century shop fronts. Two galleries are devoted to Roman and Anglo-Saxon Winchester.

***City Mill*** Claimed to be the oldest working water mill in England, last rebuilt in 1744. (£5.85).

***The Great Hall*** This 13th century aisled hall is the only surviving part of medieval Wolvesey Castle and is home to King Arthur's Round Table, a 700-year-old fake, which Henry VIII

had painted in 1522 with himself as Arthur. (£2.50). An exhibition covers the hall's history. Queen Eleanor's garden has medieval planting.

**Military Museums** These are located on the site of a former barracks next to the Great Hall:  
The Museum of the King's Royal Hussars (£3) (Closed Mondays)  
The Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum (Tues-Fri (Free)).  
The Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum (Hours vary: check website) (£4)  
The Rifles Regimental Museum (Hours vary: check website) ( Free)  
The Gurkha Museum (Mon-Sat 10-5) (Free)  
The Adjutant General's Corps Museum (Tues-Sat 10-5) (Free)

**Hospital of St. Cross** Founded in 1132, this almshouse complex has a Norman church, a medieval hall and kitchen, a Tudor cloister, extensive gardens and a tearoom. (£5).

### **Picture This**

Apart from the locations mentioned above you might like to photograph:  
King Arthur's Round Table; The Butter Cross; The Guildhall; The High Street.

Bollards at the corner of Great Minster Street and The Square in the city centre have been painted in the style of famous artists such as Michelangelo, Turner, Hokusai, Klimt, Kandinsky, Magritte, Picasso and Jackson Pollock. Bollards painted by local Winchester organisations commemorate Roman Winchester, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the 2012 Olympics.

### **Getting there**

Trains from Waterloo take between 57 minutes and 1 hour 39 minutes to reach Winchester. The average journey time is 1 hour 9 minutes.

The fastest journey time by coach from London is 1 hour 35 minutes. Coach fares are considerably cheaper than the train but increase in price as tourist numbers increase in the summer.