

Chipping Norton – Gateway to the Cotswolds

Chipping Norton is a beautiful market town set in Oxfordshire and is known as the highest town in the area. It was originally built on the site of a Norman castle and the market has existed in the market square since the 13th Century. The town was one of the largest wool towns in the Cotswolds during the 15th Century, and the Cotswold area was also famous for being one of the biggest outputs for wool in Europe. The Cotswolds has remained unspoilt and tranquil in all its beauty since the cloth trade moved to the North of England, perhaps a distant memory to what was once a very busy area. Local celebrity residents include David Cameron, Amanda Holden, Jeremy Clarkson and Alex James, all who are regularly seen around the town. The Cotswolds is a huge area located in the South-West of England on the rolling Cotswold hills and quintessential English heritage countryside. The region covers several counties including Warwickshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire and has been named as the second largest area of outstanding natural beauty in England.



The Market Square

Chipping Norton is still very much a working market town. Many of the locals are born and bred here, and for a pretty town in the Cotswolds, it is somewhat wonderfully unpretentious. Despite its popularity, it has not yet been deemed a particularly vibrant tourist town, so it gives a good example of typical life in The Cotswolds. The town has several cafes and pubs, with pretty gift shops and antique centres, alongside usual amenities of banks, supermarkets and essential shopping. Locals agree that although their town 'Chippy' is not packed with commercial retailers, there's certainly everything you need when you get snowed in. Chipping Norton town hall dominates the heart of the town square, overlooking the market and the high street. The town hall has transformed over the years from a building that was originally built on arches with 4 locking cells for prisoners, as well as space for a fire engine and weighbridge.

Bliss Mill

Bliss Mill has always been a famous landmark of Chipping Norton. It was the industrial base for wool and tweed production, originally known as Bliss Tweed Mill. The magnificent building was originally designed by George Woodhouse and was a 19th Century factory with an unusual dome based chimney. Now Bliss Mill is a beautiful landmark that looks like an enormous mansion, standing majestically in the valley and overlooked by the town. The owner was William Bliss and his business was producing high quality tweed at the mill for many years. William was very influential in bringing the railway line to Chipping Norton, creating the perfect way to transport coal to supply the mill's steam engines. Production of wool ended in 1980 when the mill closed, and since then it has been converted to an incredibly high-quality building with luxury apartments and communal sports facilities including an indoor swimming pool. Chipping Norton's railway eventually closed its station in the 1960's.



Chipping Norton Music Recording Studios

Perhaps the best kept secret of Chipping Norton is the recording studios that were once in New Street. The studio opened in 1971 and finally closed in 1999 but it entertained and recorded some of the most famous UK artists and bands throughout music history. The famous artists included; Status Quo, Cutting Crew, Alison Moyet, Barbara Dickson, Fairground Attraction, Duran Duran, Level 42, Jim Diamond, The Proclaimers and Gerry Rafferty. When the studios closed, the building was eventually converted to residences and is now part of a dental practice.

The Perfect Cotswold Tour

Chipping Norton is one of the many market towns which offer just a glimpse of beautiful Cotswold life. If you're in London and would like to take a daytrip to explore more of the English countryside, then we are only 1hr 40 minutes from London Paddington Station to Moreton-in-Marsh train station. The Cotswold Secret Cottage Tour pick you up from the train station in our luxury minibus and take you on an extraordinary 6-hour tour of The Cotswolds. You will visit all the stunning places, including seeing chocolate box villages with pretty thatched cottages, majestic stately homes, tiny Cotswold hamlets and charming market towns. There's no need to bring a picnic as we provide morning tea and coffee with a pastry at the Secret Cottage, then a delightful homecooked buffet lunch. We return to our home in the afternoon where you can indulge in a traditional Cotswold cream tea. After the tour, we will drop you back to the train station so you can get your train back to London in time for the evening. Don't miss out – book your Cotswold Secret Cottage Tour today!