Visit Guildford!

All you need to know about Guildford!
Welcome to Guildford

Guildford Town

Situated in the South East of the UK, Guildford is a vibrant bustling market town in the county of Surrey which provides an excellent location for international students in the UK. It is only a short distance from both Heathrow and Gatwick international airports and the centre of London is less than 40 minutes away by train.

Whether you’re into sport, culture, theatre or cinema, shopping, or music you can find it all in Guildford. There are a huge range of restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars that cater for everyone. The nine-screen Odeon cinema offers the latest films whilst Guildford’s two theatres cater for live performances, often previewing top shows before they move to London’s West End. Close to the Guildford campus, the Spectrum Leisure Centre is one of the biggest and best in the country. Guildford is also home to two professional sports teams, ‘Surrey Heat’ (Basketball) and ‘Guildford Flames’ (Ice Hockey).

Shopaholics will love the fact that Guildford has over 300 shops and regular markets and festivals. Culturally, there is a gallery, a museum, an 11th century castle ruin and a cathedral all set in beautiful surroundings. Other tourist attractions include guided tours of Guildford, rowing on the River Wey, swimming in the Lido open air swimming pool and walking in the surrounding hills and countryside, known as the Surrey Hills.

Surrey Hills – An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Many overseas visitors know that the UK has large areas of beautiful and varied countryside but some are so special they are officially designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Surrey Hills is one of only 33 such areas in England and is protected by an act of parliament under the care of our Local Government officers. The definition of an AONB is:

“A precious landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation’s interest to safeguard them.”

The Surrey Hills certainly lives up to this description, offering some of England’s most beautiful and accessible countryside. Opportunities abound for exploring this special area; you’ll discover breathtaking views, open commons, attractive market towns and villages and much more.

The Hills stretch across the chalk North Downs that run from Farnham in the west, past Guildford, Dorking and Reigate, to Oxted in the east. The grandeur and beauty of these hills embrace an amazing variety of countryside from rolling chalk downs and flower rich grasslands, to acid heaths and woodlands. Come and discover one of England’s finest landscapes for yourself.
**Surrey**

Surrey is one of a ring of counties (like provinces) which circle London, known as the ‘Home Counties’.

In Surrey you will find bustling market towns surrounded by sleepy villages nestled in the Surrey Hills and all just 30 miles south west of London. Within the county you will find modern shopping malls, cobbled high streets and twisting lanes with high street brands alongside unique craft shops and markets. Surrey is steeped in history and you will not need to go far to find timber framed buildings, castle keeps or an old ruined abbey or church. For example, Chertsey which is 15 miles from Guildford is one of the oldest known towns in England having grown up around ‘Chertsey Abbey’ which was founded in 666AD.

As well as Guildford itself there are also the nearby towns of Farnham, Dorking, Godalming, Haslemere, Leatherhead, Cranleigh, Weybridge, Esher and Woking, yet you are never far away from beautiful countryside, rolling fields, wooded hillsides and glittering waterways.

**Guildford Sports**

Guildford’s Spectrum Leisure Centre, in Stoke Park, is a national prizewinning sports centre that includes a variety of pools (for both leisure and serious swimming), ten-pin bowling, an ice rink and an athletics track, as well as general halls used for indoor sports including gymnastics and trampolining. The Spectrum is home to several local sports teams, including the Guildford Flames of the English Premier Ice Hockey League, Guildford City Football Club of the Southern Football League and Guildford International of the National Volleyball League.

The Surrey Sports Park, owned by the University of Surrey, has a 50 metre swimming pool, climbing wall, as well as squash courts, floodlit tennis and pitches. It is the new home of ‘Surrey Heat’ of the British Basketball League and the Guildford Giants of the Rugby League Conference London & South division.

**London 2012 Olympic Games**

Surrey was officially a host county of the London 2012 Olympic Games and three cycling events took place within the county’s borders. The Olympic Torch Relay came through Guildford, which was the focus of a spectacular event.

http://international.guildford.ac.uk
Local History

Guildford Castle

Guildford's medieval castle, used by English royalty, particularly King Henry III in the 13th century, has been restored. The Great Tower opened to visitors in 2005 and a rooftop platform offers views of Guildford and surrounds. The castle gardens are perfect for a stroll at any time of year.

Guildford Museum

Guildford's museum can take you back through time from prehistoric finds in Surrey fields through to Stone Age tools, medieval costumes and Roman head-dresses. Strong on local history and with changing exhibitions, the museum is housed in a lovely 17th-century building.

Farnham Castle

Farnham Castle was constructed in 1138 AD by Henry de Blois, the grandson of William the Conqueror, and has been occupied for nearly 900 years. It was built in the 12th century for the bishops of Winchester as a stopover on London journeys. From 1926 to the 1950s, it was taken over by the bishops of Guildford. It's now owned by the Farnham Castle International Briefing & Conference Centre, but you can still visit it on a guided tour. Even if the 'keep' is closed, it's worth walking around the outside for the picturesque views. Farnham Castle is located up the old steps at the top of Castle Street.

Mansions and Stately Homes

Mansions and stately homes are scattered around the Surrey countryside. Just outside Guildford lies Clandon Park which has beautiful grounds and the grand 18th-century Palladian Clandon House which is a fine example of an English Country gentleman's estate. The main House is renowned for its two-storey Marble Hall and is packed with antique furnishings, tapestries, porcelain and art. The formal gardens feature a Maori house.

Built in the 1730's for the 2nd Lord Onslow, the house is now owned by the National Trust (an organisation which runs many of the UK's grand estates and residences for the benefit of the nation) and can be visited easily from Guildford.
**Cultural Influences**

As well as examples of physical history, Guildford also boasts many cultural influences.

For example Guildford has been the home of several notable writers. The town has been associated with the 1863 novel ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’ because of its importance in the life of its author, Lewis Carroll who also wrote ‘Through the Looking-Glass.’ The writer had a house in Guildford and is buried in the Mount Cemetery.

There are several reminders of this connection throughout Guildford - the Museum has a collection of items belonging to Carroll whilst sculptor Jean Argent created two full-size bronze sculptures of Alice passing through the Looking-Glass and Alice and the White Rabbit. These can be found in the Castle Grounds and by the River Wey at Millmead.

In 2010 the Alice in Wonderland book was made into a Hollywood movie starring Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter and Anne Hathaway.

**Guildford Music**

In music, Guildford lays claim to the punk-rock group The Stranglers, who were based in the town in the early 1970s and were briefly known as ”The Guildford Stranglers”. One of the founder members of the immensely successful band Queen, (drummer and backing vocalist Roger Taylor), currently resides in Guildford and is a Patron of the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) located in the centre of the town. This internationally renowned ‘rock school’, offers courses in all areas of modern music production and performance. Ed Sheeran was a guitar student at ACM and played at the Closing Ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games in London!
Things to do in and around Guildford...

**Guildford Education**

As well as the Guildford College Group and ACM, the University of Surrey campus is in Guildford. The town is also home to a wide range of other excellent educational institutions such as The College of Law, the Guildford School of Acting and the Italia Conti Arts Centre. This gives the town a very lively, vibrant and culturally diverse feel with residents from all over the country and in many cases the world coming to Guildford to complete their education. The ‘Surrey Scholar’ statue can be found at the bottom of the High street.

**Guildford Food**

You can tickle your taste buds at a wide variety of eateries in Guildford that include; French, British, Italian, Indian, Thai, Mexican and Spanish. Guildford hosts well known brands of restaurants and cafes to ensure there is something for everyone...

There are also shops available to buy Chinese, Asian, South African, Polish and Thai food to enable you to prepare and eat your own.

**Guildford Shopping**

There are a wide variety of shops in Guildford that cater for everyone, from department stores to independent retailers to international franchises.

- Swarovski
- Superdry
- Mango
- Krispy Kreme Doughnuts
- Karen Millen
- Molton Brown
- Hugo Boss
- HMV
- Nine West
- Kurt Geiger
- Jack Wills
- French Connection
- Gap
- Ted Baker
- Gant
- H & M
- Hollister
- Calvin Klein
- Toni & Guy
- Marks & Spencer
- Liz Earle
Close to Guildford

Cities to visit that are close by and can be reached easily by public transport include:

- Portsmouth (1 hour)
- Brighton (1 hour)
- Windsor (1 hour)
- London (40 minutes)
- Oxford (2 hours)
- Cambridge (2 hours)
- Bath (3 hours)
- Thorpe Park (1 hour)
- Chessington World of Adventures (1 hour)
- Hampton Court Palace (1 hour)
- Canterbury (2 hours)
- Winchester (ancient capital of England) (1 hour)

Sports in Guildford

- Swimming, Ice Skating, Bowling and Football at The Guildford Spectrum
- Mini Golf and Tennis in Stoke Park Gardens
- Laser Quest at The Big Apple in Woking
- Pool and Table Tennis at the Students’ Union, Guildford College
- Dance Classes at The Dance Studio, Guildford College

General Activities in Guildford

- Theatre at The Electric Theatre and Yvonne Arnaud Theatre
- Cinema at The Odeon, Guildford
- Traditional English Cream/Afternoon Tea at House of Fraser

http://international.guildford.ac.uk
Visit Guildford at the right time of year and enjoy many festivals and events in and around the area...

**January**
New Years Day Parade

**February**
Valentines Day
Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day)

**March**
Guildford International Music Festival
Mothering Sunday

**April**
London Marathon
Easter

**May**
Chelsea Flower Show
Surrey County Show
Merrist Wood Summer Show

**June**
Wimbledon
Trooping the Colour
Father’s Day
July
Hampton Court Palace Flower Show
Global Gathering

August
The Proms
Notting Hill Carnival
Reading Festival
Cowes Week

September
Great River Race

October
Ghost tour of Guildford
Halloween

November
Lord Mayor’s Show
Guy Fawkes (Bonfire) Night

December
Christmas
New Years Eve
Famous people from in and around Guildford, Surrey

Famous people

Over the years, Surrey has become known as a haven to some of the country’s best-loved celebrities.

Paul Weller
Singer, song writer and guitarist for ‘The Jam’ and ‘The Style Council’ was born in Woking near Guildford.

Eric Clapton CBE
Singer, song writer and guitarist who has received 17 Grammy awards was born in Ripley near Guildford.

Penelope Keith CBE
Actress on TV and in the theatre, in 2002 she was High Sheriff of Surrey and today remains Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey.

Frank Lampard
English professional footballer who plays for Chelsea and the England national team, lives in Esher, Surrey. He is considered to be one of the best English footballers of his time.

Sir Cliff Richard OBE
Singer, musician, performer and actor used to live in Weybridge near Guildford and now has a house in Virginia Water.

Lord Coe
Former Olympic athlete and politician who headed the successful London bid to host the 2012 Olympics Games. He lives in Tilford close to Guildford.

Ringo Starr
Is a singer and actor who gained fame as the drummer of ‘The Beatles’, he lives in Cranleigh near Guildford.

Shane Filan
Was a member of the UK’s most successful boy band Westlife with 14 number 1 singles and ten chart-topping albums lives in Cobham, near Guildford.

Liam Heath
Was born and grew up in Guildford and took home a Bronze Medal in the London 2012 Olympics for Canoeing.

John Terry
English professional footballer, Captain of the Chelsea football team and the England national football team until February 2012, live in Oxshott, Surrey.

Brian May CBE
Guitarist and singer of the rock band ‘Queen’ lives in West End, Woking, close to Guildford.

Andy Murray
Professional tennis player and Gold and Silver Olympic medals winner lives in Oxshott, Surrey. He is the British no. 1 and is currently ranked no. 3 in the world.

Anne Milton MP
Member of Parliament representing Guildford.

Tom Felton
Who played Draco Malfoy in Harry Potter was born in Epsom in Surrey and went to school in West Horsley and Leatherhead near Guildford.
Damon Hill OBE
Retired British Formula One World Champion Racing Driver lives in the Godalming area, close to Guildford.
(Seen here as guest of honour at our Farnham College graduation evening).