



A Whole Lot of Half Term Family Fun in Wye Valley & Forest of Dean *-Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism gears up to welcome toll-free February family forays -*



With the Severn bridge tolls gone and the days slowly stretching out, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean is closer than ever for activity loving families. The family entertainment, adventure and hospitality opportunities of the region are far reaching even in winter from mountain biking, zip-wires and owl flying, to the ancient trees of Puzzlewood and the deep caverns of Clearwell. Indoor activities might include a kid's cookery class at Harts Barn Cookery School or getting crafty at the Dean Heritage Centre.

Plus, the region has many stylish hotels, B&Bs and cottages still with availability during half term with prices starting from £220 per family for three nights.

Further details can be found below, with more information on what's going on in Wye Valley & Forest of Dean here: <http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk>

Activities - indoor and outdoor

Harts Barn Cookery School Kids Cookery Day, 19th February

Cookery school isn't just for grown-ups! Booking the kids onto a cookery day is a great opportunity for them to get messy, develop new skills and relieve parents of making them lunch! This class is suitable for beginners and will introduce children to new cooking skills. In the morning they will be shown how to make a delicious two course meal. After lunch in the Apple Barn, the children will then start the afternoon baking and decorating cupcakes to take home with them.

Details: The course takes place on 19 Feb, 10am-3pm and costs £45 per child including lunch. Soft drinks and aprons provided. For more information visit www.hartsbarncookeryschool.co.uk or call 01452 831719.

Dean Heritage Centre with rainy day guarantee

The fully interactive Dean Heritage Centre is set amongst five acres of stunning scenery and protects and preserves the unique history and heritage of the Forest of Dean. There are on-site interactive galleries exploring the history of the Forest and during February half term there will be activities to celebrate the mighty oak and other great trees found in the Forest of Dean. Find out what your birth tree is, discover Celtic lore and other surprising facts and stories about the trees in this wonderful Forest. Don't miss the woodland trail which is based on The Gruffalo.

Rainy day guarantee: The Centre has both indoor and outdoor exhibits - but if you cannot enjoy the outdoor exhibits and Gruffalo Trail due to heavy rain, you'll be given a voucher to come back free of charge.

Details: Over half term there will be daily workshops in the Craft Hut between 11am and 3pm. Family prices from £23.00 (2 adults and up to 3 children).

<https://www.deanheritagecentre.com>

Puzzlewood reopens 16th February

Puzzlewood is a unique and magical forest with a mile of meandering pathways and over 200 steps set in 14 acres of ancient woodland. The paths take you through a wonderland of deep ravines of moss covered rocks, over wooden bridges and through fantastic tree and rock formations.

Many people believe that Puzzlewood was the inspiration for JRR Tolkien's forests of Middle Earth in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Puzzlewood has been used in a number of TV & film productions including *Merlin*, *Doctor Who* and *Star Wars*.

Also onsite are farm animals, outdoor and indoor play areas including mazes, outdoor and indoor picnic areas and a small cafe with gifts.

Details: Family prices from £25.00 (2 adults and 2 children). Open 16 -24 Feb from 10am, last entry 3.30pm.

Owl Flying at night on Friday 15th February

The International Bird of Prey Centre's Owl Evenings are a wonderful treat. Start with a guided tour by torchlight, where the owls look alert, then warm up with a hog roast (vegetarian option available) and mulled wine or hot apple juice with cinnamon. This is followed by a flying demonstration of small owls which takes place in the indoor flying area with special low level lighting. The evening ends when the owls fly free - outside in the field with special underground low level lighting with the owls glimmering through the lights or the Barn Owl hovering over one of the lights.

Details: The Owl Evenings are ticketed only, and places are limited. The experience starts at 7.00pm and ends around 9.15pm. These evening events are not for children under 10. The price includes food and drink, entry, guided tour and the two flying demonstrations. Wear warm sensible clothes and bring a torch. There are still tickets available for the owl evening on 15 Feb with adults priced at £35 and children at £30. To book visit

<https://www.icbp.org>

Symonds Yat for wildlife watching and Wye Valley Butterfly Zoo

Symonds Yat Rock is a world-renowned viewpoint high above the River Wye. From here visitors might glimpse fallow deer in the surrounding woodlands and otters below on the River Wye. For something more tropical and indoor there's the Wye Valley Butterfly Zoo on the opposite side of the river. Walk with butterflies as you explore the incredible and beautiful world of these wonderful creatures. This indoor safari is for everyone with an interest in the environment and has some wonderful photographic opportunities. Add in entry to the aMazing Hedge Puzzle - a great place to play tag with all the family - and this is a fun-packed day out - combining indoor and outdoor activities.

Details: Family prices from £20.00 (2 adults and 2 children) which includes Butterfly Zoo and Maze. Open from 10am, last entry 3pm. To book visit <https://butterflyzoo.co.uk/>

Playdays at Perrygrove Railway, Coleford, Gloucestershire

Treehouse, trains and treasure, whatever the weather. There's loads to do at Perrygrove Railway and Treetop Adventure to keep the whole family entertained and even more at half term with the 'BigJigs' play days on 19-21 February which includes extra free activities where children can enjoy colouring, crafts and playing with a BigJigs wooden railway in the carriage shed. Everyday families can ride the steam engines (as many times as they like); explore the tree top adventure, build dens in the woods, squeeze through the secret passages in the indoor village and play undercover at Foxy Hollow. The cafe serves freshly prepared hot and cold food, drinks and cake.

Details: Family prices from £25.75 (2 adults and 2 children). Open from 11am-4.30pm. To book visit <http://www.perrygrove.co.uk>

Accommodation

Cottage or Lodge with breakfast at The Angel Hotel, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire

The Angel Hotel has half term availability at The Lodge, a Victorian house within the Abergavenny Castle grounds and a 2-minute walk from the hotel and Sugarloaf Cottage a lovingly restored 17th century property, directly across from the hotel's car park. Both have two bedrooms so are perfect for a family of four with space to stretch out and prepare a meal. Families can still take advantage of the wonderful hotel breakfast served until 11am where all the breads and pastries are freshly made from legendary The Angel Bakery.

Details: 2x nights from 16 February are available from £590 based on a family of 4 staying in a two bedroom cottage/lodge. Book via <https://www.angelabergavenny.com>

Self Catering at The Old Mill, Flaxley, Gloucestershire - sleeps 6

In the heart of the Forest of Dean and close to the tiny hamlet of Flaxley in a gated courtyard setting, with immediate access to the owners' fields and lake, The Old Mill is a superb conversion with immediate access to fields and a lake and with fly fishing available on the lake. Sleeping up to six guests in three bedrooms this light and airy retreat has a large, open plan kitchen diner with great views across the garden. There's also a great pub close by and families can bring the pooch too.

Details: 3x nights from 22 February are available from £816 based on up to six staying on a self-catering basis. Book via <https://www.hideaways.co.uk/cottage/Cotswolds-Gloucestershire-Flaxley/The-Old-Mill-988926.html>

The Speech House Hotel, near Coleford, Gloucestershire

The Speech House Hotel is a former 17th century hunting lodge set in the heart of the Forest of Dean. The hotel has 35 rooms, several with impressive antique four-poster beds. For dining relax in the informal Orangery or visit Verderers', the à la carte restaurant. Built in 1669 there are still many original features including fire places, paintings and carved oak chairs. Perfectly located for families to explore the area - hire bikes, explore the Sculpture Trail and visit Go Ape, Puzzlewood or Perrygrove, plus it's dog friendly too.

Details: 3 x nights from 15 February are available from £368 based on a family of four sharing a courtyard family room including breakfast
<https://www.thespeechhouse.co.uk/stay/> or call 01594 822607

Bed & Breakfast at Green Gables B&B, St Briavels, Wye Valley, Gloucestershire

Green Gables is a traditional English country cottage Bed & Breakfast, set in the beautiful Wye Valley. Stay in a comfortable family room and wake to a hearty breakfast from locally sourced ingredients before heading out to explore Tintern Abbey, Clearwell Caves and the Forest of Dean. Dogs also welcome. Offas Dyke is just half a mile away and for rainy days the cosy guest lounge has a piano, toys, games and books for all ages.

Details: 2x nights from 22 February are available from £220 based on a family room sleeping four on a B&B basis. Book via <http://greengablesmork.com>

Cabin with outdoor hot tub at Forest Holidays, Near Coleford, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire

Forest Holidays Forest of Dean is perfectly balanced for those seeking the seclusion of the woods and space in nature to unwind. There are 120 luxury cabins and treehouses of various sizes to suit all families, surrounded by a maze of forest walks, trails and meadow. At the heart of the site is the Forest Retreat, with a well-stocked local produce shop, café and bar, children's play area and a hub to meet the Forest Ranger, book activities and hire bikes.

Details: 3x nights from 15 February are available from £625 based on a family of 4 staying in a two-bedroom Silver Birch cabin with hot tub on a self-catering basis. Book via <https://www.forestholidays.co.uk>

For further information please go to www.wyedeantourism.co.uk

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Notes to Editor:

About Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism

Social media handles:

#DeanWye

Instagram @deanwyetourism

Facebook @WyeValleyForestofDean

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Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism (WVFDT) was formed in 2006 and is the official Destination Management Organisation representing the interests of almost 400 members.

Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism is the destination management organisation for the “Dean Wye”. The area covers the three counties of Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire and is the only cross border tourism association in the UK working with tourism businesses and stakeholders in Wales and England.