



What's New for 2020 in the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean

-slow down, bathe in nature, reduce waste and learn new skills-



2020 is a big year for the [Wye Valley and Forest of Dean](#) as the area prepares to celebrate its status as the birthplace of British tourism with the 250th anniversary of William Gilpin's ground-breaking 'Wye Tour'. Add to this the chance to learn more, give back, switch off and go wild amongst its ancient forests, wild rivers and rocky outcrops and experience a bigger than ever River Festival there are plenty of reasons to visit next year.

There are new places to stay in this region where England meets Wales, all with the common theme of direct access to nature. Visitors can also learn new skills such as how to preserve foods and cut down on waste as well as making gin at a new distillery. Plus, there's the chance to take part in a wellbeing focused break which includes forest bathing and gratitude journaling as well as enjoy a 'photowalking' experience.

The Big Anniversary - Gilpin 2020 - Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of British Tourism

2020 sees the 250th anniversary of what is largely regarded as the birth of tourism in Britain. In 1770 the Reverend William Gilpin published the first tourist guide in Britain when the 'Wye Tour' began and coined the term 'picturesque'. The 'bestseller' guided visitors to the beauties of the Wye Valley, now an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Launched in November 2019 by the Prince of Wales in Ross on Wye, Gilpin 2020 heralds a year of anniversary activities, including an augmented reality project - Museum Without Walls, talks, exhibitions and vintage rowing trips. 2020 also sees a bigger than ever [River Festival](#) take place between 2-17 May 2020. Over two weeks, the festival will journey down from Hereford, along the river Wye to Symonds Yat and then on to Monmouth before finishing at Tintern in Monmouthshire, South Wales. The festival will bring together plenty of local artists, musicians and dancers with naturalists, geologists and environmentalists for a series of performances, shows, installations and adventures, including a major art show within Tintern Abbey.

GIVE BACK

Wye Valley River Festival flowing through the Valley 2– 17 May 2020

The biannual River Festival will be bigger than ever with two weeks in May packed with activities and events along the Wye. For 2020 the Festival will be exploring the theme of 'time' with naturalists, geologists, historians, walkers, talkers, futurists, artists, makers, performers, musicians, dancers and singers. Visitors get to embrace the outdoors, ignite their imagination and engage their minds as they experience the unexpected, the wonderful and the thought-provoking during two weeks of creativity celebrating the natural Wye Valley landscape.

The provisional programme sees the Festival starting at Hereford on 2 May and flowing through Symonds Yat on 2 and 3 May, with woodland adventures at Symonds Yat Rock. It will reach Monmouth on 9 and 10 May with a 'No Time Left to Waste' conference, with expert talks and environmental speakers, as well as artistic interventions and evening procession. During the final week, 8 to 17 May, there will be a major art installation at Tintern Abbey. The Festival Finale will be held on the riverside meadows in Llandogo on 16 May.

To find out more visit www.wyevalleyriverfestival.co.uk

SWITCH OFF

The Hudnalls Hideout – Luxury treehouse hidden in the trees above the Wye Valley

Due to open in late January 2020 and located in a private woodland, The Hudnalls Hideout will offer couples a generous 38 square metres of open plan living space, suspended almost four metres above the ground on hillside above The Hudnalls Woods looking out towards the Wye Valley.

This is the first treehouse with an A-frame design to be built in the UK and is hand crafted in-situ, laid out over two levels with interiors designed in partnership with online design brand, MADE.COM. Tree top canopy views can be expected from the mezzanine bedroom, which is reached via a sweeping hand-carved staircase fashioned around a cedar tree. The structure is encircled by a raised deck with two swing seats below and an outdoor firepit. On top of the deck sits a screened deep copper bateau style bath for two, ideal for star gazing soaks. There are miles of walking tracks from the doorstep, with the Offa's Dyke trail passing nearby.

The Hudnalls Hideout is priced from £215 per night midweek and £250 per night (low season) on the weekend based on two sharing, which includes a welcome hamper of local goodies. To find out more visit hudnallshideout.co.uk or call 01594 530998.

'Soul Soother' Forest Bathing Break at Tudor Farmhouse, Forest of Dean

Tudor Farmhouse has launched a new Soul Soother break for 2020, ideal for those looking to boost their wellbeing. Start by experiencing the Japanese art of Shinrin-yoku ([Forest Bathing](#)) with certified Forest Therapy Guide Carina Greenwood in a remote forest setting. Research found that Forest Bathing improves mental wellbeing through simple 'invitations' to connect with trees.

Back at the hotel make a start on the complimentary [Gratitude Journal](#) by psychotherapist Natalie Fox; packed full of tips and advice on positive mental habits that help to boost confidence, self-esteem and

happiness. Then, choose to add an in-room massage or drive ten minutes to [Float in the Forest](#) to ease tensions in a giant floatation capsule. End the day with a gourmet dinner before retiring to a comfortable bed and feeling the soporific effects of a sleep spray.

A two-night Soul Soother break is available from £595 based on two sharing a double room on a half-board basis including a Forest Bathing session, a Bramley sleep spray and a gratitude journal. To book and find out more visit www.tudorfarmhousehotel.co.uk or call 01594 833046.

Wanderlust Camper Co themed campervan packages, Forest of Dean & Wye Valley

New for next year are a series of suggested week-long self-drive campervan itineraries based around a specialist area of interest for a family, couple or group of friends. Based in the Forest of Dean Wanderlust Camper Co can curate these itineraries to make the most of the region they know inside out and allow visitors to choose road-trip themes such as wellbeing with forest bathing and floatation experiences; adventure with zip-lining, gorge-scrambling, canoeing and stand up paddle boarding, or learning something new with llama trekking, pottery and cookery.

Priced from £730 for a week's rental based on up to four people sharing. To find out more visit www.wanderlustcamperco.com

GO WILD

Mindful Photowalking Experience, Forest of Dean Photography School

Join professional photographer David Broadbent and escape from the stresses of daily life with this new three-hour 'Photowalking' course. David will tailor a bespoke walk to each individual depending on their pace and photography goals, with magical Puzzlewood in the Forest of Dean a firm favourite. This new experience is an antidote to instant bucket-list photo sharing and places emphasis on reconnecting with nature, living in the moment and really taking notice of what you see on your walk. With camera in hand you will document your walk with a series of shots helped by David on the technical aspects on your photography. Each walk is different and inspiring, and most importantly, restorative.

There is a special introductory rate of £45pp if booked before 31 December 2019. To book and find out more visit davidbroadbent.zenfolio.com/blog/2019/10/photowalking.

The Roost - chic cabins in wildflower meadow, Forest of Dean

The Roost in Mitcheldean is an adults-only retreat in the Forest of Dean which just opened in December 2019. Consisting of The Nook and The Nest, two beautiful cedar wood cabins set within 2.5 acres, each enjoying its own area of wildflower meadow. Each cabin is beautifully decked out with a wood burner, comfy sofa, local books, vintage artwork and houseplants. Guests will be left kilner jars of tea, proper ground coffee, homemade scones, milk in a foil topped bottle and handmade soap, made just down the road. Outside there's a cosy swing seat with rugs, a Japanese style hot tub for star gazing and total privacy. Dogs are welcome too.

A cabin at The Roost is priced from £99 per night midweek and £129 per night on the weekend based on two sharing. To find out more visit theroostglamping.co.uk or call 01594 78177.

LEARN MORE

Make more and waste less at Harts Barn Cookery School, Forest of Dean

[Harts Barn Cookery School](#), near Longhope in Gloucestershire will be opening a food shop adjacent to the cookery school called **The Forest Larder**. Also launching are two new initiatives to cut down on waste and harness wild foods. **The Glut Larder** workshop will teach people how to preserve and store a glut of items growing in the garden and **The Foraged Larder** will teach people how to preserve what has been foraged to use in the less fruitful months.

Further details including dates and prices of the Glut Larder and Foraged Larder workshops to follow or go to www.hartsbarncookeryschool.co.uk

Distil Your Own Gin and Gin Experience at Silver Circle Distillery, Monmouthshire

Silver Circle is an innovative distillery which opened in July 2019. The team are launching brand new courses and will be flinging open their doors to visitors every Thursday, Friday and Saturday in 2020.

The '[Distil your own Gin](#)' workshop starting in March 2020 will give gin-lovers the chance to learn about different botanicals and how gin is made, distil their own gin on a miniature still and leave with their own bottle of gin. Allow 2.5 hours and tickets are £110 for one person or £140 for two people sharing a still and include two gin & tonics per person.

Or, the 'Gin Experience' includes a distillery tour, guided gin tasting and two gin & tonics and costs £25 per person. To find out more visit silvercircledistillery.com

New courses at Humble by Nature, Monmouthshire

Humble by Nature is a working farm on the outskirts of Monmouth that offers a diverse range of crafting, cookery and rural skill courses. Always innovating there are several new courses including [Building with Lime](#) (19 July) where a day is spent learning about the use of traditional lime building materials, including hands-on experience carrying out pointing repairs using a traditional lime mix. On the all-new [Bundle Dying with Flowers](#) (5 June) day learn about natural dyes before heading out into the Edible Garden to collect flowers and petals to create a dye and then use it to create block prints. There is also the new [Natural Curing & Sausage Making](#) (8 March) with Steven Lamb of River Cottage where he demonstrates how to make cured meats and sausages at home without the use of any artificial additives or preservatives.

And finally, **Italian Breads** (date tbc) gives the chance to spend a day with Dough & Daughters making delicious Italian breads, including: Pane Toscana (Italian Rustic Country Bread), Focaccia Ligure (a loaf which proves in brine), and Black Olive Bread.

Working with Lime costs £155 per person, Bundle Dying with Flowers costs £135pp and Natural Curing and Sausage Making with Steven Lamb of River Cottage costs £185pp. To find out more visit www.humblebynature.com or call 01600 714595.

To find out more visit www.wydeantourism.co.uk

- ENDS -

High resolution images are available on request.

**For further media information please contact Fiona Reece or Ryan Baker at Travel Tonic PR;
fiona@traveltonic.co.uk, ryan@traveltonic.co.uk, 01452 346116**

Notes to Editors:

Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism (WVFDT) was formed in 2006 and is the official Destination Management Organisation representing the interests of almost 300 tourism related businesses spread across Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire and is the only cross-border tourism association in the UK, spanning Wales and England.

The region covers over 1,000 square miles and is home to one of England's largest and more ancient forests as well as the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Within this unique landscape of forested hillsides, limestone gorge scenery, waterfalls, rocky outcrops and unspoilt villages, are some of Britain's best fishing and canoeing opportunities, not to mention tidal surfing on the Severn Bore, a natural phenomenon coinciding with the full moon.

Above the Severn estuary rises the triangle plateau of the Forest of Dean, regularly taking a starring role in major blockbusters including Star Wars, Harry Potter and in 2020, The Secret Garden. With over 20 million trees it's the perfect place to forest bathe, explore new heights from tree top trails, or maybe spot a deer or two.

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