

# Visit Cirencester



## Capital of the Cotswolds



## other areas to explore



Cirencester's location at the centre of the Cotswolds makes it the perfect place to explore other delights the region has to offer.

Bibury is a charming Cotswold village near Cirencester, described by William Morris as 'The most beautiful village in England'. Wonderful stone buildings, including Arlington Row, edge the banks of the River Coln. Continue onwards to see the delights of the beautiful historic market town of Burford, the towns of Northleach and Fairford with their impressive wool churches, or lovely Lechlade on the River Thames.

Visit Tetbury, a picturesque wool market town with royal connections close to Highgrove, the home of HRH Prince of Wales and featuring the Highgrove Shop at the town centre. Or see Stroud, set in the Five Valleys and home to many arts and crafts makers.

Also explore Bourton-on-the-Water, the 'Venice of Cotswolds', with honey coloured houses connected by attractive little bridges, crossing the gently flowing River Windrush and the lovely town of Stow-on-the-Wold.

## about Cirencester

Cirencester sits in the very heart of the stunning Cotswold region. Considered the 'Capital of the Cotswolds', it is a town steeped in history. From its origins as an important Roman city, to its rise as a medieval market town, to the beautiful Georgian and Victorian buildings seen today, you can feel the town's heritage everywhere you go. But it's not all about the past! Modern Cirencester is a vibrant and enjoyable destination with galleries, wonderful cafés, pubs and restaurants, live music venues, theatre, and a wealth of independent shops. Explore the town itself and take in the alleyways and courtyards, the beautiful church or one of our stunning public parks.

There really is something for everyone. The central location of the town is the perfect base for those wishing to explore the Cotswolds and is situated just 20 minutes from the M5 and M4.

Pop into the Cirencester Visitor Information Centre at the Corinium Museum for more information about the town



## walks around the town

Cirencester is a great place to explore on foot. Follow the brass plaques of the Cirencester Civic Society town walk, or discover the Corinium Museum's Roman and Medieval town trails. Follow the Cirencester Hare Festival Way, a 2.5 hour route marked by large beautifully decorated hares. Starting at Watermoor and ending at Thomas Street, the route follows the River Churn and connects the town's green spaces and secret places. Cirencester is also the perfect place from which to discover surrounding areas, such as Stratton or the Cotswold Waterpark, and lies on the routes for both the Monarch's Way and the Roman Way.

The Cirencester Civic Society offer guided walks at 3pm on Sundays from April to October, meeting at the St John Baptist Parish Church in the Market Place. From mid-July to the end of August, guided walks are also offered on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 3pm. For more information, maps, trails and advice visit the Cirencester Visitor Information Centre.

## 6 key things to see & do in Cirencester

- 1 Visit the world-class family friendly Corinium Museum and Visitor Information Centre to learn about the town's fascinating history. It is also a great chance to get information and advice on Cirencester and the Cotswolds in general.
- 2 Take in the stunning Church of St. John Baptist for a real taste of medieval history and you may even be able to climb the tower! You can also visit the picturesque Abbey Grounds behind the church for a walk or picnic.
- 3 Indulge in some retail therapy in one of Cirencester's many independent retailers. A paradise for shoppers looking for a change from the uniformity of the high street.
- 4 Take a stroll in the wide avenues of Cirencester Park to see the Bathurst Estate, Polo Club and the beautiful woods beyond.
- 5 Stop for a bite to eat in one of the town's many excellent restaurants and cafés. Cirencester is also home to a wide array of traditional pubs, serving great locally-brewed ales and ciders.
- 6 Explore New Brewery Arts, the home of British crafts and creativity. Visit the studios of the resident artists and admire the excellent exhibitions on display.

## events & festivals

The town has a vibrant schedule of events throughout the year. In early July, the Cotswold Show and Food Festival brings together the varied aspects of life in the region in a two day spectacular. The Phoenix Festival in late August showcases amazing local musical talent spread over three stages, alongside a host of other wonderful activities for all the family.

There are many other events to be enjoyed, such as the annual Hare Festival, heritage open days, beer festivals, sporting and cycling events, arts events, an organ festival, bands in the park and at the end of the year the Advent Festival. Whenever you visit, there is always something to enjoy.

## independent shops

Shopping in Cirencester, with its wonderful variety of quality shops, is a delight. Enjoy exploring the courtyards with their individual style, and the many historic streets radiating from the town centre. Cirencester is renowned for its very special shops, individual boutiques, fascinating antique emporiums and craft shops, as well as national chain stores. If you enjoy peaceful and pleasant surroundings as you shop, then venture off the main streets and make a point of visiting the Swan Yard and then meander through to the Old Post Office development. Other hidden gems include The Woolmarket situated off Dyer Street and Stable Yard, accessed via the delightful Black Jack Street.



## markets

The beautifully renovated Cirencester Market Place in the centre of town, is home to the Charter Market every Monday and Friday, one of the oldest in the country. There is also a Farmers' Market on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays and an Arts and Craft Market on the 1st Saturday of every month. Cirencester's markets feature a wonderful array of stalls which include crafts, luxury items, local produce, quirky keepsakes and much more. Look out for other special markets throughout the year.

The Corn Hall, which can be reached from the Market Place, is home to some amazing markets, which include a Home, Fashion & Garden Bazaar from Monday to Thursday, an Antiques and Collectables Market on Fridays, the Original Craftsman's Market (1st and 3rd Saturdays) and the Cotswold Craft Market (2nd and 4th Saturdays).

## galleries and theatres

Cirencester is home to many wonderful galleries, with frequent varied exhibitions taking place throughout the year. New Brewery Arts is the place to come and explore the best of British craft and creativity. Two galleries show inspiring work by artists, makers, craftsmen and designers, and the onsite studios offer a rare opportunity to meet makers and buy beautifully crafted work direct from independent artists. There is also a great shop and café on site and an exciting programme of events.

Why not visit the Temporary Exhibition Gallery at Corinium Museum, which hosts an incredible array of ever changing artistic displays in mixed media, with items often for sale.

The vibrant culture of Cirencester can be experienced at one of the town's wonderful theatre facilities. Take in a musical at the refurbished Barn Theatre on Beeches Road or enjoy the thrill of a murder mystery at the Sundial Theatre on the outskirts of town.

A wide variety of shows and musical events also take place at the Parish Church and numerous other venues around the town. With such variety and quality the avid theatregoer will certainly not be disappointed!



Cotswold Show

For the latest events information visit [www.cirencester.gov.uk/whats-on](http://www.cirencester.gov.uk/whats-on)

## individual food

The array of food on offer in Cirencester really is impressive. With dozens of cafes, restaurants, pubs and bars, you'll never be short of somewhere to enjoy a good meal. Whether you enjoy a bistro dining experience, or some simple home-cooked pub food, you will find something to suit your taste. Dining in Cirencester can be a varied and global experience with English, Thai, French, Italian, Chinese and many other cuisines on offer.

Numerous venues in Cirencester offer beautiful outdoor spaces, where you can relax and enjoy your gastronomic journey, whilst taking in the delights of the beautiful town. Many of the town eateries source food and meats locally, so eating in Cirencester really is getting a taste of the Cotswolds.



Charter Market



New Brewery Arts

## sports and leisure

Cirencester offers plenty of opportunities to keep fit and enjoy the outdoors. Cotswold Leisure Centre on Tetbury Road provides excellent modern facilities, from cross fit to a gentle swim in the pool.

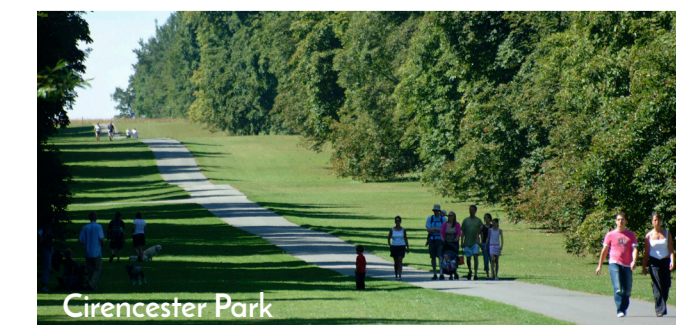
If you enjoy swimming, then be sure to visit our historic Open Air Pool. Built in 1867, it is one of the oldest pools in Britain and is supplied with natural spring water. It is open from mid-May to the start of September.

Why not explore one of the towns many parks. The Abbey Grounds behind the Parish Church in the centre of town includes a lake, wildfowl, trees and greenery creating a lovely space for families to enjoy. Through the gates at the top of Cecily Hill you will find Cirencester Park, part of the Bathurst Estate. Designed by Alexander Pope, it is open to the public for walking and riding. See the Broad Ride, which is laid out for a mile between chestnut trees that edge the woods.

St Michael's Park on Watermoor Road is home to many facilities, including tennis court, mini golf, croquet, boules, children's play areas and BBQ facilities.

There are cycling routes through the town, as the Cotswolds is a wonderful destination for cyclists and walkers alike. For the more adventurous, the Cotswolds Water Park offers sailing, swimming, windsurfing, canoeing and water skiing at the numerous outdoor activity centres. At over forty square miles, the Cotswold Water Park is the United Kingdom's largest man-made lake system and even boasts its own beach!

Why not play a round at the nearby Cirencester Golf Club, or on summer Sundays you can often catch a game of polo at the Cirencester Park Polo Club.



Cirencester Park

## incredible history

Whilst in town, why not discover the amazing archaeology of the Cotswolds at the award-winning Corinium Museum. Trace the story from prehistory to the 19th century, with many treasures from Roman Cirencester, known as Corinium, Roman Britain's second largest city. The museum is an inspiring and interactive experience for everyone, with a fantastic programme of events throughout the year.

Visit Corinium Museum and pick up a 'Whereat Trail', a route guide to the Cirencester Amphitheatre, which is free to visit. In Roman times this impressively large oval would have accommodated 8,000 people. The tiered seating and walls are grassed over, protecting one of the best preserved amphitheatres in Britain.

Explore the Abbey Grounds and see the outline of where St Mary's Abbey stood, and in the North East corner, view the remains of the Norman Arch, alongside the Abbey's former trout lake. You can also see a portion of the ancient Roman wall that would have surrounded the town.



Norman Arch

## information and attractions

**Cirencester Visitor Information Centre** Park St. The one stop shop for help and information about Cirencester and the Cotswolds including local attraction information, tickets for local events, accommodation bookings, transport information, coach tickets, maps, guides, gifts and souvenirs. Tel: 01285 654180 [www.coriniummuseum.org/visitor-information-centre](http://www.coriniummuseum.org/visitor-information-centre)

**Cirencester Local Information** Dyer St. Local town, community and volunteering information. Tel: 01285 655646 [www.cirencester.gov.uk/localinformationcentre](http://www.cirencester.gov.uk/localinformationcentre)

**Corinium Museum** Park St. Discover the amazing archaeology of the Cotswolds at this award winning museum. Tel: 01285 655611 [www.coriniummuseum.org](http://www.coriniummuseum.org)

**New Brewery Arts** Brewery Court, Cricklade St. The place to come and explore the best of British craft and creativity. Tel: 01285 657181 [www.newbreweryarts.org](http://www.newbreweryarts.org)

**Parish Church of St John Baptist** Market Place, Large attractive wool church. Tel: 01285 659317 [www.cireparish.co.uk](http://www.cireparish.co.uk)

**Cirencester Amphitheatre** Cotswold Ave. Earthwork remains of one of the largest Roman amphitheatres in Britain. Tel: 01285 655646 [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/cirencester-amphitheatre](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/cirencester-amphitheatre)

**Living Memory Historical Association Exhibition** Sheep St. Air raid shelter, home front and civilian service exhibitions from World War 2. Tel: 01285 650012 [www.livingmemory.btkc.co.uk](http://www.livingmemory.btkc.co.uk)

**Cotswold Leisure Centre** Tetbury Rd. Two swimming pools, a relaxation suite, gym, sports hall, squash courts, and a physiotherapy clinic. Tel 01285 654057 [www.everyoneactive.com](http://www.everyoneactive.com)

**Cirencester Open Air Pool** Cecily Hill, Historic, heated, outdoor swimming pool. Tel: 01285 653947 [www.cireopenair.co.uk](http://www.cireopenair.co.uk)

**Cirencester Civic Society Guided Walks** Town walks with local guides. Tel: 01285 885590 [www.ccsoc.org.uk](http://www.ccsoc.org.uk)

**Pick a Pot Paint** Stable Yard, Black Jack St. Create your own unique ceramic to take home. Tel: 01285 650405 [www.pickapot.co.uk](http://www.pickapot.co.uk)



Corinium Museum

St John Baptist in the Market Place is one of the largest parish churches in England and has been a place of Christian worship for well over a thousand years. It is one of the great 'wool churches' of the Cotswolds built from the prosperity of the wool trade. The church has one of the few pre-Reformation pulpits in the county dating from the 15th century. Amongst the many delights, inside is a silver-gilt cup owned by Queen Anne Boleyn. Facing onto the Market Place and built above the church's south porch is the Medieval Town Hall, a historic building refurbished in 2010/11 that is still in use today.

From the first Saturday in May, to first Saturday in October, the Living Memory Historical Association, have a free display of 'Wartime Life in the Cotswolds', at the Air Raid Shelter and their Home Front Exhibition on Sheep Street.



Cirencester Amphitheatre

## nearby attractions

**Organic Farm Shop** Multi award winning farm-shop and café, passionate about animal welfare, environment and future of food security. Tel: 01285 640441 [www.theorganicfarmshop.co.uk](http://www.theorganicfarmshop.co.uk)

**Butts Farm** Rare farm breeds, the place if you love animals, award winning farm shop and tea room, fun for all the family. Tel: 01285 862224 [www.buttsfarmrarebreeds.co.uk](http://www.buttsfarmrarebreeds.co.uk)

**Cotswold Water Park** Inland beach, watersports, horse riding, walking, cycling, high ropes activity centre and rally driving. Tel: 01793 752413 [www.waterpark.org](http://www.waterpark.org)

**Cirencester Golf Course** Just outside Cirencester, a picturesque and interesting course kept in great condition. Tel: 01285 652465 [www.cirencestergolfclub.co.uk](http://www.cirencestergolfclub.co.uk)

**Cirencester Park Polo Club** Watch a thrilling game with Pimms and a picnic and perhaps spot a royal or two. Tel: 01285 653225 [www.cirencesterpolo.co.uk](http://www.cirencesterpolo.co.uk)

**Cerney House Gardens** A romantic secret in the Cotswolds, set around a Victorian walled garden. Discover wildlife and woodland walks through 40 acres of Cotswold parkland. Tel: 01285 831300 [www.cerneygardens.com](http://www.cerneygardens.com)

**Elemental Sculpture Park** A beautiful 10 acre site transformed into woodland with ponds, gardens and glades, taking you on a journey for ongoing contemporary art. Tel: 01285 869040 [www.elementalsculpturepark.com](http://www.elementalsculpturepark.com)

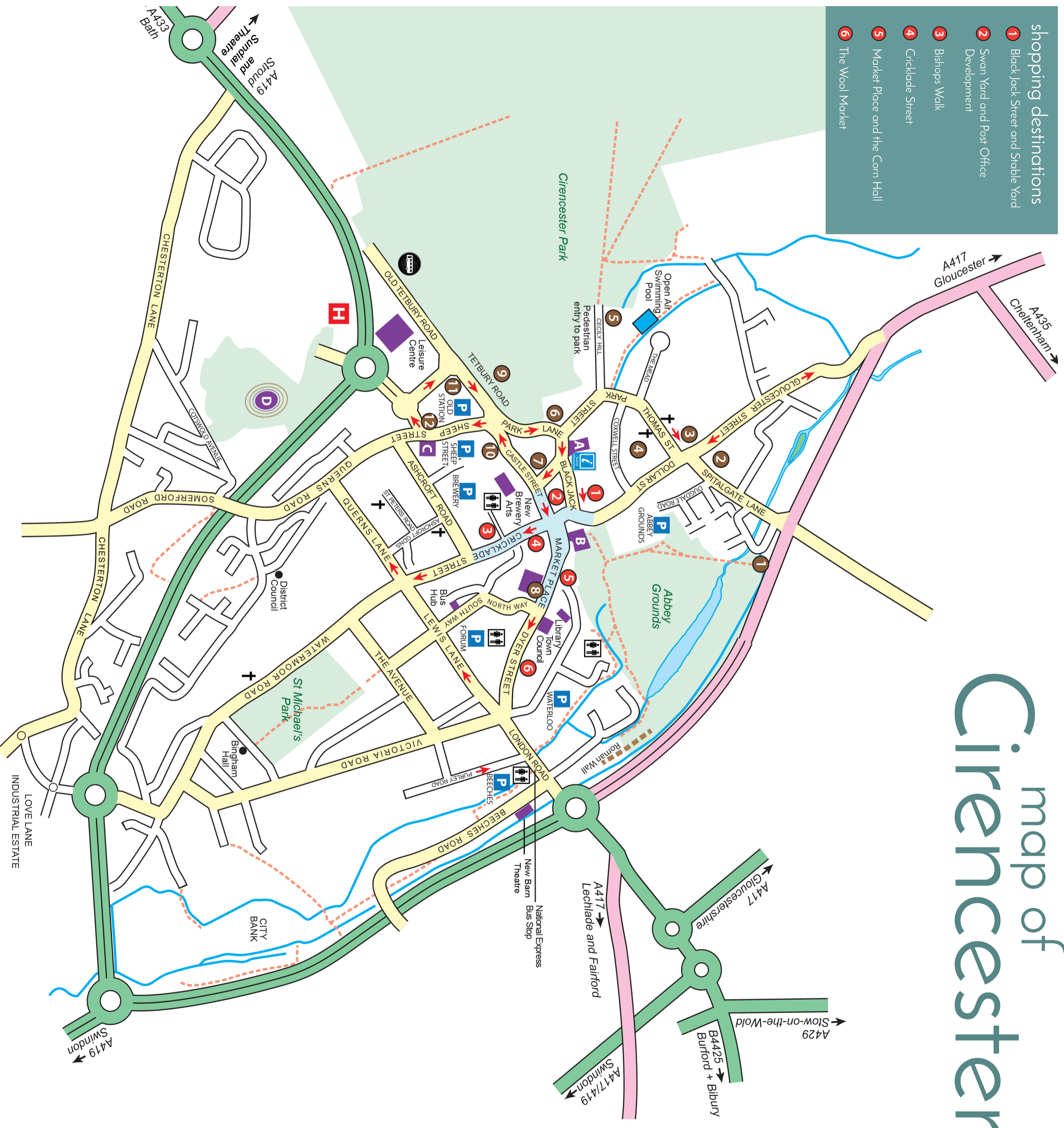
**Rodmorton Manor** A great example of a house and furniture made according to Arts and Crafts ideals, handmade using local stone, local timber and local craftsmen. Tel: 01285 841442 [www.rodmarton-manor.co.uk](http://www.rodmarton-manor.co.uk)

**Bibury Trout Farm** One of Britain's oldest, and certainly most attractive, trout farms. Tel: 01285 740215 [www.biburytroutfarm.co.uk](http://www.biburytroutfarm.co.uk)

**Chedworth Roman Villa** Cradled in a beautiful Cotswold valley rest the remains of one of the grandest Roman villas in Britain. Tel: 01242 890256 [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chedworth-roman-villa](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chedworth-roman-villa)

# Visitor map of Cirencester

- ### shopping destinations
- 1 Black Jack Street and Stable Yard
  - 2 Swan Yard and Post Office Development
  - 3 Bishops Walk
  - 4 Cricklade Street
  - 5 Market Place and the Corn Hall
  - 6 The Wool Market



## historical highlights

To explore the history of the town, you could pick up a Cirencester Civic Society Town Walk, or one of Corinium Museum Medieval or Roman Town Trails. Here are some of the attractions and buildings to look out for:

- A** Corinium Museum
  - B** Parish Church of St John Baptist
  - C** Living History Museum and Air Raid Shelter
  - D** Roman Amphitheatre
- 1 Norman Arch, Abbey Grounds. Built in the 12th century, the arch is the only standing remains of the Augustinian Abbey.
  - 2 St John's Hospital, Spitalgate Lane. Remains of the Hospital and Chantry of St John the Evangelist, founded in the 12th century by Henry II.
  - 3 St Thomas's Hospital, Thomas St. Built on wealth from the wool merchants in the 15th century as almshouses for destitute weavers.
  - 4 Coxwell Street, Gloucester Street and Dollar Street. These streets make up the most historical part of the town.
  - 5 The Barracks, Cecily Hill. Built in 1857 as the headquarters for the Royal North Gloucestershire Militia. Rock-faced stone with picturesque embattled tower and turret.
  - 6 Yew Hedge, Park St. Planted in 1720, this 40ft hedge is reputed to be the highest in Europe.
  - 7 Lloyds Bank, Castle St. Once the house of a wealthy wool merchant. A fine example of Palladian architecture.
  - 8 Corn Hall, Market Place. Victorian building, built in 1862 becoming a social and commercial focus for the town.
  - 9 First Museum, Tetbury Rd. Founded and maintained by the Bathurst family in 1856. Designed to house new discoveries recently made in the town. Although no longer a museum, the collection was donated to the town and is now housed in the Corinium Museum.
  - 10 Black Horse Inn, Castle St. Claimed to be the oldest pub in Cirencester, dating back to the 15th century.
  - 11 Old Station, Tetbury Rd. Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and opened in May 1841, it closed in October 1965.
  - 12 War Memorial, Sheep St. This monument was erected by Earl Bathurst and dedicated to those killed in the First World War.

### key to symbols

- Visitor Information
- Car Parks
- Public Toilets
- Shopping Destination
- Major Buildings
- Place of Worship
- One Way Street
- Coach Parking
- Footpath
- Shared Space
- Point of Interest