

Armchair Travellers Guide to England

Great Britain is one of the best places to visit from the comfort of your armchair. Especially in the colder months of the year. When the days are short, the fields are muddy, and the sky is more than 50 shades of grey.

To make up for these dreary months, there have always been copious amounts of tea, humour and creative storytelling to get people through.

A favourite list of books and movies are listed here, divided into the past and present. This way you'll get a gist of the country as it was, and how it is today. All while allowing you to enjoy the journey from here to there without leaving the comfort of home.



So, let's get to it, and start with:

The Past: Endless Drama and Intrigue of

Kings and Queens

England's Kings and Queens are tricky to follow, there's always a I, II, III all the way to VIII fighting someone with a similar name who is equally treacherous. Heads come off more regularly than a visit to London Tower. Making books on the subject a jolly good read. Full of excessive drama, intrigue and best of all they are based on true events.

While your average textbook is as boring as a poke in the eye, writers like [Philippa Gregory](#) bring the stories to light in a most novel way (pun intended). Making them easy to read, leaving you on edge of your seat late into the night. Now, there might be an embellishment here and there, yet, Ms Gregory knows her history. My favourites are:

[**The White Queen:**](#) Elizabeth Grey married Edward the IV, against the wishes of his family and the Kingmaker. Not only was she a mere daughter of a knight, but also a widow with two children. Highly unusual and sensational at the time. Yet for many years their marriage was successful. Like most stories about love and power, there's also plenty of drama. She has a lot of children, including the two Princes, that went missing in the tower. If you prefer to watch it rather than read it, it is also available on [DVD](#).

[**The White Princess**](#) is a follow on about the eldest daughter of the [White Queen](#) who was forced to marry Henry VII. The family hoped that the union would bring peace, which it did for some time. She was also the mother of Henry VIII, so the story sets a good background on the Tudor era of England's History. You can also buy this book in the [Cousin's War Boxset](#) for anyone interested in the whole period. The [movie is available on DVD](#).



[The Red Queen.](#) Is a part of '[The Court Tudor series](#)', this series covers the queens and stories around the Tudors, such as Henry VIII and his many wives. The Red Queen is about his grandmother Margaret Beaufort, who doesn't often get much attention. Yet, she played quite a significant role and had a strong hand in the upbringing of her son and grandson. She is often believed to be behind the disappearance and likely death of Two young Princes locked in the tower.

Philippa Gregory's stories are told from a woman's perspective, which wasn't a popular angle put forward at the time. Yes, while many women at that time were simply a pawn in a larger game. There were intelligent strategists and survivalists among them and Ms Beaufort was among them.

[The Tudors](#) is a suspenseful TV mini-series that is based on the life and a few of the marriages of Henry VIII, as well as the establishment of the Church of England.

A series called '[The Spanish Princess](#)' covers the life of Katherine of Aragon, Henry's first wife. Katherine's earlier life and first marriage aren't often written about. She was left in the lurch when her first husband King Arthur died, and her mother the Queen of Spain refused to pay her dowry. It was a tough beginning, without a happily ever after. Yet her courage, grace and character make it a great story.



[Daughter of time –](#) Is set in the current day. The story is about a bedridden detective, who decides to uncover the unsolved fate of The two Princes in the tower. His investigation takes him deeper into the life of their uncle, Richard III. You'll find it presents an interesting hypothesis of what might have happened.

Time Travelling back to England's Darker Past

There are really more books that cover the United Kingdom's history than you can read in one lifetime. Obviously, I can't cover them all, but here are a few of the best:

Books like the '[Time Travellers Guide to Medieval England](#)' is fabulously funny and take a deep dive into what the era would have been like if you were sent back in time.

The further you travel back in time, the less factual stories become. Earlier tales border on myths and legends of the British Isles. One of my favourites of that period is [The Sevenwaters series](#) by Julliet Marillier. Who does a brilliant job of bringing stories back to life and weaving in an old myth or two at the same time.

Another author that can be harder to find as they are often out of print is [Morgan Llewelyn](#). She brings stories of Ancient Albion and Ireland to life. I especially enjoy The Bard and The Druid.



If this is an era that rocks your boat, there is also a new [TV series that looks at this period called Britannia](#). While there aren't any poetic bards, it does have the Celts, druids, magic and a few gnarly Romans. The period is the time of the first Roman invasion around 43AD. You can find it on Sky TV or [Amazon Prime](#).

On-Screen Period dramas that Whisk you back through Time

[Downton Abbey](#). Resistant at first, as the show seems a bit cliché, in all honestly it is well worth watching. A great cast of actors and characters brings this whole period drama to life. It has the right amount of humour, warmth and scheming to keep you captivated all the way through to the end. Even the [latest box office movie of the same name is a keeper](#).

Others that are also set in the period are [Poldark](#), which

takes you through the challenges of rural life in Cornwall. The series is based on the famous [Poldark books by Winston Graham](#).

[Outlander](#), will take you North and up into Scotland, and is a period drama with a modern twist. Outlander is set in Jacobian times, and despite the love, and drama of this wartime era. It is the landscape and its timeless features that really steals the scene.



For any of those out there who enjoy a bit of comical black wit, on which English humour is based. Then you'll love the [Black Adder TV series](#). Written by Ben Elton and starring Rowan Atkinson and many of the cast of the equally [funny and famous Monty Python movies](#), it is the most comical view of England's history.

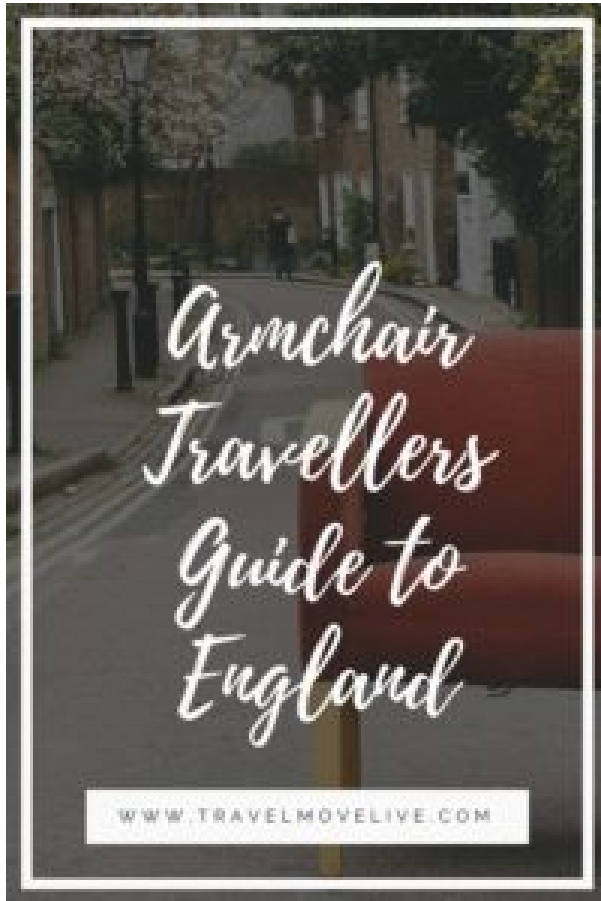
Modern Books and Movies of Great Britain

While the richness of England's history is never-ending, modern-day Britain has talent. As much as I like [Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes books](#), the [latest TV series Sherlock](#) makes London look so fabulous you'll want to visit immediately.

[Dare to be wild](#) is another perfect example. Based on true events, it contains a bit of romance, yet it is mostly about bringing a bit of wild nature back into English gardens. It's a story of a young gardener's dream to exhibit in the Chelsea flower show. It shows the English countryside and its magical landscapes in a most poetic light.



[Lad, A Yorkshire Story](#) – Such a touching story about life and death. It's often the ordinary everyday moments that become extraordinary. Most of us are touched by death, family issues and struggles. It's in these mundane moments we have the opportunity to uncover who we truly are.



This story is just that, every day that reaches out and touches us profoundly. It's a moving story, based on true events around the death of a boy's father and the effect it has on the family.

[Johnny English](#) – is what's needed after a serious movie. Good 'ole Rowan Atkinson, of Mr Bean fame, is a spy, and offers the is the best way to laugh off any and all sadness. Of course, the movie captures everything that is so quintessentially British and worth laughing at.

[Finding your feet](#) – The ideal feel-good movie. It's a view into everyday life in the UK, with a great acting cast of characters. It takes you through life turned upside down by events, the break up of a marriage, family and the magic that can come out of chaos.

It portrays hidden parts of London we don't often see on the big screen. Yes, you can swim in the ponds at Hampstead Heath and live on a canal boat. There are unknown suburbs, all worth a gander should you ever visit the city.



[Miss potter](#) – We all know the darling drawings by Beatrix potter but few of us know the author. This movie looks at how it all started out for Beatrix and how her little animals came to life.

It was quite rare at the time for women to have such freedom to create. While she did eventually marry it wasn't until she was much older. Overall its a great story of how nature can inspire us in the most charming of ways.

[Anonymous](#) – Who doesn't love a conspiracy theory? This one takes us on a deep dive into who the real Shakespeare might have been. Putting forth the most popular option of Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford.

Super actors really bring this movie to life and give us plenty of food for thought.

Personally, I am a fan of thinking it might it have been either [Mary Sidney](#) or [Amelia Bassano Lanier](#). Both of whom are better contenders than the Bard of Stratford.

If you are a Shakespeare fan, [Upstart Crow](#), is a comical series made in the same vein as [Black Adder](#) and is a very

funny view into what the real Shakespeare may have been like.



[Jam and Jerusalem](#) – This isn't a very well-known series, but it should be. It's a riot a comical take on country life written by Jennifer Saunders. Pure British humour at its best.

Timeless books about England. Warning: May increase the desire to travel

So many incredible writers come from England and weave wordy magic around this fair Isle of Albion. The top of the list are:

[The Shepherds life](#), A tale of the Lake District.

An old classic is pretty much as it sounds. A humble, honest and poignant view into the life simple life of a shepherd set in one of the most stunning parts of the country: The Lake District.



[The Living Mountain, Nan Shepherd](#)

A short but poetic book about the Cairngorm mountains in Scotland. It captures so beautifully the author's love for and relationship with them. The Living Mountain is a magical book written about and for nature.

"So simply to look on anything, such as a mountain, with the love that penetrates to its essence, is to widen the domain of being in the vastness of non-being. Man has no other reason for his existence."

– Nan Shepherd, [The Living Mountain](#)

[A Croft in the Hills](#), Katharine Stewart

Another bookshelf classic, it covers the tale of Katharine and her partner buying a croft (small countryside house) in the Scottish Highlands. It covers the simple, day-by-day challenges of life without luxury. Yet it does so in the purest form.

It is both romantic and honest in its simplicity and yet shows us that living a modest rural life can have more bite than a Rhodesian ridge-back with rabies.

Obviously, this lifestyle isn't for everyone, which is why

reading about it and experiencing it from your armchair is all the more entertaining.

[The Old Ways, Robert McFarlane](#)

Robert McFarlane's books are spellbinding, they'll carry you through highways, byways and countryside paths, stories and memories. So vividly engaging you may confuse their reading with your own future memories of adventures yet to come.

I started copying down phrases that resonated with me, only to realise I was copying the whole book, word for word. Eventually, I simply bought a copy for myself. I will inspire a long list of places to see and visit. It motivates us to a deeper exploration of the countryside. Leading to the article on why '[The Best way to see Britain in on Foot](#)'.



From here to there and everywhere, Get down, get cosy...

Kick back with your favourite beverage of cocoa or wine. Make popcorn, get comfortable and let yourself be transported both near and far by the greatest storytellers this country has

ever known.

This fair land of Albion is worth visiting anytime from the comfort of your armchair, or via plane, train or boat.

If you'd like to be transported to other countries through books and movies, check out my ['Armchair Travellers guide to Argentina'](#).

Thank you for the inspiring photographs from:

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Weekend Wanderings in Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Shrewsbury is a quaint medieval town, that made it onto my hit list of potential places to live here in the UK. This was largely due to the accolades it received from Londoners who'd made the move, housing prices and location. It didn't seem like much of a hard sell.

Yet, it is always wise before seriously considering settling into a new country or city to visit and spend some time there, even if only for a few days. You need to see the place first hand, does it live up to your expectations, as you view it through the eyes of a potential future resident.

While there is much I enjoyed about my visit to Shrewsbury.

The reality is that I couldn't see myself living there long-term. This is of course a brisk assessment – I know many people who have made the move and love it.

The decision on whether a place suits you or not is personal. It depends on your style, requirements and history. This is why it's important to know yourself, and what you are looking for.

Even though I won't be spending the rest of my life there, I did really enjoy my time there. It's a great city to escape to for a weekend, with its rich history, gorgeous Tudor buildings, tasty food and ample space for riverside wanderings.

It's a perfect spot to practice the [art of slow travel](#).

Here is a snapshot of spots that warrant a visit:



Best Places to Sleep in Shrewsbury

There are hotels in Shrewsbury. But if you are keen on a local experience a lot of pubs rent out rooms upstairs. This is

ideal for an authentic old-English experience that leaves a lasting memory.

Thankfully, a few old alehouses have also evolved. Back in the day a typical pub had wall-to-wall carpet, partnered with the nose-curling stench of beer, to create a multi-sensory overload of the most nauseating kind.

Now, there is a subset of bars that have modernized themselves, sharing the older Tudor-style building, but in a cleaner, stylish setting.

Boutique Pubs at their Finest

I stayed at [The Loopy Shrew](#): A fresh take, modern furniture and design in a country chic setting. Located in the centre of town, with everything within walking distance. The only downside is the photos on the website were taken with a fish-eye lens, giving the mistaken impression that the rooms are more spacious.

On the upside, the service and staff were friendly. And the room included a real English breakfast. A real cooked breakfast of Eggs Florentine (my fav), Full English Breakfast among others. Hands down, one of the best hotel breakfasts I've had in a while.

[The Lion + Pheasant](#) is also a boutique up-market pub that meets B&B, ideal for anyone with a taste for comfort and design.



Eating out in Shrewsbury

Travelling while attempting to go gluten-free has its challenges. I thought Japanese was a safe bet but was wrong – and in a smaller city exotic food can be a bit of a mistake. So, my first night's dinner was a tad mediocre.

To counter that, there are I found a few better restaurants with a gluten-free menu. [Jacques Bistro](#) has typical French fare at decent prices, it's open all day and offers great pre-theatre specials and a decent set menu.

[Loch Fyne](#) is a welcome treat. The food is local or sustainably sourced from the Scottish Highlands. So fresh it melts in your mouth and the service was second to none. It is popular with the locals and regulars and is located in the centre of town.

[Lion + Pheasant](#) is also a popular and recommendable choice. It is upmarket, with small portions – but well worth it for the quality and flavour. The atmosphere was great, and the food was phenomenal.

The city does have some stellar restaurants, but I did feel after a few nights to be running out of options. Especially

considering my desire to go gluten-free.

If I were eating gluten I would have liked to try the [Dough + Oil](#) as it looked like it had handcrafted sourdough pizza. In the end, when you've run out of places to eat, it might be time to move on.



Things to see and do in Shrewsbury

There is a good [calendar of events](#) happening in Shrewsbury. Everything from beer to folk festivals. I imagine the place turning into a mini-metropolis at those times. The city has an impressive new theatre complex. A small historic castle worth

visiting. With plenty more to see and do on the tourist route, you can [find more details here](#).

As I only had one free day and two working days to see the place, I opted for a walking tour and a scenic stroll along the river. It is along the river at Quarry park that you'll also find an incredible small garden called 'The Dingle'. Bursting at the seams with flowers, trees and benches it's the ideal spot to spend some time.

Not sure if there had recently been a flower festival in the city, as everywhere you look there are flowers. Flowers in the windowsills, flowers along the walkways, flowers hanging on shop fronts. Stunning.

Wandering back through Shrewsbury's past



Another point of interest outside top of the fact it has over 660 listed historic buildings. Is that Charles Darwin was born and grew up in Shrewsbury.

As a result, you'll find everything from rocks to restaurants named after him. You can see his statue at the library or visit his place of birth.

The old town encircled by the Severn River lends itself to

aimless wandering. The city shows a range of architectural styles from classic Tudor, Victorian, and Edwardian to modern eyesores of the industrial era.

Being on the border of Wales made the town a hub for the wool industry. You can see this early wealth reflected back in the quality of the early Tudor buildings.

It was also due to its location that it was at the forefront of regional disputes between Wales and England.

The Market Hall, a Hub of Creativity

When you get tired of strolling around town, [the Market Hall](#) is well worth a visit. It is one of my favourite places. You can sit down and grab a spot for lunch or do a spot of shopping. You will find fresh vegetables, vintage stalls, books, stalls selling wool or those that feature local artists. A vibrant creative hub of activity.

Getting out of town

If you have a car, you might even want to follow the trail of what they say [is the real king Arthur](#). Which legend has, does exist and happens to be from the local area. Ludlow and Wreham are close by and also have a rich history and colourful past and are worthy of a visit.

Being as it is Shrewsbury is also still today the gateway into Wales, you can catch trains up to Holyhead, or down to Cardiff and the start of the well-known Snowdonia park is but a short drive away.

Whatever your interest in Shrewsbury and the surrounding area, it is a great place to wander and spend a long weekend or dawdle away a few weeks.







Trials and Tribulations of Moving to the UK

"You can never visit the same place twice. Each time, it's a different story." – Maureen Johnson Click To Tweet

This famous quote is more than true. When you revisit a place, much of it will have changed. You will have changed, everything evolves or devolves as the case may be. There will be challenges, be they old or new.

Which is the situation I currently find myself in, here in the United Kingdom. It's a very different country that it was 20 years ago.

The Current State of Affairs

I've now been here for awhile and the plan was relatively simple; find work and house sit while I am looking for work. Once I've found a job I like, I'll move into the area and settle down – voila!!

Sounds pretty uncomplicated and like a plan, sounds easy to implement, so I should be rocking and rolling in no time...

The Key Challenges of Moving to the UK

However, there have been a few hiccups, roadblocks and obstacles on the way, as can be expected with any move abroad.

Here were my challenges and solutions, where they exist. It's was hard to put the list together in order of priorities. It's a wee bit of a chicken and egg scenario. You see before you get the one you need the other, or so you will see:

1. Proof of Address

Now if you arrive and immediately rent a property, you won't have this issue. However, for the most part, you will need a proof of address.

Most institutions such as a bank will request to see a utility

bill or a letter from the tax office or a bank statement. The bank statement will be especially hard, as you'll read below. You can't open one until you have an official proof of address. Herein lays the catch-22.

Now, this is going to be tricky if you are staying with friends, renting a room or house-sitting, as I have been doing.

I did read advice on one forum that you can register to vote wherever you are staying and you can then use this as a proof of address.

I didn't want to risk trying this, as it could also trigger a local council tax levy in my name. As I am house-sitting this is not something I want to risk. If you are renting it could be a solution.

One bank recommended that I register with a doctor and use that as proof of address. Which I did do, yet they also needed (you guessed it) a proof of address.

2. National Insurance number

To work in the UK you'll need a national insurance number. Luckily, I already had one – or so I thought... Sadly, it couldn't be found in the system. So after many phone calls, I made an appointment with a local job center to request a new one.

If you are new to the UK it is easy enough to apply, you need to call up the job center and make an appointment. Depending on where you live this can take a few weeks. They will send you a confirmation letter for the appointment. And if you don't have a utility bill you can use this letter as proof of address for the appointment.

You do need to take your International ID/ Passport. Keeping

in mind right now, depending on where you come from you need a visa for permission to work in the UK.

If you are European and have an EU Passport, at this moment in time you can still apply and have the right to live and work in the UK. After Brexit, if and when that all goes ahead, the situation may change.

I've [written about it here](#).

Once you have your appointment the National insurance number will be sent to you, this can take anywhere from 5 – 21 days.

Please note that your National Insurance number can not be used as proof of address. Which leads me to the next obstacle:

3. Opening a Bank Account



This so far has been the most frustrating experience. So much so, that I've decided NOT to open a bank account.

I don't have any proof of address I can use. So, I've simply given up. But not without finding a suitable solution.

Thankfully, there are modern digital options that you can choose from instead.

To meet my nomadic needs, I'm using two financial companies:

Revolut:* They are ideal if you still have an account overseas in a different currency and/or you travel regularly. You can upload money from your bank account abroad and then exchange that currency as needed. They give better rates than you would get via your own bank.

They will send you a card, which is a prepaid card. So it doesn't work in all online shops, but it works well enough in the local ATM's, stores and for most online purchases.

The only downside is that they don't give me a local account, with which to receive payments. There is a handy request payment link that people can pay into with a credit card.

But a company who is hiring you will want to pay into a real account. Which is why I opened:

Monese: This online, mobile account was simple to set up. It gives me a local account that I can use here to accept payments. You can access it via your mobile, you can request a debit card. And in no time you are off and running.

It is a whole new world of banking, which is much more consumer focused, easy to use, with fewer costs and paperwork.

There are other companies that I looked into, but these two are trustworthy and meet my needs. With that done, I am good to go.

Side note: If you would like to open a Monese Account, and get a £10 welcome gift, when you open and top up the account, just use my code: HUZEYS9F

My last challenge remains to be seen in how and when it'll affect me:

The Dreaded Brexit

I wrote a [post earlier about Brexit](#). While it doesn't yet affect me directly. One feels a gist of the overall unrest that exists in all levels of government, business, and society on the whole.

Ferries are complaining they have fewer bookings for next year,



pharmacies are concerned about running out of medicine. The general public doesn't know what to expect.

The mainstream media doesn't help the situation, as it milks every roundabout fear that they can scour up out of whatever garbage can their digging in. Only time will tell what is and isn't justified.

For now, put your seatbelt on, and hang tight – like any of life's roller-coasters I am sure we'll come out the other side laughing or crying. And either way, we'll brush ourselves off, soldier on. Heading right into the next challenge that life offers us.

So here I am, back in the UK for now, not as settled as I would like to be yet. However, already much more settled that

I was.

Hope you find some of this advice useful to help you to prepare and tackle any future move you may have planned to the UK.

The photos are thankfully provided by Unsplash:

Feature photo by [Bruno Martins](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Night photo by [Robert Almonte](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Nature Lovers Guide to London

Putting 'Nature' and 'London' in the same sentence may seem like an oxymoron. However, you may be surprised at how green and lush London can be once you know where to look.

As a visitor to the city, there are plenty of great museums and places to visit such as the [British Museum](#), [Tate Modern](#), [Victoria and Albert Museum](#). All super places to visit, however, too many hours indoors can leave you feeling like you've had the life sucked out of you.

Which is when you might want to escape to a park, such as Hyde Park, Regents or Green Park. Be warned that these may be full of all the same people you ran into in the Museum. The solution is to find a few less famous but more fabulous greens spots around the city.

These quiet lush places are the go-to when you start to feel a

bit drained. A bit of fresh air and a place to recharge is the perfect natural remedy, and here's a list of my favourites:

[St Dunstan in the East Church](#)

This church is tucked away in the back streets of the financial district, and can feel somewhat clandestine solely by the fact that many people that work nearby don't even know of its existence.

It withstood and was patched up after the great fires of 1666, before being bombed during the blitz in 1941. Many of the structural walls of the old church remain standing although the roof is gone. It's a treat to watch nature reclaim the space. There is a garden and benches to sit and while you enjoy a coffee or lunch.

It's a stone's throw from the [Tower of London](#), so worth a visit before or after your tour.

Cost: Free

Address: St. Dunstan Hill, London



Hampstead Heath

Hampstead Heath particularly beautiful park thanks to its lakes, easy accessibility and incredible views of the sprawling city that it overlooks. It's the perfect place for a picnic – depending on the weather – or just a stroll to stretch your legs and get some fresh air and exercise. Cost: Free



Inner City Squares

There are so many to list, it is really best to look on google maps and pick one nearby to wherever you might be on the day.

Go grab a takeaway coffee or a sandwich and find a quiet bench to sit on as you watch the seasons float on by.

A few of my favourites are Bloomsbury, Russell and Soho Square. Each with their own history, stories and famous plaques that are plastered on the affluent buildings nearby. Cost: Free

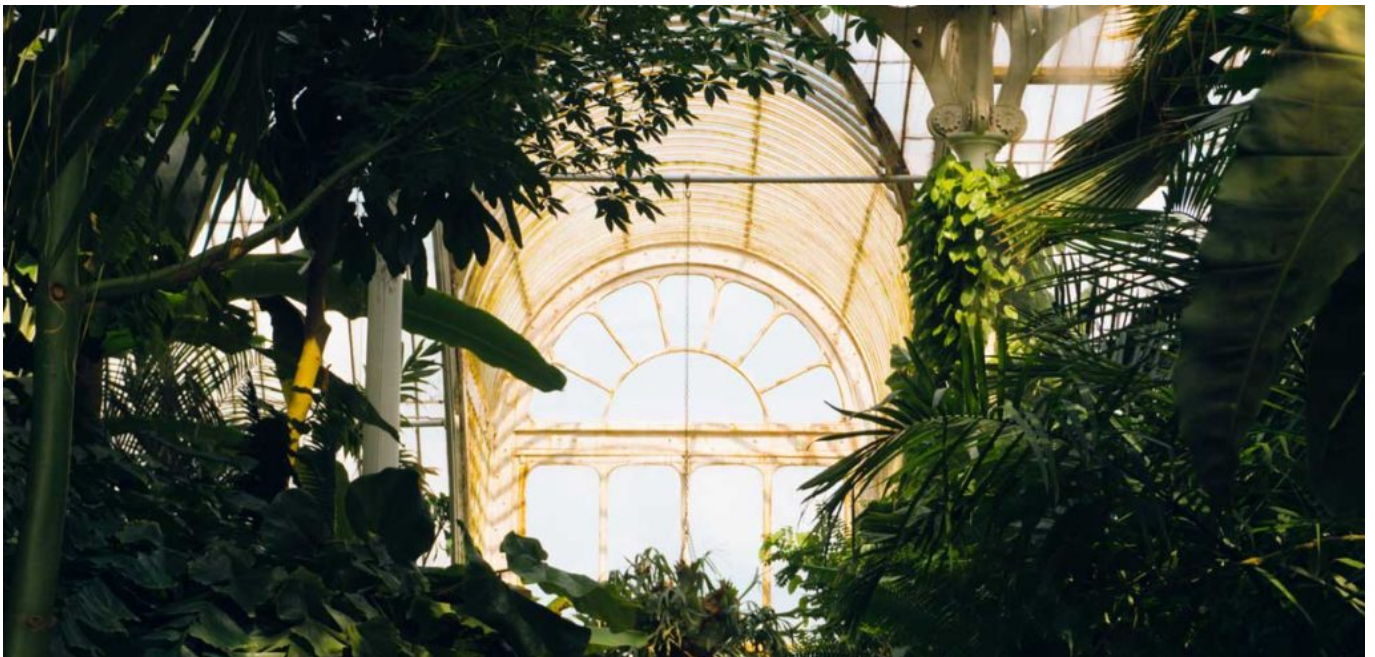
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Listing themselves as the most famous Botanic Gardens in the world, when you arrive you'll see why.

You can visit for a whole day and still not see it all. There are glass-houses, endless walking paths, treetop walkways, flower gardens as well as libraries of antique plant books, fungi specimens as well as a science, educational and specimen areas. After all this, you might also want to recharge in the cafe, where you can sit and relax, enjoy the fresh food and endlessly green views.

Cost: £13.75 for adults, £3.50 for children

Address: Kew Gardens



Chelsea Flower Show

This is a big colourful bonanza is held once year in May, and shows of the best of the best of the English flowers and gardens. You'll see where the term an 'English Garden', comes from, as it's certainly no half-baked affair. This is a serious business!

For the those of us that are easily enchanted by the colours,

shapes, and smells of all that flowers offer us, it is the perfect way to spend an afternoon.

The [Royal Horticultural Society](#) can be [found here](#) and hosts a range of events throughout the country, so even if you are not in London in May, you can visit their calendar to find other events that may be of interest. Website: [Chelsea Flower Show](#)

There is an incredibly beautiful movie based on the real-life story of Mary Reynolds. Who was the youngest winner of the Chelsea Flower Show. She works to bring elements of the wild back into our parks and gardens.

The [Dare to be Wild Movie](#) can be found on Amazon.

[Hackney City Farm](#)

There aren't just lush green gardens to visit, in some places you can also pitch in and get your hands dirty. You can even visit and pet the animals on the farm, stop in at the shop and buy produce that is grown here on the farm.

Whether you have kids or if you just feel like doing something completely different while in town by visiting and supporting a local initiative, then head over to [Hackney City Farm](#). The cost to visit: Free

Haringey Parkland Walk and Bat Project

There is a lovely Parkland walk in North London. It will take you along an old railway line, which is so incredibly rich in foliage you may be mistaken for thinking that you are in the countryside. You'll come across an old unused station that nature has reclaimed, and at the end of the walk you can visit the local Bat Project.

The bats are sleeping, undisturbed during the day, which is

why it's most shut off to the public. However, it still has is a gorgeous spot in an 'Adam's Family kind of way'.

There are always ongoing projects to protect wildlife around London. If you would like to keep an eye on what is going on, or if you live or are visiting for a longer period you can volunteer and participate in the projects by going to [Wild London website](#).

Cost: Free

Address: Parkland Walk, Haringey

[Map and information here](#)



Visiting these Lush Green Foreign worlds without having to step outside:

For those that would love some inspired reading, either while you are on the tube (underground) or have a long-haul destination.

Or perhaps you are an armchair traveller, you can still enjoy it all from the comfort of your own home.

I highly recommend these books to put you in the mood, or to inspire your love of nature, travel and endless green gardens:

- [The Signature of Things](#) by Elizabeth Gilbert.
- [Gathering Moss, A Natural and Cultural History of Moss](#), by Robin Wall Kimmerer.
- [Earthy joys by Philippa Gregory](#), Historical, Fictional and Green.
- [The Secret Life of Plants](#) & [The Hidden Life Of Trees](#) will have you looking at plants and trees in a whole new way. Did you know they're telepathic? That they faint before you even think of ripping a leaf off... so much fascinating reading.

Greenery is always is worth visiting:

Wherever you go, even in the biggest cities in the world finding a bit of time to enjoy the greenery around us is beneficial to us, our health and beneficial to the plants and trees. It's our appreciation and involvement that keeps local councils aware of the importance of these spaces in our lives. Whether we live there or we are just a visitor passing by, we all need a little bit of greenery and fresh air in our lives.

Other articles/ resources that may interest you:

[Stunning green Spaces in London via Secret London Tours by locals](#)

[25 Stunning Green Space in London](#) by Timeout

Stunning photos, thanks to:

Hampstead Heath Photo by [Amadeusz Misiak](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Kew Gardens: Photo by [Jack Young](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Moving to the UK During Brexit

What impact does Brexit have on your move to the UK?

After many years abroad, I've finally decided to move back to the United Kingdom where I lived many moons ago.

The first question on anyone and everyone's lips is 'But what about Brexit?'

While I know that Brexit is a hot topic, and widely entertaining. To give you a small taste, just last week the local paper was voicing its concern about the 'sperm'. It seems that the Nordic countries have been the largest distributors, and now the English men are going to have to step up. I kid you not, here is the article:



Yes, it's funny, silly, and serious and has most Brits with their knickers in a twist... Brexit is providing mainstream

media with an endless amount of juicy material. Yet, they like the masses that are read the papers, are pretty clueless as to what is going on.

Why would they be clear on it, even the politicians don't seem to know or agree on the facts. Right now, they are preparing for a worst-case scenario, what happens if there is no trade deal, they've termed it the 'No Deal' Scenario – this could change again next week... Stay tuned people.

To simplify the governments' terminology: The no deal scenario doesn't mean they are not working on a deal. So there *might* still be a deal. Just in case though, they've spent hours in creating a no deal worst case scenario. – although they don't think that by creating it, they are likely to *perhaps maybe* need it.

I think by the time they have come to a verdict (let's be honest, 2 years on and they're still talking rather than doing). Personally, by then I'll be living elsewhere.

So can or can't I, you, we move to the UK?



Right now, this answer is the same as it was before Brexit was the spark of an idea. It depends on where you are from; many of the same rules apply as they did before Brexit.

As an EU citizen, I have the right – at this time – to live and work in the United Kingdom. If they do go ahead with the Brexit, they won't throw me out.

The pre-exit date is March 2019, if you arrive before this date, you have right to pre-settlement. If you arrive after this date, as an EU citizen you'll need to register yourself. The date of Britain's exit from European Union is December 2020, after which different rules may apply depending on our situation, which isn't fully clear yet – may depend on the deal, no deal scenario.

I was right to think that now is the perfect time for me to come back and spend some time in the UK. If you move here pre-exit – then you're as good as gold as they say in Australia.

At this point, I think there are more people jumping up and down, because people love drama, to complain and jump up and down. The reality is that other than the sperm, there isn't much to jump up and down about.

The ideas of stockpiling food, have years worth of medicine on hand and having to create your own sperm are a wee bit exaggerated.

Of course, I would like to take the opportunity to point out for the first time in recent history the Brits have finally focused on something other than the weather. And the weather has been brilliant, the best summer on recorded history. So maybe less worrying, more enjoying

For more information (can't guarantee clarity):

For anyone looking for up-to-date information, please check the [government website](#) on the subject.

Or this pretty [clear blog by the home office](#), or if you'd prefer the EU's take on what you can and can't do, then you can find that over on their [website here](#).

For those that are already living and working in the UK, you can apply for pre-settlement status, which you can find [more information on here](#).

For those of you looking for the facts the media won't share with you, and the stats they don't print. Perhaps you're looking for a bit of giggle, here is a great article on [Global Citizen](#). As they rightly point out, even the Queen is actually German. Maybe she can be the first to go?

If you are not an EU citizen, different rules will apply, the same rules as before the Brexit scenario. Visa and Immigration information can [be found here](#).

To do List

- ☒ walk dog
- ☒ sort out photos
- ☒ buy aunt vellie gift
- ☐
- ☐



If you are moving abroad and not sure where to start, [download my free checklist](#) here, making your move that little bit easier.

Big thanks for Photo. By [Robert Tudor](#) on [Unsplash](#)

A Seekers Guide to Glastonbury

Welcome to A Seekers Guide to Glastonbury and it's sacred sites, for those that are seeking the magic, with both feet on the ground. Here is my advice on the best way to visit a sacred site to make the most of the magic you'll encounter.

A few tips to keep in mind when visiting a sacred site:

1. Everything is frequency. Sacred sites also hold a specific frequency stronger than most. And we all hold our own frequency. Simply said some will resonate with you and some will not. Don't take it personally.
2. Do to give yourself the time and space to sit and see if you connect to the place.

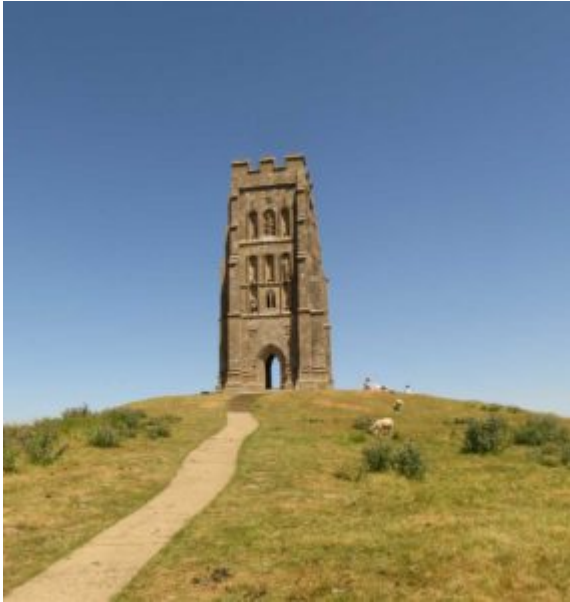
In the wise words of [Manon Tromp](#):

"Let go of expectations, go with the flow and take your time to let Avalon do what it needs to do".

I also agree with [Freddy de Silva's](#) views on why we visit sacred sites (paraphrased): Every sacred site we visit awakens a spark in us, and takes us forward on our journey of self-evolution. As each of us is on our own unique life pilgrimage, we will each experience it in our own way.

Which is why I put together my own Seekers Guide to Glastonbury;

A Pilgrimage to Glastonbury Tor



Glastonbury Tor is a magical spot. To connect and feel the energy of the land, I choose to walk up to the top of the Tor barefoot. Being so steep, every step was a reminder of how unfit I was feeling – I ended up feeling more out of breath than enlightened.

To keep myself going I imagined all the pilgrims that had walked the path before me. All the ceremonies and processions that the hill must have seen over the ages.

I hoped that by the time I got to the top that the veils would lift and Avalon would appear before me. Needless to say, that didn't happen.

Instead I went and found a quiet spot to sit on the hill. A quiet place to sit and feel all that I couldn't see. To connect to the energy of the site.

It was pretty magic.

If you find yourself at a sacred site do find a quiet place

away from everyone else. A place to connect, to go within and meditate on what you feel and what emerges within you. Churches are often built on Sacred Sites, which were often built on the earth's energy or Ley Lines.

Sacred sites have also had people making pilgrimages to them for thousands of years. Using them for their intentions, prayers and ceremonies. Put all this together and you end up with a magical energy for us all to tap into. Sit in the glow of those energies and let them share some of that subtle to strong magic with you. It is free to visit the Tor, you can find information on the National Trust's [Website here](#).

Getting your toes wet at Chalice Well

Chalice well sits at the bottom of the Tor, across the road from the White Springs. It is a small park that costs £4.50 to enter. It's a peaceful garden, well tended and with many areas to sit and reflect and meditate.



The ice cold red spring water at Chalice Well is the stuff of legends. One story is that the water gets its red colour from Joseph of Arimathea who added a few drops of Jesus's blood to it. Another is that it is the spring of eternal youth and has

healing properties.

The fact is the iron oxide gives the water the reddish colour. The well has been in use for thousands of years and is a constant 11 degrees all year around. There is a small pool you can walk through, and it's pretty cold!

You can drink the water from the spot where you'll find the lions head. Legends say it gives eternal life, I did have a drink so let's see if that is true. Only time will tell.

It's a lovely garden, and well worth the entry fee and a visit.

[Chalice wellsprings is run by the trust, website here.](#)

Address: 85-89 Chilkwell Street.

Dive into the Sacred White Springs

The White Springs sit at the foot on the Tor, managed by volunteers and open in the afternoons. It is free to enter.

You can immerse yourself in these waters. The spring and its pools are lit by candlelight. While I stood in the darkness and I wasn't sure if I wanted to risk slipping across the cold stones into a pool of water.

So I drank some instead and wet my feet with it outside and hoped that would suffice.

[The White Springs website can be found here.](#) Address: Well House Lane.

Time Travel to Glastonbury Abbey



At a cost of £7.50, I had to consider whether it would be worth it to see an old ruin. The curiosity of seeing King Arthur's tomb and the original church of Joesph de Armithea drew me in.

I am so very glad it did. The museum itself wasn't that interesting. And I have my doubts that King Arthur ever existed let alone lay there. Rumour has it this was most likely the churches medieval money-making marketing ploy.

So while I didn't see a tomb fit for marketing, or bones. I did have the pleasure of visiting one of the oldest medieval kitchens in Europe. And a chance encounter with Alice from the 1500s.

Alice was busy working and complaining about how a woman's work is never done. Before beginning her story of the kitchens and abbey's history. We sat down and had a nice long chat about ages past.



I heard that my fellow countryman from the Low Lands (Netherlands) visited the abbey in the 1500s. Brought over for their skills in silk weaving with the intention to teach those skills to locals. It was believed they spent time living in the kitchen of the Abbey. They never did have the opportunity to pass on the skills. They fled when Catholic King Henry came into power. As did most Protestants to avoid prosecution.

I did the day tour with Alice later in the day, and also learnt that the Abbey was at once the richest in the country. Pilgrims and visitors coming from far and wide to visit the holy site, seeking to clear their sins.



Luckily the wealthy people had the most sins. Which they could absolve for the right amount of money. Which is why the wealthy landlords left all their holding to the abbey in the hope of eternal redemption.

Now in a cruel twist of fate, it is the same wealth that destroyed them. The greedy king, who had spent all his money

on war decided to put the abbot on trial. The abbot was found guilty, hung and quartered at the top of the Tor. The Abbey ransacked and it's wealth sold and left to ruin.

You can enjoy the interesting stories and rich history by taking one of the guided walking tours that is included in the entrance fee. There is a tour every hour until 4 PM.

[The Glastonbury Abbey website is here.](#) Address: Magdalene Street.

St. Margaret's Chapel and Almshouses



This is a quiet secluded garden off the street. At the entrance, You'll find a finger labyrinth, which is a meditation in itself and fun. You can pray or meditate in the small old chapel or garden. The little courtyard almshouses were once hospital rooms built in the 11th century.

One of them is open and set up with furniture from the era. You can see how small yet gracious it was. Those that had to stay would have been well looked after.

While the walls of the courtyard in ruin from the onslaught of time. There are lovely details to the garden and can see that the place is up kept with love. Address: 46 Magdalene street.

Wearyall Hill and the Holy Thorn



The Holy Thorn, is where the original staff of Joseph of Armithea took root and grew, the tree is still there. It pains me to write that vandals killed and chopped branches from the tree. So it isn't half of what it once was.

The tree, or the remaining stump is still there and still holds an incredible energy. I recommend putting your hands on it and feeling it's warmth.

It costs nothing to visit, and has great views over to the Tor and the rest of Glastonbury.

More Magical spots to visit

Glastonbury is full of unusual shops, people and places that

you won't find on your average High Street. From the magic shop like the [Cat & Cauldron](#), where you can buy a real wand, staff or a host of other magic book and paraphernalia.

Lovers of the Esoteric and metaphysical books can [visit Avalon Library](#). In the same arcade 2-4 High street, is [Star Child](#), an incredible essential oil and herb shop. And upstairs you'll also find the [Goddess Temple](#). Which hosts speakers and events most nights of the week.

Anyone for cuppa tea & a scone?

[The Abbey Tea Rooms](#) has stunning views of the ruins and some of the best Tea + Scones with clotted cream and jam and other English goodies which will give you the energy to climb the Tor or walk the Abbey gardens. Address: 15 Magdalene St.

For those that might be looking for a stronger sacred drink, the [George's hotel and Pilgrims Inn](#) is a lovely old fashioned English Pub in a well preserved medieval building.

You can even [book a night and stay over the inn](#), if you dare, its known to be haunted and you can read about a [few spectral accounts and ghost stories of the Inn](#).

Where to Stay in Glastonbury

I was lucky enough to spend 3 weeks doing a work exchange through [Workaway](#) at [Earth Spirit Centre](#). Incredibly lucky to met some truly magical people. The centre also runs incredibly workshops throughout the year, so be sure to check their calendar to see what's on.

[AirBnb](#) is also highly recommended, particularly [Earth Mama's House](#) that is run by [Manon Trump](#). Manon also runs tours

to [sacred sites including Stonehedge and Avesbury](#).

The Magic never ends

Glastonbury can be many things, quirky, magical, spiritual and at times over the top. Is it a reflection of our inner selves, is it whatever we want it to be (yes, be prepared for fairies and men with arrows and crossbows walking along the high street).

It can have moments of feeling like it is spirituality gone mainstream. Yet, it is still enchanting. The people I met there is that they are all doing whatever they want, being whoever they want and living life as they want – blissfully content.

In this crazy world – maybe this is the sanity of it all. There isn't any seeking, but an authentic way of being. And that, in itself is kinda Magical.

For Further reading:

Freddy de Silva's [Website](#). Freddy de Silva's book: [The Divine Blueprint](#).

Manon Tromp's Website, you can also find her on the Mystical Tours website.

Anyone interested in visiting Avesbury Stones can [read more here](#).



