



## Hampshire's Ode to Autumn

If you're looking for autumnal destinations in the UK, how about picking-up a copy of Keats' *Ode to Autumn*, and following in his footsteps on [The Keats' Walk](#) in Winchester?

He composed the ode in 1819 - regarded by critics as one of the most perfect short poems in the English language - after a walk near Winchester one autumnal evening. It is said that its inspiration was the landscape he walked on daily basis during a stay in Winchester.

Recently named [the best place to live in Britain](#), Winchester offers the base for plenty of autumnal walking from the city centre directly into the South Downs National Park.

It will also help to introduce the visitor to Hampshire's best-known author, Jane Austen whose grave can be found inside Winchester Cathedral - one of the many venues in Hampshire which will be marking the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death in 2017.

Further details can be found on two websites at present: <http://janeausten200.co.uk>; and <http://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk/janeausten>.

From Winchester, it's a short drive to Chawton, and a chance to see [Jane Austen's House Museum](#) and [Chawton House Library](#).

Another seasonal place to visit would be [Gilbert White's House](#) in Selborne, which contains the story of the pioneering naturalist who is regarded by many as England's first ecologist, and someone who shaped the modern attitude of respect for nature.

As a rural county, autumn is a time of harvesting, and we can find plenty of food-and-drink options to reflect this throughout Hampshire: from its vineyards, to its cider making at somewhere like [Upper Neatham Mill](#).

Autumn is also the time when Hampshire celebrates its local food and drink at events such as [The New Forest Food and Drink Festival](#) from October 31<sup>st</sup> to November 6<sup>th</sup>; the [Winchester Cathedral Harvest Festival](#) on October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>; and [at Emsworth's Great British Food Fortnight](#) which draws to a close this year on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Autumnal breaks in Hampshire can be enjoyed throughout the county, and VisitHampshire has a full listing at <http://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk/where-to-stay>.

These are some examples of where it's possible to enjoy an especially seasonal stay...

### **Lainston House Hotel, Winchester**

Located in 63 acres of gorgeous Hampshire countryside, Lainston House in Winchester is a 5 star country house hotel perfect for an autumn getaway. Pick up a jogging or **walk trail map** from reception and follow the wooden posts that guide the way, or hop on one of our mountain bikes (we dare you to try the tandem!) and explore the autumnal environment that way. Discreetly sheltered in the grounds of the elegant 17th Century mansion of Lainston House, lies a secret, walled Kitchen Garden. Head Chef Olly Rouse, together with the grounds team, has built the 4 acre kitchen garden, which now provides 90% of kitchen herbs. **Relax beside the open fire in the ornate Cedar Bar** or dine in 'The Avenue', Lainston's 3 AA Rosette restaurant. Alternatively, take part in an **autumnal cooking course** at 'Season' cookery school.

*From around £130 per night*

<https://www.exclusive.co.uk/lainston-house/>

### **Upper Neatham Mill, Alton**

In a converted 17th-century barn on the bank of the River Wey, this relaxing B&B is the perfect location for an autumnal break in Hampshire. The accommodation runs a hugely popular **two-day cider making course** during the autumn months. The weekend is as much about learning and using the equipment, working as a team and sharing experiences as **learning the art of cidermaking** itself, with discussions likely to continue over an evening meal. Upper Neatham Mill is also just a short distance from the Jane Austen House Museum in Alton, which makes it ideal for looking forward to the Jane Austen 200 celebrations and taking autumnal walks in the surrounding woodland - walking in the footsteps of Jane Austen herself.

*From £79 per room, per night B&B*

<http://upperneatham.co.uk/index.php>

### **The Pig, Brockenhurst**

The New Forest is one of the UK's best places for edible fungi and foraging expeditions. Wild mushrooms are on the menu at The Pig, a Georgian shooting lodge with a cosy, shabby-chic appeal and plentiful kitchen garden, even in autumn. Nearby are Bolderwood and Rhinefield Ornamental drives and Exbury Gardens, all spectacular sights.

*Double rooms from £155 per night (midweek)*

<https://www.thepighotel.com/brockenhurst/>

### **Hotel Terravina, Woodlands**

Located between Southampton and the New Forest, this restaurant with pleasant, cosy bedrooms is a great base for witnessing the annual autumn Pannage (until mid-November), a beautiful and rare sight, when domestic pigs are turned out on to the forest floor to graze on acorns and beechmast. A very warm welcome and seasonal dishes, including pork, await you at Terravina, plus superb wines courtesy of owner and world-class sommelier Gerard Basset.

*Double rooms from £160*

<http://www.hotelterravina.co.uk>

Further tourist information can be found at <http://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk>.

*Ends*