



## Winter is the perfect time to visit Newbury on the Great West Way

Newbury is one of the Great West Way's quintessentially beautiful market towns, steeped in history and surrounded by areas of outstanding natural beauty. First recorded as a town in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Newbury came to prominence for its prosperous wool trade and highly regarded cloth manufacturing industry in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, soon becoming industry leaders in the trade. Today, [West Berkshire Museum](#) is housed in the iconic 17<sup>th</sup> century cloth hall and the old Granary/Corn Stores in the Wharf.

During the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the town offered the first daily coach to London with passengers spending forty hours on the journey! Thankfully today's visitors can reach the town more easily – in under an hour by direct train from London- and it has more than enough to enjoy for a day or weekend, as a short break or a stop on a longer trip along Great West Way.

## 5 Reasons to Visit Newbury this Winter

Winter is a great time to visit to take advantage of the town's fabulously festive Christmas events programme, soak up the heritage and peruse the abundance of independent shops and eateries. Here is a run-down of the top 5 reasons to visit this season:

### 1. Shop for unique Christmas gifts

Enjoy Christmas shopping in the bustling atmosphere of a traditional market town. Alongside the many national brands of [Parkway Shopping Centre](#), it's well worth exploring Newbury's wealth of independent retailers, including local institutions like Camp Hopson, a traditional department store dating back to 1921, and hardware store Barry Forkin Toomers which has been serving the town since 1692!

More unique shopping opportunities are offered by a monthly artisan market, twice-weekly Charter Markets, and regular specialty markets, such as the Newbury Vegan Market. Explore a full shopping guide at <https://visitnewbury.org.uk/enjoy/shopping>.

### 2. Soak up some Festive Culture

Housed in a beautiful Grade II listed 19th century building in the very heart of Newbury's Market Place, the Corn Exchange is a flagship arts centre for the Southeast and is home to a thriving 400 seat theatre, 40 seat independent cinema, and a popular Kitchen & Bar. Their annual Christmas pantomime production is one of the most popular shows produced each year (look out for their adult only performances!).

Just outside the town, the highly acclaimed [Watermill Theatre](#), housed in a unique setting within a converted watermill, brings a range of professional theatre productions to the town. From Shakespeare to new writing and West End transfers, it's well worth checking out what's on.

And for the children, [Shaw House](#) hosts an event programme full of magic and puppet shows, workshops and family fun.

### 3. Wrap up and walk in the winter air

You can walk in almost any direction from the town centre and be immersed in rolling countryside and canal-side splendour within minutes. One of our favourite walks is along the towpath of the Kennet & Avon Canal which passes through the very heart of Newbury town centre along its 87-mile journey along the Great West Way from London in the east to the Bristol Channel in the west. As you walk alongside the canal, look out for the variety of wildfowl which call it home, including swans, ducks, geese, moorhen, and cormorants. Visitors can check out [The Canal and](#)

[River Trust](#) for more information on boat trips and activities on and by the waterway and can download a copy of the [Great West Way Guide to the Kennet and Avon Canal](#) to explore the Great West Way further on the waterway.

A stop for afternoon tea at the Teashop by the Canal is highly recommended, as is popping upstairs to discover the history of Newbury Wharf in the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust's information centre above the teashop.

#### 4. Enjoy A Day at the Races

[Newbury Racecourse](#) is one of the most famous and prestigious racing venues in the UK, providing world class racing, hospitality and excellent facilities for conferences and events. Renowned for its friendly atmosphere and remarkable views, Newbury Racecourse offers enthralling action throughout the year at over 28 race days. One of the highlights of the winter season is the Winter Festival, with its "Gentlemen's Day" and Best Dressed Gentleman contest adding to the fun both on and off the track.

#### 5. Explore West Berkshire and the Great West Way

Newbury is recognised as a crossroads in southern England and makes a great base to explore along the Great West Way. Highclere Castle, perhaps best known as the setting for the period drama, Downton Abbey, is just up the road from the historic town centre, and the [North Wessex Downs](#) are just a stone's throw away and are a mecca for walking and cycling.

### **Seasonal Event Highlights**

The town's annual Festival of Light is set to return bigger and better than ever for 2021. Details will be released shortly but, in the meantime, why not add these treats to your festive diary:

Sat 20 November: Christmas Lights Switch-On Festival

Christmas season kicks off in earnest with the first day-long family festival with over 20 free workshops and activities, including cupcake decorating, bath bomb painting, cider mulling and an opportunity to meet Mr Green Grinch and Frozen ice-queen sisters!

Sunday 21 November: Newbury Christmas Vegan Market 10am- 3pm.

Boasting mulled wine stalls, vegan cheese boards and 'meat' platters, there's plenty of festive food to get stuck into alongside handmade gifts and local artisan crafts and produce.

Friday 3- Sunday 5 December: Victorian Christmas Fayre

Newbury's first-ever 3-day Victorian Fayre is set to include a wide range of over 100 market stalls with traders dressed head-to-toe in typical Victorian attire, alongside Victorian-themed roving performers, a Victorian carousel, live music and entertainment and, of course, Father Christmas.

For more details on these and many more festive events visit: <https://visitnewbury.org.uk/christmas>

### **Where to Stay**

The Chequers Hotel is set within a grade two listed coaching inn in the heart of the town whilst other boutique options include The Elephant at the Market and The Dolphin.

For self-catering, [Manor Farm](#) lies in close reach. These 17th century former barns and stables provide everything you need for a luxurious stay in glorious Berkshire countryside.

Just outside the town [Donnington Grove](#), a three-star country-house hotel, is situated in 500 acres of beautiful grounds that include an 18 hole championship golf course and beauty and treatment rooms at Avalon Retreat.

And for 5-star luxury, The Vineyard, offers stunning spa facilities and is the perfect break for wine lovers – offering tastings, cellar tours and masterclasses alongside their extensive award-winning wine list.

### **Where to Eat**

The town has a wonderful variety of independent cafes and restaurants offering a wide variety of cuisines. From authentic Japanese dishes at Arigato and The Sushi Maki, to Italian at Mio Fiore, Lusso Pizza and sister restaurant,

Lusso Pasta, whilst The Spare Wheel serves up locally sourced street food and craft beer in the heart of the Market Place. For more options see [www.visitnewbury.org.uk/enjoy/food-drink/](http://www.visitnewbury.org.uk/enjoy/food-drink/)

**Be together with friends and family again and visit Newbury this Christmas to see all this idyllic market town has to offer! Find out more at [www.visitnewbury.org.uk/christmas](http://www.visitnewbury.org.uk/christmas) and check out [What's happening in Newbury](#) for further information on events year round.**

ENDS

**Notes to Editors:**

For further information please contact [amandasnowe@GreatWestWay.co.uk](mailto:amandasnowe@GreatWestWay.co.uk)

About the Great West Way

The Great West Way is one of the world's premier touring routes, allowing visitors to explore 500 miles of navigable routes between London and Bristol by road, rail, on foot, bike and waterway. The Great West Way includes many of England's most iconic attractions - Windsor, the River Thames, Bath, Lacock, Stonehenge and The Cotswolds – and encompasses three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Images for Newbury on the Great West Way can be downloaded from our [Flickr gallery](#). Photos may be used in print and/or online for the promotion of tourism to the Great West Way and photos used must be credited to [www.GreatWestWay.co.uk](http://www.GreatWestWay.co.uk), unless otherwise stated in the title of the photo. Full terms and conditions can be found [here](#).

[The Great West Way Discoverer Pass](#) makes travelling the route easy and hassle free. It includes unlimited off-peak train travel from London Paddington/Waterloo along the route to Bristol Temple Meads. It also includes unlimited travel on the bus services along the route.

For further information see [The Story of the Great West Way](#) and our review [Great West Way: The Journey so Far and the Way Ahead](#).

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[www.GreatWestWay.co.uk](http://www.GreatWestWay.co.uk)

**Great West Way Social Media:**

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About Newbury BID

Newbury BID is designated Great West Way Ambassador and is the not-for-profit organisation behind the Visit Newbury brand, committed to the promotion, management, and development of Newbury Town Centre as a great destination to live, work, visit, and do business. Newbury BID is initiated, financed, and led by the commercial sector, providing additional or improved services as identified and requested by local businesses to the baseline services provided by the local authority in that area.

<https://visitnewbury.org.uk>

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