COTSWOLDS

THE FIVE VALLEYS & SEVERN VALE...

Stay a night or two in the Five Valleys around Stroud. Spend 48 hours exploring the Cotswold towns of Stroud and Nailsworth, and around Berkeley in the Severn Vale. But don't feel limited to just 48 hours; we'd love you to stay longer.

DAY 1

Spend the day exploring the Five Valleys. Start with the bohemian canal-side town, **Stroud**, where cafés and independent shops are a plenty. Don't miss the fabulous **Farmers' Market**, filling the streets every Saturday morning. Take a stroll along the canal towpath or up to the beautiful commons. Head on to the hilltop town of **Painswick** to wander the pretty streets or visit its spectacular churchyard – a photographer's dream. The neighbouring village of **Slad** is the setting of famous novel, *Cider with Rosie*. Alternatively, visit artistic **Nailsworth**, renowned for its award-winning eateries, lovely shops and celebrated bakery.

Stroud is located in the south Cotswolds, encircled by five beautiful valleys: The Frome (known as Golden Valley), Nailsworth, Painswick, Slad and Toadsmoor Valleys. Stroud is known as a centre for contemporary arts and has a wide range of festivals and events throughout the year. The market towns of **Dursley** and **Wotton-under-Edge** sit on the edge of the Cotswolds escarpment, which drops off towards the Severn Vale. This beautiful river vale includes **Berkeley** and **Slimbridge**.

WHERE TO STAY

Choose from a selection of accommodation around the Stroud valleys including the boutique-style Bear of Rodborough on Rodborough Common, luxurious The Painswick (in the town of the same name), a range of bed & breakfasts or country inns.

HIDDEN GEMS

Explore the woollen mills that brought so much wealth to the Five Valleys (open to visitors on select days by the **Stroudwater Textiles Trust**). Pack a picnic from **Stroud Farmers' Market** and head up to beautiful **Rodborough** or **Selsley Commons**. Explore the unique **Rococo Garden** in Painswick (famous for its winter snowdrops). Pop in for a pint at Laurie Lee's favourite pub, **The Woolpack** in Slad.

TOP TIP

Walk along the restored **Stroudwater Canal**, an ideal place to spot wildlife. Find out more about the ongoing restoration project by popping into the **Cotswold Canals Visitor Centre** at Wallbridge in Stroud.

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HIDDEN GEMS

Saul Junction is where the Stroudwater Canal meets the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal. It's a great spot for walks and watching canal boats. You might even spot a Tall Ship glide by, when the Gloucester Tall Ships Festival is taking place. There's a lovely café and the **Saul Junction Visitor Centre** is run by the Cotswold Canals Trust.

DAY 2

Head towards **Berkeley** in the Severn Vale. Don't miss magnificent **Berkeley Castle**, where Edward II met his grizzly end, or the fascinating **Dr Jenner's House** in the town (where Dr Jenner found his cure for smallpox). Families will love nearby **Cattle Country**, where there are lots of fun things to do. Animal lovers can make a beeline for **Slimbridge Wildfowl & Wetland Trust**, in **Slimbridge**, on the banks of the **River Severn**. This is the place to observe a fascinating collection of wildfowl, along with migrating wild birds such as the Bewick's swan. Walkers will enjoy the chance to hike a section of the **Cotswold Way** in the lovely market towns of **Wotton-under-Edge** or **Dursley** – both with far-reaching views towards the River Severn.

TOP TIP

While **Slimbridge Wildfowl & Wetlands** centre is a fabulous place to visit all year round, it's quite special in winter due to the number of migratory birds that come to visit from the Arctic tundra. Watch the wintering wild birds being fed from the warmth of the observatory, or book a Floodlit Swan Supper, observing hundreds of Bewick's swans.

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