About this Guide

Welcome to Stratford-upon-Avon, home of the world’s most famous playwright, William Shakespeare. Stratford is steeped in history with many half-timbered buildings from medieval times and the aim of this brief guide is to tempt you to explore our lovely town following streets that Shakespeare would have known and would still recognise.

Stratford-upon-Avon has been a market town since before Shakespeare’s day. It was a small river crossing until it received its town charter in 1196. The original crossing was close to the site of Clapton Bridge, one of the oldest bridges in the county still serving traffic today of 500 years—whilst speaking of the skill of the original builders, when the heaviest traffic would presumably have been laden carts crossing the river to come to the market today we still have a thriving market, held on Fridays and Saturdays, but the town is also host to many other continental and craft markets throughout the year.

Stratford-upon-Avon is home to the Royal Shakespeare Company, one of the most prestigious ensembles acting companies in the world. The theatre obviously provides a showcase for Shakespeare’s plays but has a much broader repertoire, performing works from across the centuries and many contemporary pieces as well. If you are lucky, you will see many a famous face wandering through the town or enjoying a post-theatre drink in one of our many hosties.

You may enjoy a boat trip on the river or a visit to the Butterfly Farm, one of the largest in the world in Europe, which has collections of many extraordinary insects. An enjoyable time may be had in the Brass Rubbing Centre, which promises that great artistic skills are not required to produce an unusual souvenir of your visit. The centre of the town has many small unusual shops and galleries. We hope you enjoy your visit!
10 Things to do in Stratford-upon-Avon

1. Shakespeare's Birthplace
   Discover the exciting story of Shakespeare's childhood home where he was born in 1564 and see where he spent the first years of his life with his wife, Anne Hathaway. See the workshop where Shakespeare's father carried out his craft of gloemaking.

2. Holy Trinity Church (Shakespeare's Church)
   Enjoy a walk along the banks of the Avon to our lovely medieval church where Shakespeare is buried. Church open daily.

3. Holy Trinity Church & The River Avon
   Enjoy the River Avon by either hiring a motorboat, rowing boat, or book an organized tour from a local tour operator.

4. Anne Hathaway's Cottage
   The thatched home of Shakespeare's wife is a mile from the town centre, and has been described as having the most romantic view in England.

5. Butterfly Farm
   The largest exhibition of butterflies and insects in Europe – a highly enjoyable trip for the whole family.

6. Royal Shakespeare Company
   The Royal Shakespeare Company will be performing in The Courtyard Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon throughout the transformation of their theatre. RCS. tickets. 0384 800 110.

7. Shopping
   Within the town we have the major high street shopping names alongside many high quality independent shops.

8. Stratford Town Walk
   Award winning daily guided walk. Starts at the Swan fountain. Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu. Thu, Fri. Sat, Sun 2pm. Last turn up, whatever the weather! Also entertaining evening ghost walk. Mon, Thu. Fri. Visit www.stratfordontour.co.uk or www.stratfordonavon.co.uk contact 01789 260645.

9. Boat trips on the river
   Enjoy the River Avon by either hiring a motorboat, rowing boat, or book an organized tour from a local tour operator. Tel: 01789 260645 or Bancroft Cruises Tel: 01789 290969.

10. Museum of Witchcraft & Wizardology
    Discover the real history of witchcraft throughout England in one of the country's most haunted buildings. You can even search the records to see if one of your ancestors was on the black slate. Tel: 01789 290969