

Tunbridge Wells

Royal Tunbridge Wells lies at the heart of one of the most scenic stretches of countryside in England surrounded by the unspoilt beauty of the Weald.



Facts about Tunbridge Wells

Did you know that...??

- The town of Tunbridge Wells owes its existence to the chance discovery of the Chalybeate Spring in 1606 by a nobleman, Dudley Lord North. Having tasted the spring water, Lord North felt so rejuvenated that he declared the iron-rich water to have health giving properties. When he returned to London word soon spread amongst his aristocratic friends. Visitors from London and elsewhere flocked to try the spring water for themselves, and slowly a small settlement developed alongside the spring which later developed into the town of Tunbridge Wells.
- The name Tunbridge Wells comes from the nearby town of Tonbridge, which was at the time spelled "Tunbridge". The similar names and alternative spellings have been a source of confusion over time.
- In Georgian times particularly, Tunbridge Wells became a well-known and popular spa resort for the aristocracy and members of the Royal family, a rival to nearby Brighton. Its visitors alternated between Bath for the summer season and Tunbridge Wells for the winter season.
- In 1698 Queen Anne was visiting 'The Wells' and her young son, the Duke of Gloucester fell over while playing. The Queen commanded that the walk where he fell should be paved, and left £100 for the work to be carried out. On her return to Tunbridge Wells a year later she found that the area had not been paved. So disgusted, she swore never to return to Tunbridge Wells. She never returned. After she had gone the area surrounding the Spring was quickly paved with pantiles (small clay tiles, baked in a pan). The 'pantiles' were later replaced with paving stones but the name has remained.
- In the early 1800s Tunbridge Wells became a very desirable place for wealthy business and professional people not just for a holiday, but also to live. A great deal of building was undertaken during this time.

The official "Royal" title dates from 1909, when King Edward VII officially recognised the popularity of the town amongst royalty and aristocracy. To this day, Royal Tunbridge Wells is one of only a few towns in England to be granted the 'Royal' prefix.

- Today Royal Tunbridge Wells, or Tunbridge Wells as it is more commonly called, remains a popular place to live and to visit as it maintains much of its original charm and elegance. Surrounded by beautiful countryside and just a short distance from London it is an ideal destination for a short break.

Local Towns & Villages

Within a short drive of the main centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells are some of the most picturesque villages in the south east of England.

Cranbrook, known as the 'Capital of Weald', is a pretty town with a medieval layout of streets and alleys. The Union Mill is probably Cranbrook's most famous landmark, one of the finest smock mills in the UK and still in working order.

Goudhurst is a pretty bustling village with several pubs and small shops. The village street tumbles down the steep hill from the church to the village pond.

Hawkhurst was once notorious throughout southern England as the home of the Hawkhurst Gang of smugglers active in the early 1700s. Hawkhurst has many other claims to fame such as the location for the discovery of the Oxo cube.

Horsmonden gets its name from 'horsemen's woodland pasture' and grew from the increasing prosperity brought by the cloth and iron industries. The church was the family church of Jane Austen's ancestors with the churchyard containing many of their tombstones.

Lamberhurst village is met by the River Teise which flows through the centre. The famous Lamberhurst Gloucester ironworks, named after Queen Anne's short-lived son, were amongst the last in Kent to produce iron, some of which can be seen in the main street today.

Matfield is a typical English village with its green, pond and elegant Georgian houses. Siegfried Sassoon, the famous World War I poet, was born and raised in Matfield.

Paddock Wood was once a busy commercial centre with the railway which provided access for local fruit growers and hop farmers to London and the coast. Today Paddock Wood continues to be an important centre for the country's fruit storage and distribution industry.

Pembury is just three miles from the centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells situated to the north east of the town, but remains very much a village with its village green and two churches - one medieval and the other Victorian.

Sandhurst is at the far eastern edge of the Weald. Within a mile of the village, the ridge on which it stands drops away to the Romney Marsh. The Church of St Nicholas is purported to have a plague pit where victims of the Black Death are buried.

Countryside

The Seven Wonders of the Weald are a group of unique visitor attractions located in The High Weald, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. All seven are within 10 minute's drive of one another and just 8 miles east of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

The Seven Wonders of the Weald are:

1. Sissinghurst Castle Garden
2. Bedgebury National Pinetum
3. Bewl Water
4. Marle Place Gardens
5. Scotney Castle Garden
6. Finchcocks
7. Merriments Gardens

Visit the website for more information: www.sevenwonders.org.uk

Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk is formerly known as the High Weald Walk, the Tunbridge Wells Circular leads through 27.5 miles of beautiful Wealden countryside. The walk can be done in small sections as 4 circular walks or as a whole.

The Cranbrook walk is a circular route stretching 3 miles of west Kent countryside. The walk passes through Cranbrook village as well as the nearby village of Sissinghurst.

The Horsmonden Walk (5 miles) follows orchards and pasture surrounding the village along paths, farm tracks and country lanes. Throughout the walk there are fantastic views of High Weald, Greensland Ridge, Teise and Medway Valleys.

Places to visit

Some of the country's best examples of castles, stately homes and gardens are to be found in the Tunbridge Wells area.

Art Galleries & Museums:

Marle Place Gardens and Gallery

Marle Place Road,
Brenchley,
Kent, TN12 7HS
Tel: (01892) 722304
Fax: (01892) 724099
Email:
lindelwilliams@googlemail.com
Website: www.marleplace.co.uk

Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery

Civic Way,
Mount Pleasant Road,
Royal Tunbridge Wells,
Kent, TN1 1JN
Tel: (01892) 554171
Email: museum@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
Website: www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org

Finchcocks Musical Museum

Riseden,
Goudhurst,
Cranbrook,
Kent, TN17 1HH
Tel: (01580) 211702
Fax: (01580) 211007
Email: info@finchcocks.co.uk
Website: www.finchcocks.co.uk

Cranbrook Museum

Carriers Road
Cranbrook
Kent
TN17 3JX
Tel: (01580) 712516
Website: www.cranbrookmuseum.org

Parks & Gardens:

Dunorlan Park

Pembury Road,
Royal Tunbridge Wells,
Kent, TN2 3QA
Tel: (01892) 554031
Website: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Calverley Grounds

Mount Pleasant Road
Tunbridge Wells
TN1 1QY
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Churches:

All Saints Church

Tudeley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 0NZ
Tel: (01732) 357648
Website: www.tudeley.org

Bayham Old Abbey

School Hill,
Lamberhurst,
Royal Tunbridge Wells,
Kent, TN3 8DE
Tel: (01892) 890381
Fax: (01892) 890509
Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

The Parish Church of King Charles The Martyr

King Charles Church Hall
3 Warwick Park
Tunbridge Wells
TN2 5TA
Tel: (01892) 511745
E-mail: kingcharlesthemartyr@hotmail.com
Website: www.kcmtw.org

Marle Place Gardens and Gallery

Marle Place Road,
Brenchley,
Kent, TN12 7HS
Tel: (01892) 722304
Fax: (01892) 724099
Email:
lindelwilliams@googlemail.com
Website: www.marleplace.co.uk

Groombridge Place Gardens & Enchanted Forest

Groombridge Hill,
Groombridge,
Royal Tunbridge Wells,
Kent, TN3 9QG
Tel: (01892) 861444
Fax: (01892) 863996
Email: office@groombridge.co.uk
Website: www.groombridge.co.uk

Scotney Castle Garden

Lamberhurst,
Kent, TN3 8JN
Tel: (01892) 891081
Fax: (01892) 890110
Email: scotneycastle@nationaltrust.org.uk
Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/scotneycastle

Walking & Cycling:

Pleasant Promenades, Guided Walking Tours of Royal Tunbridge Wells

Royal Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information Centre,
The Old Fish Market,
The Pantiles,
Royal Tunbridge Wells,
Kent, TN2 5TN
Tel: (01892) 515675
Email: touristinformationcentre@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
Website: www.visittunbridgewells.com

Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest

Park Lane
Goudhurst
Kent
TN17 2SL
Tel: 01580 879820
Fax: 01580 212423
Website: www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury
Email: bedgebury@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Penshurst Place and Gardens

Penshurst,
Kent, TN11 8DG
Tel: (01892) 870307
Fax: (01892) 870866
Email: enquiries@penshurstplace.com
Website: www.penshurstplace.com

Hever Castle and Gardens

Hever,
Edenbridge,
Kent, TN8 7NG
Tel: (01732) 865224
Fax: (01732) 866796
Email: mail@hevercastle.co.uk
Website: www.hever-castle.co.uk

Sissinghurst Castle Gardens

Sissinghurst
12 miles east of Royal Tunbridge Wells
Tel: (01580) 710700
Email: sissinghurst@nationaltrust.org.uk
Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst

Finchcocks Musical Museum

Riseden,
Goudhurst,
Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 1HH
Tel: (01580) 211702
Fax: (01580) 211007
Email: info@finchcocks.co.uk
Website: www.finchcocks.co.uk

Vineyards:

Lamberhurst Vineyards

Lamberhurst Down,
Lamberhurst,
Kent, TN3 8ER
Tel: (01892) 890170
Fax: (01892) 890493
Email:
info@sevenwonders.org.uk
Website: www.sevenwonders.org.uk

Sandhurst Vineyards

Sandhurst, nr. Cranbrook
18 miles south east of Tunbridge Wells
Tel: 01580 850296
E-mail: ca.nicholas@btinternet.com
Website: www.sandhurstvineyards.co.uk

Biddenden Vineyards & Cider Works

Biddenden
20 miles east of Tunbridge Wells
Tel: 01580 291726
E-mail: visits@biddendenvineyards.co.uk
Website: www.biddendenvineyards.com

The Chapel Down Winery

Tenterden Vineyard
Small Hythe
Tenterden

Bewl Water

Bewlbridge Lane,
Lamberhurst,
Kent, TN3 8JH
Tel: (01892) 890661
Fax: (01892) 890232
Website: www.bewl.co.uk

Railway:

Spa Valley Railway

Nevill Terrace,
Tunbridge Wells,
Kent, TN2 5QY
Tel: (01892) 537715
Email: enquiries@spavalleyrailway.co.uk
Website: <http://www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk/>

Estates & Castles:

Bayham Old Abbey

School Hill,
Lamberhurst,
Royal Tunbridge Wells,
Kent, TN3 8DE
Tel: (01892) 890381
Fax: (01892) 890509
Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

Hever Castle and Gardens

Hever,
Edenbridge,
Kent, TN8 7NG
Tel: (01732) 865224
Fax: (01732) 866796
Email: mail@hevercastle.co.uk
Website: www.hever-castle.co.uk

Scotney Castle Garden

Lamberhurst,
Kent, TN3 8JN
Tel: (01892) 891081
Fax: (01892) 890110
Email: scotneycastle@nationaltrust.org.uk
Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/scotneycastle

Spa:

Chalybeate Spring

The Pantiles,
Royal Tunbridge Wells,
Kent, TN2 5TE
Tel: (01892) 515675
Email:
touristinformationcentre@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
Website: www.visittunbridgewells.com

Penshurst Place and Gardens

Penshurst,
Kent, TN11 8DG
Tel: (01892) 870307
Fax: (01892) 870866
Email: enquiries@penshurstplace.com
Website: www.penshurstplace.com

Shopping in Tunbridge Wells Town:

www.visittunbridgewells.com

The Pantiles (boutiques & antiques)
Lower end of London Road, Tunbridge Wells

The High Street & Chapel Place
(Small, independent shops & designer boutiques)
High Street, Tunbridge Wells

Royal Victoria Place (shopping centre)
Major Entrance - Fiveways
Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2SS
Tel: 01892 506666
Website: www.westfield.com

Calverley Road and Mount Pleasant Road
(High street shops) top end of the town.

Camden Road and Monson Road

Tourism Figures: Key headline figures for Tunbridge Wells 2006

- It is estimated that around 315,783 overnight tourism staying trips were made to Tunbridge Wells in 2006. Of these trips, domestic visitors made 84% of trips (266,373) and overseas visitors made 16% of trips (49,410). £49,705,762 was spent by staying visitors on their trip.
- It is estimated that around 3.8 million tourism day trips were made to Tunbridge Wells in 2006, generating a further £134,327,938 trip expenditure.
- Of all commercial accommodation available to visitors, serviced accommodation (hotels, guest houses and B&Bs) was the most popular choice among visitors. Around 5% of all staying visitors used caravan or camping accommodation and a further 4% used self-catering accommodation.
- In total £184,033,700 was spent by all visitors on their trip. In addition, expenditure by friends and relatives on visitors, and visitors spend on second homes (i.e. maintenance) generates a further £8,688,000. With the addition of other expenditure tourism activity generated £192,721,700 expenditure.
- It is estimated that 9% of total trip expenditure went towards the cost of accommodation. Approximately a third of total trip expenditure 33% was spent in catering establishments and 33% was spent in the retail sector. Approximately 10% of total trip expenditure went on visits to attractions and other entertainment. Finally, the remaining 15% of total trip expenditure was spent in the transport sector.
- Of this expenditure, £181,531,000 translates into direct income for local business; and a further £18,153,100 of income is generated through indirect and induced effects (a total of £199,684,100 business turnover).
- This income supported 2,879 FTE jobs and 3,938 Actual jobs. Overall it is estimated that tourism expenditure supported 6% of local employment.

*Figures from Cambridge Model 2006

Population Figures

	Male	Female	Total
Population (Mid 2006)	50,300	54,300	104,600
Population Forecast	-	-	-
2011			105,700
2016			104,100

Source: Population Estimates Unit, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

To find out more visit your local Visitor Information Centre:

Royal Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information Centre

The Old Fish Market
The Pantiles
Royal Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN2 5TN
England

Freephone: 0800 393686

Tel: 01892 515675

Fax: 01892 534660

E-mail: touristinformationcentre@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Website: www.visittunbridgewells.com

Useful Tourism Contacts:

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Economic Development & Regeneration

Town Hall,
Royal Tunbridge Wells,
Kent TN1 1RS

Tel: 01892 554229

Fax: 01892 554023

E-mail: tourism@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Website: www.visittunbridgewells.com

The Heart of Kent

c/o Economic Development & Regeneration
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Town Hall

Royal Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN1 1RS

Tel: 01892 55229

Fax: 01892 554023

Email: tourism@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Website: www.visitheartofkent.com

Visit Kent

Kent County Council
Invicta House
County Hall

Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XX

Tel: +44 (0) 1622 671411

Website: www.visitkent.co.uk

www.visitkent.co.uk/business

Seven Wonders of the Weald

Website: www.sevenwonders.org.uk

