For further information

The Tourist Information Centre is also the ideal place for further information on travel, events, what to see and do in the area, and can provide details on a wide range of hotel, B&B, guesthouse and self-catering accommodation, as well as details on camping in the area.

Ask for a copy of the Weald of Kent Guide, log on to www.visittunbridgewells.com or download the free Tunbridge Wells iPhone app to access accommodation in the area.

For your convenience and peace of mind, all accommodation listed in the Weald of Kent Guide has been inspected and awarded a grading by an accreditation scheme. To make things even easier, staff at the Tourist Information Centre in Royal Tunbridge Wells would be pleased to book accommodation on your behalf, either in person, over the telephone or via e-mail.

Royal Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information Centre
Unit 2, The Corn Exchange
The Pantiles
Royal Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN2 5TE

Telephone: 01892 515675
E-mail: touristinformationcentre@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
www.visittunbridgewells.com
Twitter: @TWellsTourism

Transport

Royal Tunbridge Wells is 20 minutes drive from the M25 and M20 motorways and can be reached in less than an hour from the Channel Tunnel terminal at Folkstone and in just over one hour by train from London. Gatwick airport is 40 minutes and Heathrow airport 1 hour away by car.

Royal Tunbridge Wells is less than an hour by train from London Charing Cross, Gatwick Airport and Ashford International railway stations. Regular direct train services operate to Tunbridge Wells from London and from Hastings. Please call 08457 484950 for further details.

Accessibility

Information on accessibility issues in the Borough is available from the Royal Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information Centre, tel: 01892 515675, or by visiting www.disabledgo.com.

The Tourist Information Centre has level access and an induction loop fitted. RADAR keys are also available.

Every care has been taken in compiling this brochure, however, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any subsequent errors, omissions or changes.

This brochure can be made available in large print and on audio cassette.

Tel: 01892 554229

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www.visittunbridgewells.com
Town & Country at its Best

The Town
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.

The Pantiles, the famous white colonnaded walkway, once the central meeting place for visiting gentry, is the historic heart of Royal Tunbridge Wells and today is buzzing with shops and cafés. The original Chalybeate Spring still flows and it is possible to sample its reputed health-giving waters served in its traditional manner by a costumed Digger in the summer months. The town’s historic past is very much reflected in its architecture – from Regency villas and large Victorian houses, many designed by Decimus Burton, to pretty clapboard cottages. Evidence of this can be found in the ‘village’ area situated behind the old High Street, in Mount Ephraim and in Calverley Park and Calverley Park Crescent.

The collections at Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery on Mount Pleasant also reveal some of the past, including one of the most impressive collections of Tunbridge ware in the world – locally made marquetry and silverware. The adjacent Art Gallery hosts a programme of regularly changing and varied exhibitions.

At the centre of the town The Common has been a place of diversion for residents and visitors alike for several hundred years. Its large open green spaces have unusually survived the march of time and nowadays it is a lovely place to walk and for children to play, especially on the popular and unusual outcrop of sandstone rock, known locally as Wellington Rocks.

Guided Walks & Heritage Walking Trail
Guided Walking Tours of the Pantiles and the old High Street are conducted by Tourist Board accredited Blue Badge Guides and are very popular. The tours are an excellent way of learning more about the colourful history of Royal Tunbridge Wells and its many famous visitors. For further details, including tour times and booking please contact the Tourist Information Centre in Royal Tunbridge Wells.

The Heritage Walking Trail links together a series of special plaques commemorating famous residents and visitors to Royal Tunbridge Wells for centuries, and is a wonderful way of discovering more about the historic buildings and streets of the town and its famous visitors, such as Princess (later Queen) Victoria, William Makepeace Thackeray and EM Forster. Copies of the Trail are available from the Tourist Information Centre in Royal Tunbridge Wells or on the visit tunbridge wells website.

Shopping
Royal Tunbridge Wells offers one of the most unique shopping experiences in south east England with its unspoilt combination of specialist shops, designer boutiques and big high street names.

The Pantiles is home to a variety of delightful shops, galleries and lovely cafes. Many of the shops in Chapel Place and in the old High Street still retain their original Victorian frontages and now sell designer clothing, home furnishings, gifts and jewellery.

Mount Pleasant leads into the ‘modern’ part of the town and to Calverley Road, a busy, partly pedestrianised area where many of the town’s main high street names can be found. The main entrance to Royal Victoria Place shopping centre is also found here.

Food & Drink
Royal Tunbridge Wells has developed a reputation as one of the best places to find good food and drink in the south east. The town and surrounding area boasts a wide range of excellent traditional English pubs, brasseries and fine restaurants, serving local produce. Visitors can also find local producers’ stalls at the Pantiles.

Events & Entertainment
The Assembly Hall Theatre, Trinity Theatre and The Forum in Royal Tunbridge Wells offer a wide range of entertainment from opera and ballet to comedy, music and drama, and alongside these are many smaller venues. A number of music events take place in the area throughout the year such as Jazz on the Pantiles and the Bedebughe Pintempe open air concerts.

Around Royal Tunbridge Wells
Royal Tunbridge Wells lies in the unspoilt beauty of the Weald, designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a landscape of rolling hills, ancient woods and open heaths. The countryside is home to hedges, orchards, ponds and vineyards, making this part of the Garden of England full of beautiful blossom in the spring, covered with the cool verdure of summer and awash with vibrant colours in autumn.

The many small towns and villages in the area still retain the true flavour of the English countryside, taking time to visit Goudhurst, Lamberhurst, Matfield, Brenchley, Hawkhurst and Benenden. Cranbrook, known as the Capital of the Weald, was once the bustling centre of the region’s medieval cloth industry. Today the original, and still working, Union Mill stands as testament to this important part of the region’s past as it overlooks this pretty country town. The Cranbrook Museum and Country Park reveals more about the local area’s history, trade and industry.

Castles & Historic Houses
There are more castles, historic houses and gardens concentrated in this area than any other in England, making the Tunbridge Wells area a base for a short break for history and garden lovers alike, and as well as those who just want to relax and unwind.

Penshurst Place, home of the Sidney family for 450 years; Hever Castle, the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, second wife of Henry VIII; and Leeds Castle, known as ‘the loveliest castle in the world’, are splendours of examples of fine historical buildings set in spectacular grounds and gardens and all within easy reach of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The fairy tale castles at Bodiam and Tonbridge, both strongholds against invading armies, still stand guard over the River Rother and the River Medway.

Chartwell, once the country home of Sir Winston Churchill; Knole, the largest private house in England and Egham Mote, an enchanting 650 year old moated manor house, are now all open to the public and full of fascinating historical treasures. Chiddingstone Castle contains the intriguing antique collections of its last private owner.

Gardens
The area lives up to its reputation as the Garden of England. It not only has more than its fair share of the country’s top gardens, but also has many gardens which have remained more of a secret.

World famous and breathtaking Sissinghurst Castle Garden and Scotney Castle Garden, surely one of the most romantic gardens in the world, both provide a profusion of colour in the spring and summer months.

Groombridge Place Gardens has much to offer from award winning formal terraced gardens and topiary to the fantasy wilderness of the Enchanted Forest.

Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest, the national collection of coniferous trees, is the largest on one site in the world, occupying over 300 acres.

Hole Park Garden and Murrays are just two of the “secret” gardens tucked away in the beautiful countryside, both peaceful and picturesque.

More Places to Visit
Bewl Water, the largest area of inland water in the country, is full of beautiful blossom in the spring, covered with the cool verdure of summer and awash with vibrant colours in autumn.

Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest offers outdoor pursuits including walking, cycling and bridle trails, as well as a network of scenic walking routes, an imaginative adventure play area, and Go Ape, a treetop adventure course, all set amongst the 2000 acres of Bedgebury Forest.

The magnificent Georgian mansion house of Penshurst, near Goudhurst hosts a celebrated collection of 18th century keyboard instruments played for visitors in entertain music tours.

Churches
The area is dotted with many intriguing and unusual churches; King Charles’ Church in Chapel Place in Royal Tunbridge Wells, St Dunstan’s in Cranbrook, known locally as the ‘Cathedral of the Weald’ and All Saints’ Church at Tudeley with its magnificent windows designed by Marc Chagall, are just three examples - all well worth a visit.

Walking
The area around Royal Tunbridge Wells has an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways. Long distance routes include the Tunbridge Wells Circular Way, the Weald Way, the North Downs Way, the Pilgrims Way and the Sussex Border Path. There are many delightful shorter walks in the woodlands and country parks that are scattered around the Weald.

There are also 18 and 9 hole courses at Hever Castle; 18 holes at Hemsted Forest Golf Club and 9 holes at Hawkhurst Golf Club. Contact the Tourist Information Centre for more details.

Cycling
From strenuous mountain biking to family friendly routes, Tunbridge Wells offers all the natural beauty of nature to enhance any bike ride. Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest has tracks for family rides and mountain biking enthusiasts of all ages and abilities. Bewl Water is another great background for mountain biking around the 21km lake shore. Details of other National Cycle Routes through the Wealden countryside are also available from the Kent County Council’s Leisure and Tourism Centre.

Find out more about places to stay, eat and visit and about events taking place in the area by visiting www.visit tunbridge wells.co.uk or download the free Tunbridge Wells i-phone app.