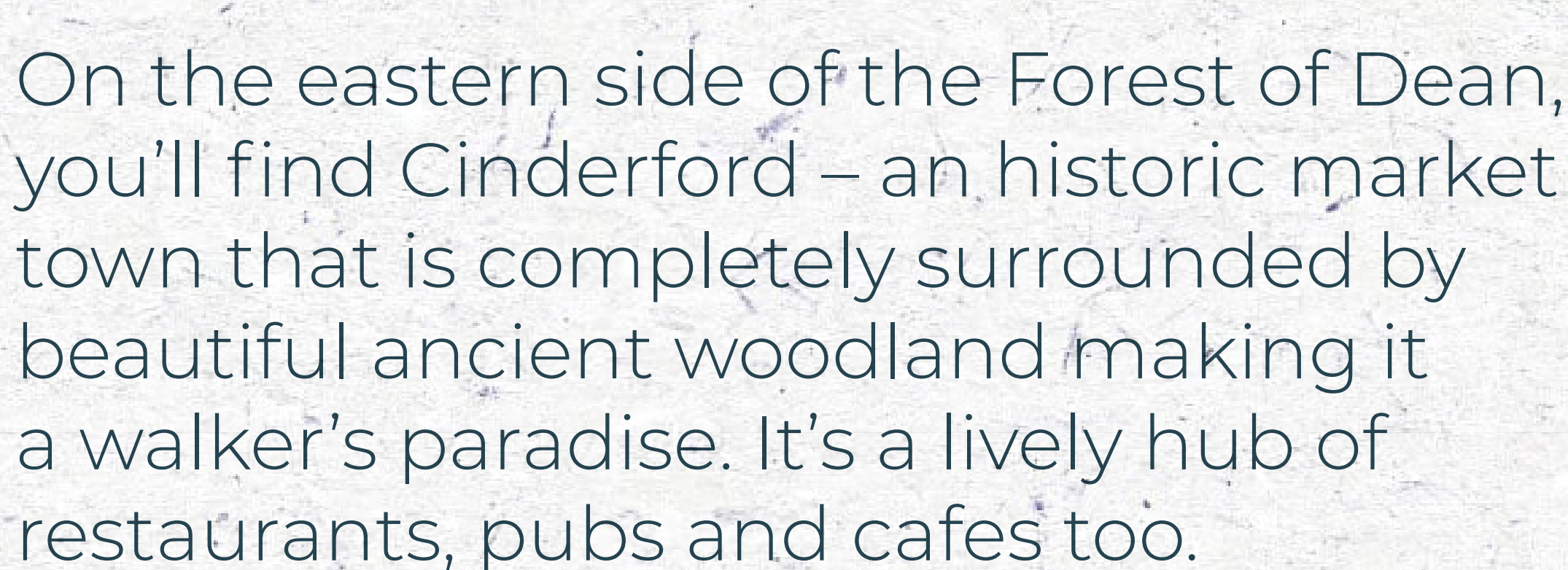


Among the ancient trees and under the vast skies you'll find a wealth of little-known spots, sights, sounds, walks and tastes to savour on your visit. These are the hidden gems to help you explore deeper than ever.



THE HIDDEN GEMS OF

LYDNEY

YOUR GATEWAY TO THE FOREST

Standing like a sentry on the west bank of the UK's longest river (the River Severn) is Lydney.

Known as the gateway to the Forest of Dean, this thriving small town has deep historical roots and bustles with 21st-century life.



THE SIGHT

Steam rising from a heritage locomotive as it sets off on an historic journey through the Forest.

Cutting a dash through 4.5 miles of Forest, is the Dean Forest Railway – one of the UK's finest heritage railways and last remaining steam train experiences in the UK. The steam trains are quite a sight up close, there is a museum and cafe and cream teas are available to book for your trip. So head to Norchard Station and climb aboard one of the heritage carriages for a steam train ride through the ancient Forest of Dean.



THE SPOT

Lydney Harbour and the majestic River Severn Estuary.

Visit Lydney Harbour to see the power of the River Severn and the wildlife of its estuary. The Severn has the second highest tidal range in the world and can reach 15.4m. Take an easy walk around the historic docks and then follow the riverside path past several interesting sculptures and benches for taking it all in. From the banks you can see curlews, egrets, herons and oystercatchers amongst other wading birds. Afterwards, grab a hot drink at the new cafe and explore the historic buildings.



THE SOUND

Utter stillness as you float in your own relaxation pod.

Float in the Forest, which you'll find in Whitecroft north of Lydney, offers relaxation therapy where you float in special noiseless pods filled with warm Epsom-salted water. This dreamy, weightless experience melts stresses and strains away leaving you calmer in mind, body and spirit no matter what is happening in the outside world.



THE TASTE

Warm milk and honey organic chocolate handmade by local chocolatiers.

The Chocolate Shop at Taurus Crafts to the west of Lydney gives Wonka a run for his money. Here, husband and wife team, Mark and Maren, conjure up hand-made chocolate bars and filled chocolates, using organic chocolate and locally-sourced ingredients. From much-loved favourites like vanilla and ginger to unusual sweet treats such as raspberry and chilli or hot mandarin. Book in to the Chocolate Truffle Making Workshop for two hours of sweet heaven, taking home your new skills and chocolate creations.



THE WALK

Through the town's park and rose garden and around the boating lake.

Just 200m south of Lydney town, Bathurst Park has a decorative fountain and rose garden, the Lyd river which feeds into the Severn and a Garden of Remembrance where silhouettes of soldiers symbolise those killed in the two world wars. Cross St Mary's Halt iron bridge, built in 1892, and you may spot a heritage steam train passing underneath. The boating lake has an island that makes it a safe haven for many breeds of ducks, geese and swans, and there is a café serving hot and cold food. The 1.8 mile Lydney Heritage Walk takes in some of the town's highlights including the park, which is a one-mile walk to the harbour.



THE SLEEP

In a hidden-away holiday home on a private estate

On the privately owned Lydney Park Estate what once was a working pump house is now a large, airy self-catering space for six people called The Old Pump House. Outside, there's an impressive trout pond fed by a small stream and set into a private clearing. There is also a stunning barn conversion sleeping 18 should you need an even bigger space. In the spring, explore the expansive and beautiful private gardens and see if you can spot deer grazing in the surrounding meadows.



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FOREST OF DEAN & WYE VALLEY

THE HIDDEN GEMS OF

NEWENT

ONE OF THE FOREST'S OLDEST TOWNS

This pretty market town is **mentioned twice in the 1086 Domesday Book** and has over 100 listed buildings to its name.

Unspoilt by the march of time, Newent is a popular base for exploring the northern section of the Forest of Dean.



THE SIGHT

75-acres of south-facing vines at one of England's oldest vineyards.

Experience one of England's oldest vineyards by sleeping amongst the vines, eating in the vineyard-view brasserie, and tasting award-winning English wines. Three Choirs Vineyard on the outskirts of Newent boasts 75-acres of south-facing slopes and 12 varieties of grape. They also produce 250,000 bottles a year of both white and red wine including Bacchus and the award-winning Coleridge Hill. And when the vines sleep for the night, so can you, in one of their spectacular lodges or vineyard-view rooms where you can start the next day with fresh coffee on your veranda.



THE SPOT

Under the arches of the 17th century black and white timber Market House.

You can't miss the striking black and white timber Market House in Newent. Built in 1668, this Grade-II listed building was originally used as a butter market serving local fairs and villages. It stands proud in the centre of the town, with views down the two main streets. Alongside it is Valegro, the 2021 bronze sculpture of the triple Olympic gold medal winning horse trained in Newent by Carl Hester and ridden to victory by Charlotte Dujardin. It's the perfect spot to start your journey exploring this historic town.



THE SOUND

The clink of china as you bake then take High Tea.

Bake your cake and eat it on this tasty Afternoon Tea Experience at Harts Barn Cookery School. Join the school's Professor Pastry learning how to make a selection of high quality cakes, pastries and petit sandwiches before tucking into them in the Apple Barn, along with the tea of your choice. Three hours of finger-licking fun.



THE TASTE

A glass of real ale in a Good Beer Guide recommended pub.

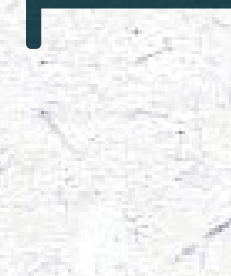
For a decent pint in Newent journey to The Black Dog pub. This refurbished 18th-century half-timbered pub always has a warm welcome waiting for you along with a great selection of real ale, real cider and real perry. Proud to be a member of CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale), The Black Dog is dog-friendly (as you'd expect given its name) and also serves delicious evening and lunchtime meals and has a large beer garden.



THE WALK

Through peaceful, ancient woodland with a llama by your side.

At Briery Hill Llamas, there's a herd of friendly llamas waiting to meet you – all with gentle personalities and calm temperaments. They'll walk happily alongside you, at your own pace, as you explore the Forest on foot led by an expert guide. For an extra-sweet treat, finish off your trek with a delicious homemade afternoon tea.



THE SLEEP

Under a plump duvet in your own private yurt.

Bed down in one of the four luxury yurts that make up Mrs Mills' Yurts (all named from the roaring 20s and styled to suit). The yurts sleep three to five guests each, come with wood burners, outdoor firepits and a menu of homemade suppers, breakfasts and boxes so you can leave the cooking and washing up at home. You'll wake up to incredible views of the valley and May Hill and you can explore Mrs Mills' six-acres of gorgeous countryside.



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THE HIDDEN GEMS OF
COLEFORD

THE PRIDE OF THE FOREST

A compact market town close to the Welsh border, Coleford knows how to have a good time.

The town is a favourite location for lively festivals and fun outdoor events, as well as being a picturesque place to explore with a rich history - any time of the year.



THE SIGHT

The inside of a working coal mine and its many underground tunnels.

Sink below the Forest floor for an underground adventure with Hopewell Colliery. Mined by the Forest's freeminers since the 1800s, the colliery gives you a unique opportunity to learn about the ancient and fascinating tradition of freemining in the safe hands of an expert freeminer. Take the 45-minute tour through the dark tunnels before emerging back into serene woodland. Follow it with a hot drink and bite to eat at the friendly Hopewell Cafe.



THE SPOT

Standing amongst ancient trees with a professional photographer by your side.

Pick up your camera and join the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley School of Photography on a masterclass that captures the flora and fauna that call the Forest of Dean home. The school runs group classes as well as bespoke one-to-one sessions exploring the best photography locations in the area. Book a morning, afternoon or day session at a time and a location of your choice and prepare to sharpen your skills and make some wonderful memories.



THE SOUND

The squelch of mud as you roar over slopes, gullies and ruts driving a Land Rover 4x4.

Start your engine for some serious heart-thumping adventure with Whitecliff 4x4 off-road driving experiences. Sat behind the wheel of a Land Rover you'll cross flat slippery surfaces, plough through mud and water, and traverse moderate and steep inclines and declines in an impressive old quarry on the outskirts of Coleford. Choose from 4x4 Introductory, Adrenaline 4x4, 4x4 Advanced, 4x4 Junior or 4x4 Professional



THE TASTE

A bite of local cheese at one of the finest delis in the region.

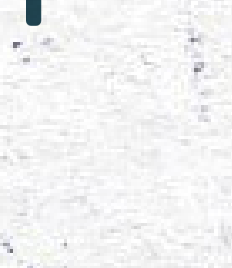
Good old-fashioned customer service, a large cheese counter, homemade bakes, local beers, ciders, gins and wines, and a host of great cooking awaits you at Forest Deli – run by local husband and wife Debbie and Simon. Try a slice of the notorious Stinking Bishop (made in Dymock in the north of the Forest of Dean), order a delicious picnic to take away for a day out or bring back a personalised hamper for your loved ones.



THE WALK

Past the Georgian buildings and along ancient streets as you browse the boutique shops in town.

Explore Coleford on foot and delve into the independent shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants. Many of the buildings originate from the 17th-century and their Georgian features are worth stopping to look at. Plus, with a great selection of boutique shops and cafes, there's always a handy pit-stop along the way. You can even download the town's Hidden Heritage app to help bring the past to life with 'then and now' photos.



THE SLEEP

Retire to the garden wing of a 17th-century Italianate villa.

Tan House is a stunning 17th-century villa built in the 1670s during the Restoration and the reign of King Charles II. Bed down in luxury by staying in the beautifully furnished garden wing. Wake up to views over 20 acres of land and a stunning formal garden. For the ultimate indulgence, add a private chef to your stay or book a unique dining experience.



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THE HIDDEN GEMS OF
CINDERFORD

WELCOMING AND HISTORIC MARKET TOWN

On the eastern side of the Forest of Dean, you'll find Cinderford: An historic market town that is completely surrounded by beautiful ancient woodland making it **a walker's paradise**. It's a lively hub of restaurants, pubs and cafes too.



THE SIGHT

A classic movie in the comfort of one of the oldest purpose-built cinemas in the UK.

Blockbusters and classic films are shown in the wonderfully restored Edwardian theatre, the Palace Cinema in Cinderford. Winner of numerous tourism awards, it's one of the oldest purpose-built cinemas still operating in the UK today and prices are very reasonable.



THE SPOT

Watching kingfishers on the scenic mill pond at the Dean Heritage Centre.

The Museum of the Forest, the Dean Heritage Centre holds over 20,000 precious objects and documents showcasing the culture and history of the Forest of Dean. Browse the fascinating buildings, then head outside to see the restored waterwheel and sit by the lovely mill pond that feeds it. If you're lucky, you might catch sight of the kingfishers who often skitter by. Finish off your visit with a delicious lunch in the cosy cafe.



THE SOUND

A chorus of birdsong at dawn as you walk amongst it, guided by an expert.

Follow local naturalist, broadcaster and wildlife detective, Ed Drewitt, as he introduces you to one of nature's greatest sounds: the dawn chorus. It'll be an early start but worth it as you wander the Forest listening to the woodland birds getting set to start a new day. Along the way, you may even catch sight of deer. For further creature encounters, join Ed on one of his popular wildlife safaris.



THE TASTE

A delicious home-cooked pub lunch.

The Red Hart Inn in Blaisdon is a lovely 16th-century Forest pub with flagstone floors, low beams and original fireplaces - and many awards to its name. Pop in for a craft ale, a large plate of hearty pub grub and a chance to chat with the locals. Its impressive beer garden has views of the hills and there are village walks nearby.



THE WALK

Stimulate your senses deep within the Forest on a guided shinrin-yoku experience.

Translated from the Japanese shinrin-yoku, forest bathing is fast becoming a popular way to enhance wellbeing. Join local, experienced and certified forest therapy guide, Carina from Forest Bathe, who'll guide you on a wonderfully restorative forest bathing experience in specially-selected spots within the Forest of Dean. Afterwards, enjoy a foraged tea ceremony with light snacks to bring you back to the real world.



THE SLEEP

In a luxury stone cottage tucked away in your own private, rural hamlet.

A hot tub with a Forest view, a falconry experience or a picnic in the trees? They're just some of the wonderful treats you can enjoy when you stay at Forest Barn Holidays to the south of Cinderford. This gorgeous private hamlet of five luxury cottages (each sleeping two to eight people), is swimming in countryside and makes an ideal retreat for families, couples or groups looking for a memorable break.



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