



TRAVEL INFORMATION

Rail: Direct trains depart from  London Paddington, to  Bath Spa. Journey time is approximately 90 mins.

VISITOR CENTRE

Abbey Chambers, Abbey Churchyard, Bath, Somerset, England, BA1.
 08448 475 256.
 visitbath.co.uk

OUT OF TOWN: BATH

By Jo Caird and David G. Taylor

When the Romans discovered natural thermal springs on the site of what we now call **Bath**, they knew they were on to a good thing. Nearly 2,000 years later, the only hot springs in the UK are one of the country's most popular tourist attractions, with over one million visitors flocking to the beautifully preserved **Roman Baths** every year.

Walk in the footsteps of the city's Roman residents as you explore the extensive ruins at the heart of Bath's UNESCO World Heritage Site. Water from the springs was believed to have healing properties, so have a glass of spring water from the fountain, then complete the experience with a visit to the **Thermae Bath Spa**, a luxurious modern spa complex in the heart of the city.

Following its Roman heyday, Bath became extremely popular again as a spa resort in the Georgian era. Visitors can see some of the amazing architecture

and interiors at **No. 1 Royal Crescent**, a magnificently restored town house. The first of 30 terraced dwellings sweeping along a majestic crescent-shaped street, it's typical of affluent urban homes of the period. Nineteenth-century novelist Jane Austen lived in the city between 1801 and 1806 and set two of her novels there. Literature fans can learn more about the writer, as well as life in 19th-century Britain, at the **Jane Austen Centre**. Guided *Jane Austen Walking Tours* are also available and offer a great way to explore the city's sights.

Somewhere Austen would certainly have visited is **Bath Abbey**, a magnificent cathedral begun in 1499 and completed in 1611. There has been a church on the site since AD 757, though three incarnations have been built and destroyed since that time. Tours of the Abbey's tower lasting around 45 minutes take place several times daily.

They offer fantastic views over the city and surrounding countryside. Bargain-hunters might even find the time to catch one of the Abbey's dedicated *Shoppers' Carol Services*.

Twinkling Christmas lights beckon gift-seekers to the main shopping area in **Milsom Street**, but be sure not to miss **Bath Christmas Market** in the streets around the Abbey and the Roman Baths **until 9 Dec**. There you'll find more than 140 traditional wooden stalls selling locally-made crafts, gifts and food, plus carol

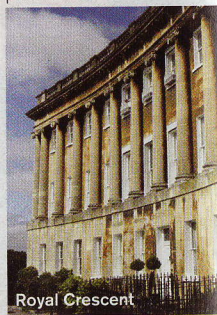
singers, musicians and children's entertainers to enhance the experience.

Another seasonal treat is **Bath On Ice (until 6 Jan)**, an open-air ice rink in Victoria Park, a short walk from the city's main shopping area. It's the ideal refresher after an afternoon pounding the pavements.

After you've watched the setting sun, head to the **Theatre Royal Bath**, built in 1805, to enjoy slapstick comedy with *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs (from 13 Dec)*, a traditional British pantomime.



Roman Baths



Royal Crescent