



Whether you have one day, three days or longer to spend exploring the Stour Valley, these suggested itineraries will give you some inspiration of places to visit.

The recommendations in this guide are just a taster of what the valley has to offer, there is plenty more to see and do! For more information about exploring nature reserves and wildlife, heritage churches, art galleries and museums, activities for children and families, historical and archaeological features, the three Stour Valley Food Trails, and scenic walking and cycle routes, visit: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/visiting



VISITING THE STOUR VALLEY

The Stour Valley, which includes the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain's finest and most cherished landscapes. The area boasts a whole host of different things to explore and enjoy, from art heritage to nature and wildlife reserves, and from archaeological history to culinary delights from local food producers. Whether you're a visitor to the area for your holiday, or a local looking for a special place for a day trip, the Stour Valley offers a wealth of different opportunities for many different interests, meaning there's no shortage of places to go and things to see.

VISITING THE STOUR VALLEY



Please consider travelling sustainably where possible. There are good links to the Stour Valley on the Gainsborough rail line between Marks Tey and Sudbury, and there are bus routes throughout the area. For up to date local public transport timetables, contact Traveline on: www.traveline.info or 0871 200 22 33.



For detailed maps of the area, use Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No's. 196 (Sudbury, Hadleigh and the Dedham Vale), 210 (Newmarket and Haverhill), 211 (Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket) and 195 (Braintree and Saffron Walden).

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 Dedham Village High Street
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Short Breaks in THE STOUR VALLEY



Explore the Stour Valley with a series of guides

SHORT BREAKS IN *The Stour Valley*

Day One: The Lower Stour Valley *This easterly part of the Stour Valley is the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).*

Dotted throughout the Dedham Vale are pretty villages such as Nayland, Dedham, Flatford and East Bergholt, with their remarkable architecture, timber framed buildings and fine 'wool' churches dominating the landscape. Sometimes referred to as Constable Country, this area has significant art heritage, as the Stour Valley was home to John Constable, Thomas Gainsborough and Alfred Munnings. Admire the scenery they and other famous artists painted and see the Constable works exhibited at Nayland and Dedham churches. Other highlights include National Trust Flatford, The Munnings Art Museum, an arts and crafts centre, RSPB wildlife garden and a variety of shops, boutiques, and places to eat.



After exploring the lower Stour, head west to Bures for some dragon hunting! From behind St Stephens' Chapel you can see the outline of a dragon cut into a nearby hillside. Find out more about this legend and a walk that will take in views in the dragon by downloading the 'Walking in Bures' leaflet from: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/visiting/visitor-information/visitor-guides/walk-guides

Looking for somewhere for dinner?
The nearby Lamarsh Lion is a lovely community pub, with great views too:
www.lamarshlion.co.uk



Day Two: The Middle Stour Valley *The centre of the Stour Valley is home to some of the most well preserved and picturesque historic Wool Towns.*

Start your day with a wander around Long Melford, an attractive 'Wool Town' with a sweeping village green. It boasts the longest high street in England - three miles long with a great mix of independent shops and boutiques, plus eateries - and the impressive stately homes Melford Hall and Kentwell Hall, a country park, water meadows and riverside walks, a brewery, a Heritage Centre showing the Roman and medieval past, and a spectacular 'wool' church with stained glass windows.



Next, head to Lavenham, once the 14th richest town in England, prospering from its Lavenham Blue broadcloth, it is now one of the country's best preserved medieval wool towns. Explore its narrow streets easily by foot, see stunning timber framed buildings leading up to the impressive marketplace or to the magnificent flint covered parish 'wool' church. With over 300 listed buildings, notably Lavenham Guildhall, Little Hall, The Swan Hotel, Lavenham Priory, De Vere House it also boasts independent boutique shops, galleries, and exceptional places to eat and stay. There are short circular walks around both Long Melford and Lavenham to download: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/visiting/visitor-information/visitor-guides/walk-guides

Looking for somewhere to stay?
Relax in contemporary sophistication at The Swan Hotel & Spa:
www.theswanatlavenham.co.uk



Day Three: The Upper Stour Valley *The charming towns and villages in the upper Stour Valley have a backdrop of green and rolling Essex and Suffolk landscape.*

Clare is the smallest town in Suffolk, and this historic market-town is home to a magnificent 'wool church', a tranquil priory, a castle set in a country park and the Ancient House Museum. Like Lavenham prosperity came from cloth, and Clare has over 130 listed buildings with breath-taking beautiful carvings, and ornamental parquetry. There are contemporary art galleries, a nine-hole golf course with fishing, a bustling community of independent shops, and places to eat and stay. As a Walkers are Welcome town expect many guided and self-guide walks.



Make time to head east to Steeple Bumpstead, a delightful destination for a walk. The village's Moot Hall is believed to have been built in the 1570's as the earliest known school in the parish. Visit St Mary's Church, the Steeple Bumpstead Pottery, and the village pubs. A scenic walk from the village takes in Moyn's Park, home to an impressive Grade I listed Elizabethan country house built in the late 16th century. Download the 'Walking in Steeple Bumpstead' leaflet: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/visiting/visitor-information/visitor-guides/walk-guides

Looking for somewhere to shop?
Sea Pictures Gallery located in Clare offers original, affordable, contemporary art in all media, specialising in maritime scenery:
www.seapicturesgallery.com

