

The cathedral city of Salisbury



Located in the county of Wiltshire at the point where five rivers meet, there has been a settlement here since the Iron Age. It wasn't until after the Norman Conquest of 1066 that the Sarum, as it was called, became important with the building of a castle on the remains of the Iron Age hill fort and later the nearby cathedral between 1075 and 1092.

As often happened in these dark times, the Church and Military never saw eye to eye and so it wasn't long before the clergy had their cassocks in

a twist and the military were flashing their weapons, so a new cathedral was started at a nearby site and the city of New Sarum was born and became Salisbury in 1220.

In 1226, King Henry II gave the Bishop of Salisbury permission to hold a fair lasting eight days from 15th August. Over the following centuries the dates of the fair has moved many times and is now held for three days from the 3rd Monday in October.

By the dangerous, smelly and violent times of the mediaeval age Salisbury had become the most



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B2
Intermediate



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important place in Wiltshire. The city now had a spectacular wall around it with five gates allowing access to a busy and prosperous area full of taverns (pubs), markets, houses and churches, all located around the magnificent cathedral.

One of the oldest and most famous taverns in the city is the 'Haunch of Venison' which is infamous for having the mummified remains of a hand that was cut from its owner during a very bad-tempered card game. If you visit it you can see the solid pewter bar, but be warned because you may see the resident ghost. There is also a story that Winston Churchill and Dwight Eisenhower met secretly in a small room in the tavern to plan the D-Day landings during World War II.

Famous residents

Former British Prime Minister Edward Heath lived and died in Salisbury and the actor Anthony Daniels (who played C-3PO in the Star Wars films) was born here.

Famous visitors

A room located above St Anne's Gate is where the composer Handel stayed. And during the Great Plague of 1665 King Charles II moved to Salisbury to get away from the danger.

With no television, radio or film and, to be honest, some of the most depressing music, it's not surprising that the wealthy people of the 13th century became very fond of having great parties and banquets. In Cathedral Close there is an historic 13th century banqueting hall which was used for these grand functions and at times of the many royal visits to the city.

Throughout the city's history it has always been popular with artists and musicians because the wide open landscape and rolling hills of Wiltshire make it an ideal place to visit for inspiration.

In the 18th century John Constable made a number of celebrated paintings of the area featuring the cathedral spire and surrounding countryside.

It is impossible to mention Salisbury without mentioning the fact that just 8 miles (13km) from Salisbury, located on the vast Salisbury Plain, is the world famous prehistoric stone circle at Stonehenge. Built between 3,000 and 1,000 BC, the site is thought to have been either a place of worship or a huge astronomical calendar and has now been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Each year on June 21st visitors from around the world gather at Stonehenge overnight to mark the summer solstice and, weather permitting, watch the sun rise above the stones on the longest day. At dawn the central Altar stone aligns with the Slaughter stone, Heel stone and the rising sun. 🗣️ **AT**

Visit Salisbury:

LAL Runs regular tours to Salisbury including a visit and admission to Stonehenge.

Trains to Salisbury from Paignton cost £37 for an off-peak return.

Find out more about Salisbury at:
www.visitsalisbury.com

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The cathedral

The spire of Salisbury cathedral is 123m (400ft) high and is the tallest in the UK. It has Europe's oldest working clock – built in 1386, and has one of only four surviving original copies of the Magna Carta.