

Timbrell's Yard, Bradford-on-Avon

Best for West Country produce and riverside charm

Just seven miles from Bath, Bradford-on-Avon has all the best bits of its neighbour – honey coloured Georgian buildings, ancient history, independent restaurants and tea rooms galore – without the hordes of tourists. Autumn is a great time to visit, as any summer crowds will have departed and the cosy pubs come into their own.

On a top spot overlooking the River Avon, you'll find Timbrell's Yard (timbrellsyard.com), a revamped coaching inn set in a grade-II listed building with a bar, farm-to-plate restaurant and 17 bedrooms. They've seamlessly blended the building's history with contemporary interiors; low beams and exposed stonework are paired with quirky Native American and Scandi furnishings. The luxurious bedrooms range in style from modern to period – either way, opt for one with a river view. On arrival, soft classical music plays from your radio and the warm welcome doesn't stop there; other touches include complementary locally made fudge and natural toiletries from Somerset-based Bramley.

Enjoy a pre-dinner drink in the stylish bar, grab a seat near the fireplace and sip a regional craft beer or West Country cider (they do excellent cocktails too). In the restaurant, ex-River Cottage chef Tom Blake oversees the modern British menu. Provenance is key with meat, eggs, cheese and yogurt sourced from local farmers, and bread, cakes and sauces made in-house daily. Dishes are expertly cooked and portions are generous, with standouts including fall-apart-soft Gloucester Old Spot pork belly with crackling, and decadent desserts such as chocolate & salted caramel tart (mains from £13.50, desserts, £7). Post-dinner, the best thing is you won't have to brave the cold night air – simply stagger upstairs to your bedroom.

Breakfasts are just as good, with a buffet of yogurt, fruit, croissants and homemade jams to start, followed by a full English with all the usual (top

quality) suspects, plus smoky beans and an exceptional slab of bubble & squeak.

Beyond Timbrell's Yard, there's plenty to do. Cross over the medieval bridge and you'll find the Saxon church, and just 10 minutes' walk away, there's the 14th-century tithe barn (free; english-heritage.org.uk). Check out the surrounding outbuildings selling crafts, homeware and antiques (a great place to source Christmas gifts), and recharge in the coffee shop or tea room. From there, it's a half hour stroll through the scenic Barton Farm Country Park to the Avoncliff Aqueduct. Walk back along the towpath and stop off at quirky pub The Lock Inn Café (thelockinn.co.uk).

There's no shortage of good dining options too, don't miss the award-winning The Bunch of Grapes, a charming candlelit bistro serving a modern European menu (thebunchofgrapes.com; mains from £15.50). A few minutes' drive away, The New Inn in Westwood (thenewinnwestwood.co.uk) is a toasty country pub with a woodburner, open fire, and a menu of British classics – if you're lucky, the venison and red wine pie (£13) will be on the menu. *Fiona Forman*

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Pork belly at Timbrell's Yard



Stroll along the historic River Avon



Timbrell's Yard period bedrooms are filled with vintage finds

How to do it

Double rooms from £85 a night (timbrellsyard.com).