



Harvest HOLIDAYS

Celebrate the beauty and bounty of the autumn countryside with a food-and-drink-inspired break

Explore the beautiful rolling landscapes of Herefordshire on a relaxing autumnal getaway

There's something captivating about the countryside in autumn – ripe apples are thudding to the ground, grapes are juicy and sweet, and growers are busy converting the season's growth into something heavenly to sip or sample. So what could be better than indulging in a stay that takes you to the heart of the harvest?

Cider sleepovers

Herefordshire is quintessential cider country, with heart-stopping views at every corner – rolling pastures, ancient fruit orchards, the meandering River Wye and the dramatic Black Mountains. Then there are the old-world villages with crooked Tudor houses (see blackandwhitetrail.org).

There are cultural treasures too, such as the Mappa Mundi, and the world's largest surviving 'Chained Library' – both on display at Hereford Cathedral. And don't miss the buzzy town of Hay-on-Wye, which hosts literature, music and philosophy festivals. Famous for its numerous bookshops, it's full of eclectic independent shops and eateries (don't miss Shepherds for the best ice cream). It's also a starting point for one of three thirst-quenching cider trails that take in some of the county's finest craft brewers – not to mention cosy pubs and places to eat (visitherefordshire.co.uk/see-do/scenic-trails/cider-circuits).



Jo's delicious
framboise liqueur,
left, is produced on
her Hereford farm;
and ready-to-pick
apples, right

Orchard bathing

Herefordshire's rich, biodiverse orchards provide the raw ingredients for artisan cider wizards Tom and Lydia of Artistraw (artistraw.co.uk). Based in the Welsh Marches, just outside of Hay, they hand-pick the apples from unsprayed orchards within a small radius of their cidery, and press and ferment them on-site, without any additives. The results are bright, Breton-style brews that capture the feel of lazy, hazy summer days. The couple offer tastings and tours around their recently planted orchard, a tranquil space knee-deep in wild grasses and flowers, and buzzing with insect life.

Larger in scale but no less devoted to natural, small-batch cider, is Ross on Wye Cider & Perry Company (rosscider.com), based at Broome Farm, near the hilltop town of Ross on Wye. Run by the Johnson family, cider and perry (from pears) has been made here since the 1930s. Mike and his sons, Albert and Martin, produce over 50 ciders and perries in a traditional way. Each batch of cider is unique and specific to the soil, climate and apple variety (or blend of apples), for that season. A tour and tasting here is a masterclass in the art of cider-making, and will open your eyes (and taste buds) to the amazing variety and complexity of cider apples.

*'It's classic cider
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Luxury tipples

For a different drink destination, take a short drive from the picture-postcard market town of Kington and you'll find

White Heron Drinks, run by Jo Hilditch on her 700-acre farm. Jo grows a range of crops – apples for Bulmers cider and blackcurrants for Ribena – but she also creates her own small-batch liqueurs, including rich, fragrant cassis and framboise (stocked in Fortnum & Mason and Waitrose). Jo runs group tours to see the fruit in the fields and to visit the cassiserie, where guests can bottle their own liqueur to take home, and also enjoy cocktail demos and tastings (whiteheronproperties.com/british-cassis-tours). >>

Relax in
country-chic
style at
Penrhos Court
or 17th-century
Orles Barn
Hotel, below

Where to stay

PENRHOS COURT

Once an illustrious hotel, where the band Queen came to rehearse *Bohemian Rhapsody* and Monty Python star Terry Jones set up a microbrewery, Penrhos has been lovingly restored into seven luxury self-catering cottages. The decor is country chic – think squishy sofas and generous-sized beds, slick kitchens and bathrooms alongside old timber beams and stone walls. There's also an on-site restaurant, The Cattle Shed, in a candlelit barn with cosy log burner. Plus, you can pop over the road to sample the delights of award-winning gin brand, Penrhos Spirits.

✚ From £145 per night for a minimum two-night stay; penrhos-court.co.uk

ORLES BARN HOTEL AND RESTAURANT

This 17th-century renovated apple store in Ross on Wye has four elegant rooms decorated in soft tones with crisp bed linen, waffle bathrobes and slippers. Run by Roxy and her chef husband, Matt, the meals are refined and flavour-packed, and feature local produce, such as Hereford beef.

✚ Doubles from £100 B&B; orlesbarnhotel.co.uk



FOUR MORE HEAVENLY HARVEST STAYS

Grape escape

The UK wine harvest usually starts late September – depending on the level of sweetness in the grapes. For wine lovers, it's a great time to see the harvest come in and learn about the winemaking process. Tinwood produces award-winning sparkling wine from the edge of the South Downs National Park, West Sussex. Daily tours and tastings are available in a room overlooking the vines. There are also three luxury lodges (each sleeps two) for short breaks, with decks overlooking the vines and towards the setting sun. Lodges include a jacuzzi bath, barrel sauna and fully stocked wine fridge.

✦ **A tour and tasting costs £21. Lodges start at £225 per night; tinwoodestate.com**



Truffle hunt

Fullerton Farm in Hampshire has its own vineyard (blackchalkwine.co.uk), but also offers a seasonal rarity – truffle hunting. During a six-week window from the end of October, guests can search for this most coveted fungi with Bruno the truffle dog. The one-hour hunt costs £35 and is bookable when you stay on-site, at one of four luxurious tree houses.

✦ **From £274 for two per night; wildescapes.com/fullerton-farm**



Forest fruits

The art of successful 'shrooming lies in identifying what's safe and delicious to harvest. Luxury boutique hotel, The Newt, in Somerset, is hosting Mushroom Masterclasses, where guests are taken on a guided forage around the estate, as well as learning how to cultivate home-grown varieties. Workshops run on 20 and 26 October, and 2 and 9 November, 10am-2pm; £125, including lunch.

✦ **A two-night midweek break in a Farmyard Room during October costs £1,590; thenewtinsomerset.com**

Coastal feast

Foraging with Caroline Davey of the Fat Hen offers a fascinating insight into the wild foods that are in season along the West Cornish coast. Her one-day workshops involve gathering ingredients, followed by a picnic or a four-course pub lunch. Alternatively, try a Walk, Picnic and Wild Spa day, with spring-fed swimming lake, hot tub and sauna. Stay on-site at The Old Wash House or at The Gurnard's Head, a pub with open fires and rooms with beautiful views.

✦ **Foraging, from £65; for dates and info, see the-fat-hen.co.uk. Doubles from £147.50 B&B; gurnardshead.co.uk**



From top: a Fullerton Farm tree house, The Newt, The Gurnard's Head, and a Tinwood Estate barrel sauna