

Welcome to Gatwick

Discover what's on our doorstep

Goodwood, West Sussex



ENGLISH FESTIVALS & EVENTS

8 authentically English festivals and events near Gatwick Airport

The area around the airport hosts all sorts of unmissable fun. There's everything from traditional English Social Season events to oddball festivals that will make you laugh out loud – so dress up and join the fun!

Here are 8 annual festivals and events that make a spectacle of local life.

www.gatwickairport.com/at-the-airport/flying-in/discover-local/

YOUR LONDON AIRPORT
Gatwick

1. Goodwood, West Sussex

If you love motorsports, horse racing and vintage cars, the Goodwood estate is one of the most exciting places in the world. The beautiful country home of the 11th Duke of Richmond, Lennox, Gordon and Aubigny hosts several sporting spectacles among the rolling hills of the South Downs National Park.

Festival of Speed is a glamorous celebration of motoring and car culture, with legendary drivers and a festival atmosphere. Goodwood Revival celebrates the golden era of motor racing. Vintage cars zoom around the circuit while festivalgoers watch movies in a retro drive-in cinema, go on traditional fairground rides and browse stalls crammed with memorabilia. Wear period costume if you want to blend in!

Thoroughbred horses are the star attraction at Qatar Goodwood Festival, one of the most glamorous events of the flat-racing season.

[Website: www.goodwood.com](http://www.goodwood.com)

When: Festival of Speed happens over 4 days in July; Qatar Goodwood Festival over 5 days in July/August; Goodwood Revival over 3 days in September.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Goodwood is 40 miles (65km) southwest of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 1 hour 10 mins by road, or 1 hour by rail to Chichester station then a direct bus or 10-min taxi.

2. The Investec Derby Festival, Surrey

Billed as the greatest flat race in the world, the Investec Derby at Epsom Downs Racecourse is so famous it's usually known simply as 'the Derby'. The Derby Stakes have been run here for over 300 years – and it was here that suffragette Emily Davidson brought down the king's horse in 1913, giving her life for the women's rights movement.

The racing is exhilarating and there's plenty of entertainment off the course too. There are after-parties with celebrity DJs, family friendly fairground rides, and food from celebrity chefs. What you wear is as important as which horse you bet on – the Style Awards are almost as hotly contested as the Derby!

[Website: www.thejockeyclub.co.uk/epsom](http://www.thejockeyclub.co.uk/epsom)

When: 2 days in May/June.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Epsom Racecourse is 20 miles (30km) north of Gatwick. Travel time is approximately 35 mins by road.

3. Glyndebourne Festival, East Sussex

There's even more to Glyndebourne Festival than world-class opera from the resident orchestras and chorus, which include the renowned London Philharmonic. Glyndebourne is a truly English affair with elaborate picnics in the grounds of a country house surrounded by sheep and the picturesque South Downs. Performances take place in a beautiful, modern opera house.

Most guests arrive two hours before the performance starts, so they can wander through the gardens, see the art exhibitions and find the perfect spot for their picnic. There are fine dining options and celebrity chef pop-ups too. Dress in your finest clothes and feast on strawberries, cream and Champagne!



Jazz Festival,
The Pantiles

[Websites: www.glyndebourne.com](http://www.glyndebourne.com)

When: May – August.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Glyndebourne is 35 miles (55km) southeast of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 45 mins by road, or 30 mins by rail to Lewes station then a free coach to the festival.

4. England's Medieval Festival, East Sussex

History fans will love England's Medieval Festival. It's one of the most authentic medieval-themed festivals in Britain. A medieval court complete with kings, queens, knights, jesters, magicians and music is recreated in the grounds of Herstmonceux Castle, a moated 15th-century castle.

There's jousting, siege re-enactments and falconry displays to watch, or you can pull up a seat at a medieval banquet. Have a go at archery or axe-throwing, or learn to make chainmail in one of the traditional arts and crafts workshops. As night falls, stargaze from the festival campground or watch a medieval-themed movie in the moonlit cinema.

[Website: www.englishmedievalfestival.com](http://www.englishmedievalfestival.com)

When: August bank holiday weekend.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Herstmonceux Castle is 40 miles (65km) southeast of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 1 hour 10 mins by road, or 45 mins by rail to Polegate station then a 15-min taxi or free shuttlebus available during the festival.

5. Pub in the Park, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent

What happens when you bring together Michelin-starred chefs, live music and Britain's greatest gastro-pubs in Royal Tunbridge Wells' Dunorlan Park? Pub in the Park, that's what! The gourmet food festival is run by Tom Kerridge, owner of the UK's only pub with two Michelin stars.

Top gastropubs such as Kerridge's Hand & Flowers and the county of Kent's award-winning Sportsman serve affordable tasting dishes at the festival's pop-up pubs. Celebrity chefs host masterclasses, workshops and demos. And acts like Rick Astley, James Morrison, KT Tunstall and Gabrielle bring the soundtrack. There are bars and shopping stalls, too. All the ingredients for a fantastic festival experience!

STEP BACK IN TIME
AT ENGLAND'S
MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL



8. The Charleston Festival, East Sussex

The country home of the Bloomsbury group is the perfect venue for this thought-provoking festival of books, ideas and creativity. The programme is always packed with exceptional people, such as Jeanette Winterson, Lionel Shriver, Simon Callow, Michael Morpurgo and Peter Blake, but it's the setting that helps makes this event so special. Talks take place in the same flower-filled walled gardens that sheltered the Bloomsbury group, a radical set of 20th-century artists, writers and thinkers that included Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell and John Maynard Keynes. It's easy to imagine them sitting among the audience, enjoying the scene.

Take a house tour while you're there and see the dining table that has hosted EM Forster, TS Eliot and Benjamin Britten.

[Website: www.charleston.org.uk/festival](http://www.charleston.org.uk/festival)

When: 10 days in May.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Charleston is 30 miles (50km) southeast of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 45 mins by road, or 30 mins by rail to Lewes station then the Charleston Festival shuttle bus or a 15-min taxi.



THE DARK SKIES FESTIVAL SHOWS OFF THE BEWITCHING NIGHTTIME SKIES OF THE SOUTH DOWNS



ECCENTRIC EVENTS THAT REVIVE ENGLISH TRADITIONS

[Website: www.pubintheparkuk.com/tunbridge-wells](http://www.pubintheparkuk.com/tunbridge-wells)

When: 3 days in July.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Royal Tunbridge Wells is 20 miles (30km) east of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 45 mins by road, or 1 hour 30 mins to Tunbridge Wells station then a 20-min walk or 5-min taxi or bus.

6. Jack in the Green Festival, East Sussex

Jack in the Green is an eccentric revival of traditional May Day celebrations. It's also one of the UK's biggest annual gatherings of traditional Morris dancers. The modern event is a flurry of live folk music and the clacking sticks and waving handkerchiefs of traditional Morris dancing troupes.

The highlight is the bizarre Jack in the Green parade, which starts by the Fishermen's Museum. The Jack, a tall crowned figure draped with leaves and ribbons to represent winter, is 'released' to parade to West Hill where it is 'killed' to free the spirit of summer. Morris dancers, huge papier-mâché figures and the 'bogey men' complete the spectacle. Beware – if you're not wearing enough green, the bogey men will dab your nose with green paint!

[Website: www.hastingsjitg.co.uk](http://www.hastingsjitg.co.uk)

When: Early May bank holiday.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Hastings is 50 miles (80km)

southeast of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 1 hour 30 mins by road, or 1 hour 25 mins by rail to Hastings station.

7. Dark Skies Festival, South Downs National Park

Did you know that before your aeroplane landed at Gatwick, it probably flew across one of the most accessible International Dark Sky Reserves in the world? The skies above the South Downs National Park are as important as the rolling hills below, and the Dark Skies Festival is a chance to understand the twinkling nighttime landscape better. The festival is a party under the stars with family friendly talks and activities.

Learn how to take amazing nighttime photographs, discover the animals that come out at night, or simply stare at the scenery above your head. The South Downs National Park is great to stargaze from at any time of year, but the festival really shows off its bewitching nighttime skies.

[Website: www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/dark-night-skies](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/dark-night-skies)

When: 2 weeks in February/March.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: The South Downs National Park is a swathe of protected land to the south of Gatwick. Dark Skies Festival events take place at various venues across the National Park. Check the South Downs National Park website for details.

OUR PARTNERS:

Gatwick Airport

www.gatwickairport.com/at-the-airport/flying-in/discover-local/

Surrey

www.visitsurrey.com

South Downs National Park

www.southdowns.gov.uk

Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

www.surreyhills.org

West Sussex

www.experiencewestsussex.com

West Kent

www.visitsevenoaksdistrict.co.uk/see-and-do

East Sussex

www.visitengland.com/things-to-do/east-sussex

The information in this guide is intended to assist visitors in choosing suitable places to visit. Information has been curated and produced by the Gateway Gatwick Group in good faith. Details were correct at time of going to press (July 2019). Whilst every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information shown in this publication, the Gateway Gatwick Group does not accept responsibility or liability for any of the claims made nor the information stated, especially opening times and dates.

The project was produced and funded by the Gateway Gatwick Group. A tourism partnership designed to support the local visitor economy around Gatwick Airport. Contributing partners include: Coastal West Sussex Partnership, Coast to Capital, East Sussex County Council, Gatwick Airport, Gatwick Diamond Initiative, Experience West Sussex Partnership, Rural West Sussex Partnership, West Kent Partnership (Sevenoaks District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council), South Downs National Park Authority and Surrey Hills AONB and Enterprises.

Thank you to all that provided photos, in particular: Goodwood – Jayson Fong, Jazz Festival, The Pantiles – David Hodgkinson Photography