



THE STARGAZERS' GUIDE TO HEREFORDSHIRE

The best places to see stars in one of
England's darkest counties



VISIT **HEREFORDSHIRE**



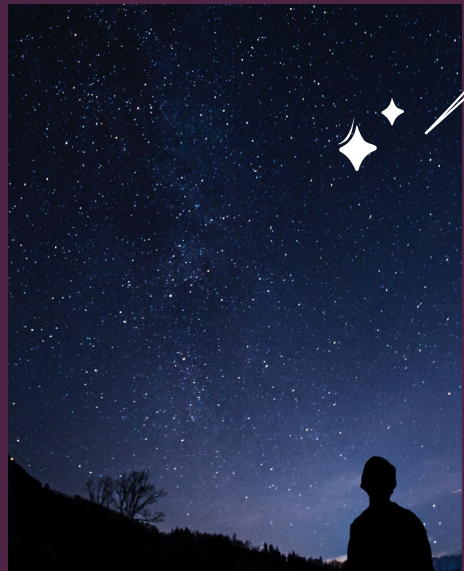
Immerse yourself in celestial skies in one of England's darkest counties!

Herefordshire's big skies and low levels of light pollution mean the stars are within easy reach across huge swathes of the county. This guide reveals some particularly special places for dazzling views and, if you're lucky, the chance to glimpse some nocturnal wildlife from bats to hedgehogs.

Make an evening of it by calling at one of our favourite nearby country pubs for supper and a pint. Perhaps sticking to the theme by savouring a glass of locally-brewed Nightjar!

Or spend a few days soaking up the spectacle of our night skies by booking a 'Starry Stay'. Pick from a contemporary cabin, geodesic dome, restored circus wagon, even a cider shack, including many places where you can quite literally star bathe.

On a clear night, you'll see constellations, planets, even shooting stars. And for a real show, time your trip to catch a dramatic meteor shower, including the Lyrid in mid-April, the Perseids in mid-July and August, Orionid in October and Leonid in November.

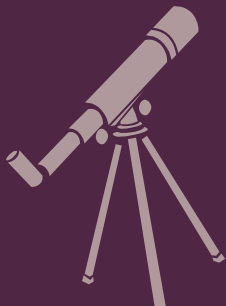
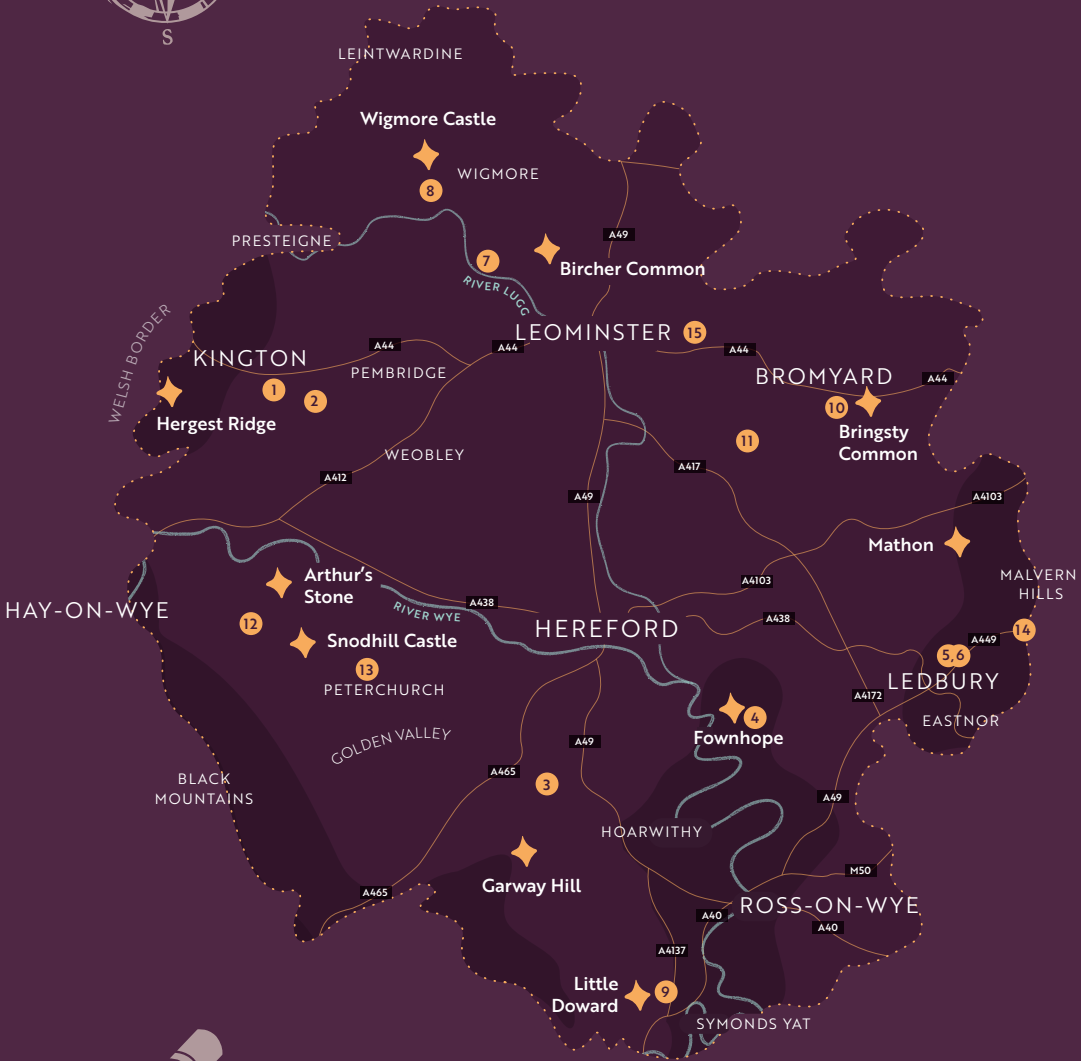


Stargazing tips

Happily you can stargaze at any time of year, simply look up to the heavens on a dry, clear night, ideally one with minimal moonlight, and see what you can spy.

To see in the dark without ruining your night adapted vision, use a red light torch.

If you need a hand identifying the various stars, constellations, planets and more, then download one of the many free astronomy apps onto your mobile phone.



Supper & Stargazing

We've paired our favourite places to stargaze with fantastic nearby country pubs, for the perfect evening itinerary.

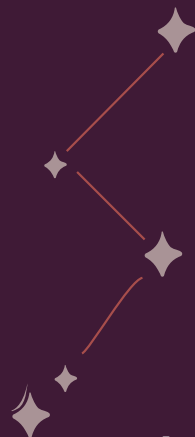
If you would like to eat at any of the places below, we advise booking ahead.

Stargazing

- ◆ Hergest Ridge ◆ Garway Hill ◆ Bircher Common
- ◆ Mathon ◆ Wigmore Castle ◆ Pages Pasture
- ◆ Bringsty Common ◆ Fownhope ◆ Arthur's Stone
- ◆ Snodhill Castle ◆ Little Doward

Supper

- 1 The Swan, Kington
- 2 The Cattleshed, Lyonshall
- 3 Kilpeck Inn, Kilpeck
- 4 The Greenman, Fownhope
- 5 The Feathers Hotel, Ledbury
- 6 The Seven Stars, Ledbury
- 7 The Riverside Inn, Aymestrey
- 8 The Castle Inn, Wigmore
- 9 Old Court Hotel, Symonds Yat
- 10 The Live and Let Live, Bringsty
- 11 Three Horseshoes Inn, Little Cowarne
- 12 The Pandy Inn, Dorstone
- 13 The Nags Head, Peterchurch
- 14 Malvern Hills Hotel, Colwall
- 15 The Fisherman's Arms, Docklow



Supper & Stargazing

◆ Hergest Ridge

An easy one-mile walk takes you to Hergest Ridge, which straddles the border between England and Wales. Big skies guaranteed.

Directions & parking

Drive up Ridgebourne Road and park at the top. Walk up to the gate and then follow the wide track to the ridge. Nearest postcode: HR5 3EG, What 3 Words: altitude.trample.promotion.

Supper

Drop back into Kington for dinner at local steakhouse, **The Swan**, open til 9pm Tuesday to Saturday, rooms also available. Nearby, you'll also find **The Cattleshed**, which is open for evening meals on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. There's also a selection of self-catering cottages on site.

◆ Garway Hill

For 360-degree uninterrupted views and glorious night skies, Garway Hill is a must. Park up and walk a mile to the summit.

Directions & parking

There's a small car park at Lower Caste and also roadside parking space. Nearest postcode: HR2 8RU, What 3 Words: flamed.excellent.options

Supper

Four miles away you'll find the cosy **Kilpeck Inn**, complete with log fire. Recommended by the Michelin Guide and Good Food Guide Top 100, they champion local and seasonal food, real ales and fine wines. Bar open til 11pm Tue-Sat (4pm on Sundays), food served til 9pm Tue-Sat. Luxury bedrooms are also on offer.



✦ Bircher Common

Soak up the tranquillity of this expansive lowland heath which has been common land since medieval times.

Directions & parking

Park at Yarpole Village Hall, nearest postcode: HR6 0BL, What 3 Words: fondest.sandpaper.swerves. Coming out of the car park, turn right along Green Lane and on reaching the crossroads, go straight

over and continue up the surfaced road until you see the National Trust markers for Bircher Common. Follow the path through the trees and across open land to the highest point. The walk will take around 20 to 30 minutes one way.

Supper

Seven minutes in the car brings you to **The Riverside Inn** at Aymestrey. All the food at this award-winning restaurant is made and sourced on site. The kitchen is open til 9pm Monday to Saturday and the bar is open til 11pm every day except Sunday (closes at 6pm). Stay in the main building or try the spacious suites and garden lodges.

✦ Mathon

Recognised as an official Dark Sky Discovery Site, Mathon is a tiny rural hamlet in the Malvern Hills. On a clear night you can see the Milky Way with the naked eye.

Directions & parking

St John the Baptist Church is the place to stargaze, park on the road, postcode: WR13 5PW, What 3 Words: unzips.brushing.husky.

Supper

Retreat to the market town of Ledbury where you will find the black and white former coaching inn **The Feathers Hotel**, last orders for the restaurant at 8.50pm, as well as the timber-framed **Seven Stars**, open til 9pm for dinner Monday to Saturday. Both offer great food and drink as well as rooms.



✦ Wigmore Castle & Church

Sitting on a naturally defensive spur, the semi-sunken ruins of this medieval fortress make an atmospheric place to contemplate the skies

Directions & parking

Park for free at the village hall (HR6 9UW) then make for the Church. Walk through the churchyard and pick up the trail to the Castle (HR6 9UB).

Supper

Return to the village and hole up at **The Castle Inn**, open all days except Wednesday.

✦ Pages Pasture

Summer stargazers can soak up dark skies with the heady scents of rambling honeysuckle, field rose and guelder rose at this tiny nature reserve.

Directions & parking

Cared for by the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, the reserve has a small car park just inside the main entrance gate, off the B4203, immediately adjacent to Pine Tree Cottages. Nearest postcode HR7 4QD. What 3 Words: massing.snuggled.excusing.

Supper

For a flavour-packed gourmet dining experience try **The Baiting House** which is four miles up the road and also offer luxury lodges for overnight stays. Alternatively, drive a little further for homemade pub classics at **The Fishermans Arms** at **Docklow Pools** where there's a wide range of adult-only accommodation options. Opening hours for both vary so check in advance.



✦ Bringsty Common

Take a night hike through the sweeping landscapes which once inspired Sir Edward Elgar who enjoyed strolls here with the playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw.

Directions & parking

On the A44 around 3 miles east of Bromyard, turn at the distinctive sign for the **Live & Let Live** pub (postcode: WR6 5UW) and find parking on the right hand side. There's various paths but for the best lookout point (complete with seats!) head south west for Jubilee Hill.

Supper

Make for **The Live & Let Live**, a beautiful 16th-century thatched pub which serves traditional pub meals until 8.30pm on Fridays and Saturdays, with the bar open til 11pm. Alternatively, try the **Three Horseshoes Inn** which offers freshly prepared dishes Thursday to Saturday.



✦ Fownhope

A favourite for stargazers is the pretty village of Fownhope. Try the area around Capler Lane, running from the Church to the Recreation Field.

Directions & parking

Drive along the B3224 through Fownhope and turn right by St Mary's Church into Capler Lane. After about 200m, there's a right turn between two houses, signposted 'Recreation Field and Parking, River Wye'. Nearest postcode HRI 4PJ. What 3 Words: marathons.ojective.rumbles

Supper

Fownhope is home to **The Greenman**, a charming hostellerie serving delicious, locally-sourced dishes until 10.30pm, seven days a week, with the option to enjoy a sound night's sleep in one of their comfortable bedrooms. Meanwhile, **The New Inn** is a great option for a traditional pint and pub meal, open til 9pm on Thursdays and 11pm on Fridays and Saturdays.





Arthur's Stone © Lee Nuttall

❖ Arthur's Stone

This spellbinding prehistoric stone in the Golden Valley looks out to the Black Mountains and has witnessed starry skies for over 5000 years.

Directions & parking

Park in the layby adjacent to the stone, postcode: HR3 6AX. What 3 Words: movements. toffee.amused.

Supper

Reputedly the oldest pub in the county, **The Pandy Inn** features in the Good Beer Guide, thanks to its selection of real ales and ciders. Serves traditional pub food til 8pm, Tuesday to Friday and til 8.30pm on Saturdays.

❖ Snodhill Castle

One of the oldest Norman castles, the ruins at Snodill are simply magical. On warm summer evenings, you may even spy glow worms on the Keep steps.

Directions & parking

Park in the layby on the left, just beyond the entrance gate. Nearest postcode: HR3 6BG. What 3 Words: unwound.massesspoons.

Supper

Try popular local, **The Nags Head**, which serves food until 8pm Monday to Saturday, with the bar open til 11pm.

✦ Little Doward Woods

Walk through the woods to command views of the night sky from the heights of Little Doward Camp, a Bronze and Iron Age hillfort.

Directions & parking

Access is from the A40, following signs for Ganarew. Near the entrance to Wyastone Business Park, you will see signs for the Woodland Trust car park, What 3 Words: flicked.guesswork.hill. Follow the path from the car park to the hillfort.

Supper

A three-minute drive brings you to the characterful **Old Court Hotel**. Call in for a drink at the Cotswold Bar or head for the Tudor dining room for a delicious, locally-sourced supper. Last orders for food at 8.30pm, bar open until around 10pm. Rooms are also available, as well as self-catering cottages.

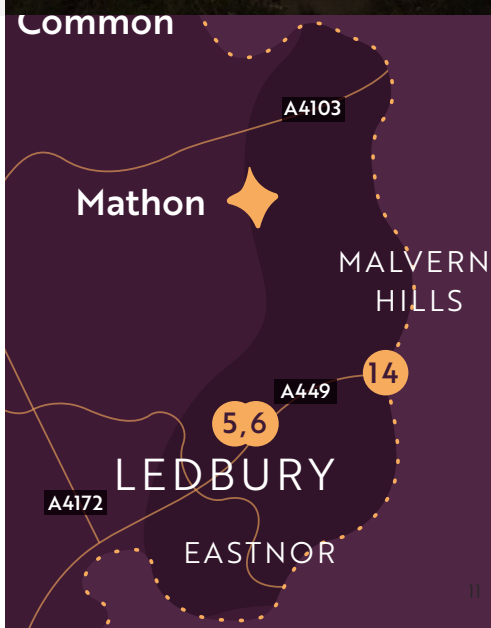


Snodhill Castle © Lee Nuttall

Moon Walk

Take a magical moonlit walk to the Herefordshire Beacon in the Malvern Hills. Park at the British Camp car park (postcode: WR13 6DW, What 3 Words: rally.eyebrows.potential) and follow the well-maintained path to the summit. It's a short, steep walk with views stretching in all directions.

Return to a hearty bar meal at **Malvern Hills Hotel**, which is opposite the car park.



Starry Stays

Stellar places for stargazers to spend the night. Located in secluded spots with panoramic views of the sky... observe the stars from the comfort of your outdoor bath, hot tub, hammock or rooftop window.

Kaya at Blackhill Farm

You'll find this boutique, adults-only retreat tucked in the hills between the Wye Valley National Landscape and the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park. Pick from two yurts and a cabin, each with its own stargazing highlight. Keep an eye to the skies as you lounge in the outdoor bath, hang out in the wood-fired hot tub or cuddle up under cosy blankets on the deck net. When it's time to turn in for the night, continue to enjoy the show, courtesy of the see-through crowns (roof windows) on each of the yurts.



Stargazers Wagon, Herefordshire Hideaways

Retired from circus life, this cavernous 27ft long wagon now sits in an ancient wild meadow. It's a splendid place for a stargazing getaway, with a wood-fired hot tub for an evening seeking out comets and constellations. Recommended daytime excursions include the 'Wedding Cake' Church and age-old Arches in Shobdon as well as a cycle ride around the picture-perfect Black & White Villages.



Redhill Holidays

Immerse yourself in night sky views by staying in a geodesic dome. Redhill has four and each one has perfect panoramas, including the **Malvern Hills** and the Cotswolds. Soak up celestial happenings as you unwind in the hot tub or, on colder evenings, watch the stars through the huge viewing windows as you snuggle up by the woodburner. Nearby, discover NT Brockhampton, before sipping the finest ciders at Little Pomona.



Ty Gwyn Holidays

The delights of cider and stars collide at the quirky and compact Cider Shack, a gorgeous getaway in the tranquil Monnow Valley. This cider farm makes award-winning tipples, available from the on-site shop & bar.

Look to the stars as you enjoy a chilled drink in the amazing outdoor bath, famous for its appearance on the BBC show *My Unique B&B*, or laze in the hammock. By day, soak up the views and ramble along the warren of walks on the doorstep.



Long exposure astrophotography captures the Earth's rotation from the Cider Shack



The Dragons Gate

A hilltop retreat in the Golden Valley with views out to the Black Mountains. Spend an evening under the stars, in the outdoor bath or the wood-fired hot tub. The BBQ invites al fresco dining and you are surrounded by wild walks in all directions, including nearby [Garway Hill](#) with its mountain ponies.

Drovers Rest

Take the kids on a wild adventure! Stay in a luxury safari lodge or cosy, restored stone cottage on this organic farm close to the bookish town of [Hay-on-Wye](#). By day, take a guided animal safari, climb trees and build dens. In the evening, admire the twinkling skies, toast marshmallows over a campfire and roam around moonlit meadows. Time your trip to coincide with one of the farm's fantastic feasts, from wild Sunday lunches to seasonal spectaculars, all cooked over open fires.





Field Cottage, White Heron Estate

Set in a vineyard with panoramic views stretching from the Black Mountains to the South Shropshire Hills, Field Cottage is a real rural retreat, ideal for families. In the evenings, treat yourself to a meal whipped up on-site by a local chef before retreating to the hot tub to look out for shooting stars. Days can be happily spent playing badminton in the garden, visiting the [Small Breeds Farm Park](#) and roaming [Hergest Ridge](#).

Grown-ups will also enjoy a tour around the home of [British Cassis](#), the luxury British blackcurrant liqueur which is made here on the family farm. Take the opportunity to walk the fields, bottle your own cassis and sample delicious cocktails.



Millie the Hut

Evenings are magical at this traditional-style shepherd's hut - relax in the glow of two firepits as the nearby stream babbles in the background. The area is so dark that it is home to the Spaceguard Centre, a working observatory which is the UK's main source of information about near Earth objects, such as asteroids. Tours can be booked.



Cruck Barn

With oak woodland on one side and far-reaching views on the other, Cruck Barn is a peaceful spot, miles away from the everyday hustle and bustle. This luxury, eco-friendly bolthole suits couples and families alike. Come nightfall, it's deliciously dark - toast marshmallows over the outdoor fire and swing in the hammock as the stars twinkle and owls hoot. Spend the week antiques hunting in [Leominster](#), visiting [NT Berrington Hall](#) or teeing off from England's highest [golf course](#) in [Kington](#).



Cynefin Retreats

Situated on the edge of a dark sky reserve, Cynefin Retreats is no stranger to spectacular stars. Whether you book a romantic pod or a larger lodge, sunrises and sunsets will bookend your day before the blanket of twinkly stars descends. Floor to ceiling sliding windows ensure uninterrupted views or take to the terrace, complete with hot tub and firepit. Nearby, you'll find the delightful [Artistraw Cidery](#), [Hergest Croft Gardens](#) and and the [Birches Farm Nature Reserve](#).



Dragon Orchard Retreat

Sleep under the stars in a hand-crafted yurt, set in an apple orchard. Immersed in the natural cycle of the seasons, this is a lovely place to slow down. Gaze at the stars through the stunning see-through roof or when cosying up around the firebowl. Nearby, find the pretty market town of [Ledbury](#), [Eastnor Castle](#) and [Coddington Vineyard](#).

Share your stargazing pics!

If you've captured stunning shots of celestial skies in the county then we would love to see them, simply tag us.

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The view at Cynefin Retreats

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