

Whilst Norfolk in summer is stunning, there is something quite majestic about Norfolk in winter. Crisp, fresh mornings when the sun is low across the fields, and hazy fog lingers on the waters' surface- these are some of the best days to be out and about in this beautiful county.

Here are our top 25 winter highlights

1. Bracing Beach Walks...

Forget sandcastle building & paddling and enjoy the beaches of Norfolk in winter which have a very different feel. Wrap up warm and take a walk from Horsey Mere to across the fields and dunes to the beach, where you may be lucky to see seals basking on the shoreline. For a ride out to the west of the county Holkham with its wide sandy beach and dunes provides a stunning vista. There is a disabled friendly 1 mile walk accessible at the end of Lady Anne's Drive, (Holkham) where you can park and where you can also warm up with a hot chocolate afterwards in the newly built 'Lookout Visitor Centre' centre complete with café. www.holkham.co.uk



2. Otter Spotting...

Winter is a great time to see Otters, particularly on the Broads. They can often be seen hunting in daylight along the river banks. Pack up a winter picnic full of delightful locally sourced produce, and head on the water in one of our fully accessible motor cruisers or visit the floating Broads Wildlife Centre at Ranworth, which is reached by a boardwalk so is suitable for the less abled, and has a panoramic vista across the water.

www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-in-norfolk/nature-reserves/reserves/ranworth-broad



3. Christmas Entertainment...



Norfolk provides some of the best in festive entertainment and yuletide joy! Three 'must sees' include the Christmas Spectacular at Thursford, (www.thursford.com) Cromer Pier Christmas Special, (www.cromerpier.co.uk) and the Christmas Spectacular Circus & Water Show at the Hippodrome, Great Yarmouth (www.hippodromecircus.co.uk).. Lots of fun to be had for all ages, and are all fully accessible.

4. Blickling Hall at Christmas...

From the 1st to the 21st of December Blickling Hall celebrates Christmas throughout the estate. Enjoy the colours, smells and sounds of Christmas whilst exploring this beautiful Jacobean house. Delight at the twinkling lights of the garden illuminations in the evening, and pick up a present or two from The Loft Galley with its unique non high-street gifts. (www.nationaltrust.org.uk/blickling-estate)



5. New Year's Day Fireworks...



What better way to kick off the New Year than to celebrate with family and friends and watch the stunning fireworks display at Cromer Pier. The spectacular event is really a 'must see'. Arrive in town early and enjoy a spot of lunch before 'reserving' your spot along the clifftop to watch fireworks being let off from the pier, and reflecting in the sea. Fireworks are at 5pm on New Year's Day.

(www.facebook.com/NYDFireworksCromer)

6. Fairhaven Woodland Garden...

The award winning unique garden experience is open 364 days a year, and offers 4 miles of woodland pathways to explore plus a private broad. During the winter months it is a perfect spot for a bit of wildlife watching. There is a garden, plant and sales gift shop and special events run throughout the year.

(www.fairhavengarden.co.uk)



7. Norwich

Norwich has both a Castle and a Cathedral - iconic parts of the city's rich heritage. The Castle Museum (www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/norwich-castle) is home to many exhibitions which illustrate the city's rich history through a mixture of prints,



photographs, paintings, memorabilia, displays, activities and archives. Guests with access issues can be accompanied by a carer free of charge. Blue badge holders can park outside the main entrance, and there are varying aids to

help make this lovely activity adaptable for the visually impaired and less abled. The Cathedral has the second highest spire of any cathedral and has free tours on the hour each day. There is no admission charge and Blue Badge holders can park outside the entrance. You can walk through the Close with its historic and interesting houses, to the river at Pull's Ferry. (www.cathedral.org)

8. Snowdrop Walks...



Ahhhh.....the lovely moment when you see the first signs of spring. Said to be the symbolism of the renewal of life, the Snowdrop is the first plant to awaken after the depths of winter and acts as a reminder that spring is on its way. Walk amongst the carpets of Snowdrops within the 18 acres of historic ground, at Walsingham Abbey between January and March. Boarded pathways and gravel tracks make most of the site accessible to wheelchair users. (www.walsinghamabbey.com)

9. Pretty Pensthorpe...

Popular Pensthorpe Natural Park is a waterfowl park and wetland reserve, which has designated paths for wheelchair and buggy users. The 700 acres of gardens and trails, together with bird hides, restaurant, and 'Hootz House' indoor play area makes for a nice day out. There are hides for those who may like to spend a little time birdwatching, and the varying gardens are planted as such to excite the senses. (www.pensthorpe.com)



10. Foodies Delight...



A definite must on a cold winter's day is a visit to a pub to warm your cockles! We are spoilt for choice here in Norfolk and wouldn't want to pick a particular one, but if we had to... would recommend...The White Horse, Neatishead, (www.thewhitehorseinnneatishead.com) The Fur and Feather at Woodbastwick (www.thefurandfeather.co.uk) and St Andrews Brew House, Norwich; each of them offer great

food and brew their own beer- so you can take a little taste of Norfolk home in a keg...or two! (www.standrewsbrewhouse.com)

11. Explore Afloat...



Don't be fooled into thinking that a trip on the Broads is purely a summer activity, the winter months are a great time to hit the water and our motor cruisers have heating! Take full advantage of the somewhat quieter waterways and soak up the tranquil surroundings. The area is rich in wildlife including Herons, Cormorants, Kingfishers and Otters. Please call our office for information and to book. 01692 630572

12. Crisp Woodland Walk...



Don your wellies, bobble hat and head out to one of Norfolk's finest in woodland offerings. National Trust owned Sheringham Park is an area of outstanding natural beauty which expands through wooded area, farmland and parkland. There are stunning views out to sea and signposted walks depending on how far you fancy exploring. Some of the pathways are suitable for those with limited mobility and wheelchair users. There is a small gift shop and café on site.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sheringham-park

13. Be 'Wild' ...



Hurrah! During February half term award winning Bewilderwood, a forest of adventure, re-opens. Based around the author Tom Blofield's adventurous characters Swampy, Leaflette and friends, there are treehouses, zip wires, a boat trip - plenty to keep everyone amused. There are several snack huts on site serving light snacks and drinks, or picnic areas if you wish to take your own food. Whilst the treehouses would be tricky for some to access there is disabled friendly play equipment. www.bewilderwood.co.uk

14. See the Seals...



In the winter months Common and Grey Seals can be seen basking with their pups at Blakeney point. Book onto an organised boat trip where the skipper will take you out to the point and tell you about the seals and the headland. Boats are uncovered for an 'up close' experience. On a sunny winters day this is a real treat, don't forgeto take your camera! (www.bishopsboats.com or www.beansboats.co.uk)

15. Cycle...



If you over indulged during the festive season why get out on a bike. Not only is cycling a great form of exercise it makes for a pleasant and 'green' way to explore the county. Get yourself a 'Broads Bike Trail Map' for a guide to local cycle routes. Broadland Cycle Hire, based in Hoveton,

offer hybrid and mountain bike/equipment hire and a free delivery service to Neatishead if you wish to book a bike for three days or more.

(<https://norfolkbroadscycling.co.uk>)

16. Nostalgic Norfolk...

The museums of Norfolk each offer a pleasant day out for when you wish to stay dry! Time and Tide in Gt Yarmouth is well worth a visit and tells the story of Great Yarmouth and its herring industry through exhibits and displays, and the lingering aroma of the smokehouse remains today. The museum is very disabled friendly and caters for those with impaired hearing and sight.

www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/time-tide



17. Splash and Swim...



Just a short drive cross country to Ingworth is Skipjack Leisure Pool, a privately owned complex which you can hire and use for half hour and full hour slots. There is a hydrotherapy salt pool which is heated to 35c and has hydro massage seats, spa jets, swim jets and an infrared sauna. It is ideal for sports injury recovery, Arthritic conditions, muscle pain and general relaxation.

www.skipjackleisurepools.co.uk

18. Shop...

Take a visit to historic Norwich. Its mix of independent shops and boutiques teamed with well-known high street stores makes for a great place for a spot of seasonal sale shopping or souvenir hunting. There are plenty of places to stop for a snack or slice of cake, and some great restaurants if you wish to dine out! To avoid the hassle of parking why not take the park and ride at Sprowston. www.norwichparkandride.co.uk



19. Stargaze...



There are some real treasures in the skies in January and February, and because the skies get darker much earlier than at other times in the year, you don't need to stay up really late to see them. Vast open unspoilt areas like Morston Quay on the North Norfolk coastline, or Thurne Mill and Horsey Mere within the Broads National Park would be an ideal locations to spend an hour or two counting how many shooting stars you can see or how many constellations you can identify.

20. "How" could we forget How Hill

Set on the river banks of the Ant, not far afloat from our base, you cannot fail to miss How Hill House. It's impressive thatched roof and pretty features stand tall and proud within this beautiful area of wetland, gardens, and marshland. Take a walk through woodland to the Secret Garden- open every day, this is a plant lover's paradise.

Download a plant guide and identify the varying species, or simply sit and relax in this tranquil spot. To stretch the legs a little further and clear your head take the path across the marshes into Ludham where you can stop and refuel at the Wayfarers Café. Revisit this lovely spot for a completely different experience in the summer months when the tea rooms are open and a traditional Norfolk Wherry moors up and is open for visitors. www.howhilltrust.org.uk



21. City of Norwich Aviation Museum...



This lovely little museum is one of Norfolk's best kept secrets! Suitable for all ages, the museum is home to aircraft from many eras, some of which can be boarded for a closer look. Engine displays and exhibitions documenting interesting facts about Norfolk's rich relations with the RAF, and the part service men from this county played during World War II, can all be found here. There is a tea room serving drinks and

snacks and a gift shop where you can purchase souvenirs. Assistance dogs are welcome. www.cnam.org.uk

22. Wroxham Barns...

Award winning Wroxham Barns has something for everyone during all seasons- craft shops, garden shop, animal farmyard, children's indoor play area, unique shopping, and not forgetting the super restaurant for a tasty treat or afternoon tea. In particular, if visiting during the lead up to Christmas this is a perfect spot to stock up on gifts! www.wroxhambarns.co.uk



23. Be 'broad minded'...



Get to the nitty gritty of Broads life by visiting The Museum of the Broads at neighbouring Stalham. Learn about the impact this outstanding network of waterways and vast expanses of water has had on the residence of Norfolk. From trade to tourism and war to wildlife it's all covered here! Child friendly, dog friendly and fully accessible this is a must

when staying with us. For a unique experience why not book a Trust boat to take you to the museum by water. www.museumofthebroads.org.uk

24. 'All Aboard' to Aylsham...



Step aboard a traditional steam train at Wroxham on Norfolk's longest narrow gauge steam railway and take a lovely ride through the countryside into the market town of Aylsham. Completely run by volunteers, The Bure Valley Railway has a full list of events that run throughout the year, including the Mince Pie Special in December and January. Alongside the usual carriage, there are six specially designed coaches which can carry wheelchairs easily. Dogs are also welcome www.bvrw.co.uk

25. Winter Wellbeing...

Let's face it, there are days during the winter months that are simply for relaxing, unwinding and recharging the batteries— what better way to relax and unwind in readiness for spring, than at our quaint bungalow in the quiet tranquil countryside!



