

Lakeside Cottage

(In the grounds of the Inn at Fossebridge)

You'll find Lakeside Cottage in the picturesque hamlet of Fossebridge, where the Fosse Way – the Roman road that once linked Exeter and Lincoln – drops gently into the valley of the River Coln. The Cotswold stone cottage sits within the grounds of the Inn at Fossebridge, a beautiful 17th Century coaching inn.

Ramblers will be delighted to hear that there are plenty of footpaths around and about, and that the National Trust Chedworth Roman Villa is not far away. In Spring the nearby bluebell woods are simply beautiful – ask in the bar for directions, or simply discover them yourself – and the ancient market town of Northleach, with its mechanical music museum and magnificent wool church, is well worth a visit. What's more, Bourton-on-the-Water, Stow-on-the-Wold and Cheltenham are all within half an hour's drive of the cottage.

Not only is Lakeside Cottage a great base to use while exploring the local area, it's also a home away from home. The owners are firm believers that it's the little details that count, and the cottage is blessed with many. There are boutis quilts, beautiful antiques (handpicked by the owners) and brass bedknobs in the bedrooms, and you'll find copper pots and hand-painted crockery in the kitchen.

Lakeside Cottage sleeps ten comfortably. The master bedroom, on the ground floor, boasts a king size bed and an en-suite bathroom with a bath and shower cubicle. Also on the ground floor is the Twin bedroom, which has its own wash basin. Upstairs you'll find another double bedroom, also with its own wash basin, and, just across the landing, the dormitory room, which sleeps four. Children will adore this cosy hideaway.

One of the nicest thing about the cottage is that, although you feel a world away from any sort of hustle and bustle, you're just a few yards from the Inn at Fossebridge and its wonderful restaurant, which serves local ales, fine wines and fabulous traditional fare – think pan-fried pigeon breast with crispy pancetta, Cotswold saddle of lamb, and mixed berry Eton Mess. The Inn offers a daily lunch menu from noon until 2.30pm, and à la carte dining in the evening from 6pm until 9.30pm. A traditional Sunday roast is served every Sunday from noon until 3.30pm (advanced reservations are recommended). The two Garden Rooms within the hotel are available for private use (no room hire charge) should you require additional space for a special celebration.

If you can think of no better way to spend a winter's evening than by gathering around a dining table with friends and family, you're in luck. The cottage kitchen has everything you need to create your own wonderful meal, including a large freestanding fridge freezer and a gas hob with electric fan oven. The owners have even installed a Miele dishwasher, so there's no need to worry about washing up.

The cottage also has its own enclosed garden – perfect for summer days when only al fresco dining will do. Breakfast can be enjoyed in the hotel dining room (cottage guests can pre-book breakfast at a cost of £13.50 per person), while gazing out at the lake (keep an eye out in the early morning for kingfishers and herons).

If rainy days force you to postpone your afternoon picnic or stroll in the woods, why not while away the hours in the traditional sitting room? The log burning stove will chase away any winter blues, while the chessboard (take a peek in the cupboard) is sure to keep you amused; satellite television and a DVD player are installed. There's even a separate children's television area – complete with the comfiest of sofas.

The cottage has a private entrance and two driveways with parking for five cars. Children and well-behaved dogs (maximum two dogs) are most welcome.