instant escapes

Locals' **Bath**

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Central Bath is showy; every Georgian curve seems to throw up yet further grandiose proof of the city's right to Unesco status. But turn right where the tour buses turn left and you enter a parallel city of rambling lanes, artisan workshops, and willow-shaded canal ways that will surprise you with their softer-spoken charms. **By Chris Allsop**

CUT-OUT-AND-GO GUIDE | LOCALS' BATH

SEE & DO

● Bath's pretty parks are deservedly popular, but swerve the crowds in prim Parade Gardens and sprawling Victoria Park. Quieter Prior Park Landscape Garden (nationaltrust.org.uk; £7 entry; ① on map) is a poetic flourish leading the eye to the city's **spires beyond the park's Palladian Bridge**. Prior Park's views are pipped only by quiet Alexandra Park ②, a tree-encircled summit in the Bear Flat district. More centrally, stumble across a replica Roman temple in Sydney Gardens ③, which fans out from behind the Holburne Museum.

● Taking tea might fit with Bath's formal facade, but the city also microfoams **some of the finest flat whites**. Preppy Colonna & Small's (6 Chapel Row; colonnaandsmalls.co.uk; ④) crafts the best (£3) — pair it with the heavenly carrot cake (£2.90). If it must be tea, de-chintz and step into the clean lines of Comins Tea House (34 Monmouth St; cominstea.com; ⑤) for single estate loose-leaf tea (£2.50) and Sri Lankan egg hoppers (£3).

● Bath is a rugby town, its beating heart the famous, central 'Rec' stadium (Spring Gardens; bathrugby.com; ⑥) – and if it's rugby season (September to May) watching a game there is a joyous rite of passage. But remember **this is Bath doing sport, so expect Jamie Oliver food trucks and designer handbags**. On the east side, the Dyson Stand also provides superb views of the Abbey (tickets from £10).

Picture captionMusci nestem quam facessum estionetur, ipsam comnimi, seniminvel inctur reribusciur mo volorecus, qui temquia sitatus

● Every Saturday morning, you'll find the cream of Somerset's crops boxed and sold on the stalls of the Bath Farmer's Market (Green Park Station; bathfarmersmarket.co.uk; ⑦). **Nab free tasters of award-winning Wyfe of Bath cheese**; eyeball decadent Seven Hills chocolates made with local organic butter; and pick up some Quality English Apple Juice, squeezed from fulsome West Country orchards.

● Make a baking pilgrimage to the Bertinet Kitchen , run by French baker and former BBC Food Champion of the Year, Richard Bertinet (12 St. Andrew's Terrace; thebertinetkitchen.com; ⑧). If his courses are too much dough (the one-day Introduction to Bread Making costs £170pp), locate the bakery, tucked on an alley in the Design Quarter, and engage with his genius via a sticky almond croissant (£2).

● Bath's streets are a hive of artisan industry. Watch Katherine Fraser (74 Walcot St; katherinefraser.co.uk; ⑨) **weaving must-have merino wool cushions** on her loom; find handmade tiles being painted on Old Orchard (88a Walcot St; handmade-tiles.co.uk; ⑩); or pop through the back of Old Bank Antiques Centre (16-17 Walcot Buildings; oldbankantiquescentre.com; ⑪) — you'll stumble across a craftsman upcycling ruined antiques.

● Love your local ale and pork scratchings with a side of live music? Bath's cosiest boozers await. Community-run The Bell (103 Walcot St; thebellinnbath.co.uk; ⑪) is a **boho pub with free gigs** during the week — locals love the Sunday lunchtimes. You'll find subterranean grooves in the St James Wine Vaults (10 St James St; stjameswinevaults.co.uk; ⑪), while the intimate Green Park Brasserie (Green Park Station; greenparkbrasserie.com; ⑪) is another residents' favourite.

● The idea of cycling hilly Bath might be anathema to all but the most masochistic Lycra devotee, but Two Tunnels Greenway, 6.5km of converted railway, is picturesque — and flat. Rent from the Nextbike stations in town (£10 for five hours), and pedal the 20km loop to Midford and back (bit.ly/2tunnels), stopping off at Warleigh Weir, at the bottom of Ferry

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EAT

● *A taste of Spain*
OLE TAPAS *(Tapas about £6)*
Because: Everything at this dinky restaurant tucked away in the city centre — from the staff accents to the Manchego cream cheese drizzled with Málaga-made honey — is authentically Spanish and, naturally, rather more-ish. ***Travel's* tip:** Try a G&T from the dedicated Spanish gin menu. *1 John St; 01225 424274, oletapas.co.uk;* ⑪.

● *Foodie wine bar*
CORKAGE *(Small plates about £7)*
Because: This pop-up went permanent after ecstatic responses to the eclectic cuisine — think octopus marinated in Pinot Noir with lemon-infused hummus. ***Travel's* tip:** If there are four of you, order the entire menu (about 14 dishes). You won't regret it. *132a Walcot St; 01225 422577, corkagebath.com;* ⑪.

● *Brunch favourite*
CASTLE FARM CAFE *(Mains about £8)*
Because: In the rolling hills on Bath's southern border, this laid-back cafe serves up the city's tastiest — and vegetarian — breakfast. It's local fare: homemade baked beans, and Bertinet sourdough toast. ***Travel's* tip:** Don't miss the farm shop, full of gourmet goodies such as spicy rhubarb and beetroot chutney. *Midford Rd; 07564 783307;* ⑪.

● *Relaxed gastro-pub*
KING WILLIAM *(Mains about £18)*
Because: It's a smart palate pleaser, using the finest local produce. Try a malty pint of King William in the bar, or go upstairs for candlelight and white-linen tablecloths. ***Travel's* tip:** Lunch mains too heavy? You can order from the bar menu. *36 Thomas St; 01225 428096, kingwilliampub.com;* ⑪.

● *Low-key wizardry*
MENU GORDON JONES
(Six courses £55)
Because: The concept might alarm the unadventurous: no menu — instead six surprise courses (five for £50 at lunch). Expect haute cuisine that fills bellies, and creative seasonal pairings such as Jerusalem artichoke soufflé with bacon ice cream. Course for course, it's is the best meal in the city. ***Travel's* tip:** The kitchen is open to dietary requirements — just phone ahead. *2 Wellsway; 01225 480871, menugordonjones.co.uk;* ⑪.

DRINK

● *Old-school charm*
THE STAR INN
Because: Little changed since the 16th century (it still sells snuff behind the bar), this is your, par excellence. Play shove ha'penny, or settle by the fire with a pint of golden Bellringer, brewed in Bath. ***Travel's* tip:** Go on a Thursday evening and get free bar snacks. *23 Vineyards; fb.com/thestarinnbath.*

● *Top roast*
HARE & HOUNDS
Because: This handsome Victorian gastro-pub has spectacular views into leafy Wiltshire — and equally spectacular Sunday roasts. ***Travel's* tip:** The small car park is usually full, but you can park free on the road opposite. *Lansdown Rd; hareandhoundsbath.com.*

● *Local brews*
THE SALAMANDER
Because: This jolly pub moonlights as the shop front for Bath Ales brewery. It's best enjoyed with a pint of malty Gem after a rugby match, when supporters from both sides rush in to celebrate and commiserate. ***Travel's***

ASK THE LOCAL

Kate Authers is a freelance creative (and former editor of a local magazine) who has lived in the city for 11 years

Hidden away in Lilliput Court, The Hideout (1 Lilliput Court; hideoutbath.co.uk) is a tiny stone-walled bunker of a whisky bar – it's a real find. **Knowledgeable bartenders with flat caps, waistcoats and big smiles** mix mean cocktails. The Scallop Shell (22 Monmouth Place; thescallopshell.co.uk) is my favourite restaurant for consistently awesome oysters, cock crab, chips and curry sauce washed down with a glass or two of fizz – I love the ice-filled rolltop bath displaying the catch of the day. For the inside track on the city's food and drink legends, take the three-hour Food Heroes of Bath tour with Savouring Bath (£35pp; savouringbath.

STAY

● *Life and soul*
HILL HOUSE *(Doubles from £115, B&B)*
Because: Owner Harry's warm welcome at the door sets the tone for this convivial B&B opposite Camden Crescent. The building, dating back to 1762, is a hodgepodge of glam and homely, with an ebullient art collection magpied from local artists. With an international clientele around its farmhouse breakfast table, come ready for homemade yoghurt served with eclectic conversation. ***Travel's* tip:** Ask for a room facing towards Victoria Park – hot air balloons can often be seen rising in the morning. *25 Belvedere; 01225 920520, hillhousebath.co.uk.*

● *Central retreat*
THE ROSEATE VILLA *(Doubles from £120, B&B)*
Because: This Villa reflects the serenity of Henrietta Park opposite, despite being but a Roman helmet hurl from selfie-central Pulteney Bridge. Its stately exterior enfolds a warm heart: fresh flowers and homemade shortbread await in the pleasant, light-filled rooms, while returning guests can look forward to Charlotte Brunswick choccies awaiting them on goose down duvets. ***Travel's* tip:** Don't splurge on The Hideaway suite as isn't as up-to-date as the other rooms. *Henrietta Road; 01225 805513, www.roseatevillabath.com.*

● *Classic comfort*
BRINDLEY'S BOUTIQUE *(Doubles from £125, B&B)*
Because: Hiding behind a veil of raspberry-whip wisteria, this Edwardian villa is tucked away on a side road about 10 minutes' walk from the city centre. Experienced new ownership has revitalised the garden furniture, but left everything else just-so at this relaxing boutique hotel. ***Travel's* tip:** Just up the hill is public access to Bath's most beautiful stretch of canal. *14 Pulteney Gardens; 01225 310444, brindleysbath.co.uk.*

● *Pimm's heaven*
PARADISE HOUSE *(Doubles from £130, B&B)*
Because: It's all about the garden. You walk through the crisp interior of just another handsome Georgian façade to emerge into a singular half acre of walled garden, complete with a wisteria-laced pergola, in a neighbourhood that floats above the city. Pimm's is served on the lawn in summertime, which only heightens the fantasy that you're starring in a Beeb period drama. ***Travel's* tip:** The newly redecorated luxury king is the quietest room, with its own entrance onto that stellar lawn. *86-88 Holloway; 01225 317723, paradise-house.co.uk.*

● *Eclectic style*
NO. 15 GREAT PULTENEY STREET
(Doubles from £140, B&B)
Because: An idiosyncratic boutique hotel, a modern art gallery, a quirky interiors showroom – No. 15 is all three, sensibly contained within the grand frontage of Pulteney Street. Take the stairs so as not to miss the gramophone light fixture, but mind the blind stairwell – the hotel's most Alice Through the Looking Glass touch. ***Travel's* tip:** Room price includes access to the larder – a SMEG fridge stocked with organic Marshfield Farm ice cream. 15 Great Pulteney Street; 01225 807015, no15greatpulteney.co.uk.

● *Sensory feast*
BERDOULAT & BREAKFAST *(Doubles from £165, B&B)*
Because: An offer of wine isn't far away at this magical little B&B on a quiet road near the Abbey. Arrive at mealtime, and you enter a fragrant fog of Neri's cooking spices and her architect husband Patrick's sensual décor. For breakfast, try her award-winning Full Turkish. ***Travel's* tip:** Guests can take some private reading time in the grandiose library, stocked with 6,000 books, by appointment. *5 Pierrepont Place; 01225 334798, berdoulatandbreakfast.co.uk.*

GET ME THERE

GO INDEPENDENT
Bath is south of the M4 exiting on junction 18. Congestion can be dreadful,

PHOTOGRAPHS: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX MAP: MAIDENHEAD CARTOGRAPHIC

Caption copyOdit modit magnam volorum simusaperit, ut et fugitat. Ut laborentio. Verest, ium, quatem explam quunt eatem ex est que sero volore voluptate delis audaerum adigenis eatem que veribus delit plitatur? Feristibus essitas