

# Buxton

A hilly yet delightful Derbyshire spa town that came into prominence during the 19th century

## WHY GO?

Buxton is perhaps best known for the eponymous bottled water sold throughout the UK by Nestlé. The local mineral water also turns up in Rockhead bottles, but if you come to Buxton (one of England's highest towns, up in the Peak District), you can fill your own empty bottle with the same water for free at St Ann's Well.

Pick up a copy of the town guide from the tourist information centre and explore the Georgian and Victorian spa heritage, from the grand architecture of The Crescent and Palace Hotel to smaller bygone buildings, such as the one on the corner of George Street, which was the Pump Room and drinking well for Devonshire Hospital patients.

The town's attractions are nicely compact, leading down from Higher Buxton's Market Place to the well-landscaped Pavilion Gardens. The scenic wonders of the hilly Peak District are all around, so it makes a great base for a hiking break.

## GETTING THERE

### By car

If you're heading up to Buxton from the south and east, take the A6 and you can see another couple of former spa towns en route. Rising up a steep hillside, larger Matlock retains much of its Victorian architecture, while Matlock Spa is a tourist resort that curves around a river.

### By train

Northern Rail [www.northernrail.org](http://www.northernrail.org). Trains from Stockport (45 minutes) and Manchester Piccadilly (one hour).

### By bus

Traveline

[www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)

0871 200 2233

[www.derbyshire.gov.uk/buses](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/buses)

Buxton is fairly well served by regional buses. For example, the Transpeak service ([www.trentbarton.co.uk](http://www.trentbarton.co.uk)) has buses to Stockport, Manchester, Derby and Nottingham, the 58 goes to Bakewell and Chatsworth House, while the 65 goes to Sheffield. You can also buy a Derbyshire Wayfarer ticket, allowing unlimited bus (and train) access for a day (£8.60 per adult and child under 16).

## THINGS TO SEE AND DO

### ■ Pavilion Gardens

[www.paviliongardens.co.uk](http://www.paviliongardens.co.uk)

There is a miniature train ride in summer, an art gallery and conservatory with exotic plants.

### ■ Buxton Palace Hotel

01298 24859

[www.barcelo-hotels.co.uk](http://www.barcelo-hotels.co.uk)

This hotel was built for spa-visiting Victorians and still retains its palatial lobby, with arched colonnades and swanky drapes. You don't have to stay at the hotel to use its Health and Leisure Centre. For £10 per day you can have access to the pool, gym, sauna and steam rooms (all free for hotel guests).

### ■ Devonshire Spa

University of Derby

01332 594408

[www.devonshire-spa.co.uk](http://www.devonshire-spa.co.uk)

This spa centre is part of the university's Devonshire campus, a substantial multi-domed

building that was formerly a hospital. The beauty therapists are students in training, so treatments (such as 'dry floatation' and aroma wraps) are reasonably priced. A two-hour spa session costs £15, and includes the use of a hydrotherapy pool (not natural thermal waters).

### ■ Poole's Cavern

[www.poolescavern.co.uk](http://www.poolescavern.co.uk)

One mile south of the town centre on Green Lane. The lengthy cave includes impressive curtain walls and manganese-stained flowstones. The trail up to Solomon's Temple (part of Buxton Country Park) begins on the other side of the car park from the cavern.

Open daily March-Oct, weekends only in winter. Tour times vary through the year – roughly every 20 minutes in summer

Admission £7.50 for a 40-50 minute tour; car park £1

### ■ Opera House

0845 127 2190

[www.buxtonoperahouse.org.uk](http://www.buxtonoperahouse.org.uk)

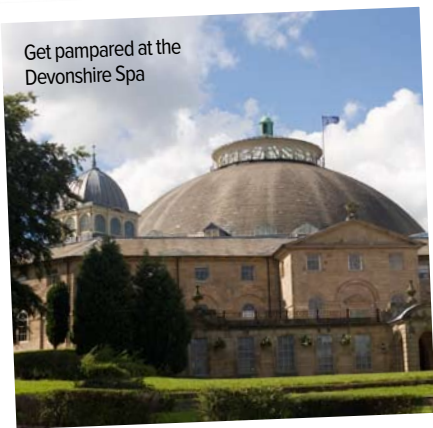
This Edwardian gem with Art Nouveau stained glass dazzles with Baroque features inside. A theatre tour costs £2.50 per person, 11am on most Saturdays (not during the festival season).

### OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST TO VISIT

The permanent exhibition at the Buxton Museum and Art Gallery on Terrace Road (free admission, closed Mondays) includes a fine collection of ornaments made from local Ashford Black Marble, Victorian paintings of the town, and prehistoric relics such as a sabre-toothed tiger bone and a Bronze Age skeleton.

In 'Higher Buxton', take a look at sweet little St Anne's Church on Bath Road, Buxton's oldest building. Its founding year of 1625 is inscribed in the entrance porch and the inside (resembling a barn with timber beams) includes a square Saxon font.

Get pampered at the Devonshire Spa



## GOOD PLACES TO STAY

### ■ Grosvenor House

☎ 01298 72439

[www.grosvenorbuxton.co.uk](http://www.grosvenorbuxton.co.uk)

Conveniently central, the Grosvenor has a traditional feel, with oriental artworks and an antique dresser in the lounge and old Buxton photos dating back 130 years in the breakfast room, which is shaped like a boat prow. Hostess Pat's daily specials here may include eggs Benedict or home-made cheese potato cakes. Half of the eight, good value rooms overlook Pavilion Gardens – they generally have a chintzy, country-style décor. Drying room available. **Double rooms from £65 B&B**

### ■ 9 Green Lane

☎ 01298 73731

[www.9greenlane.co.uk](http://www.9greenlane.co.uk)

It's a five-minute walk to the Market Place and Pavilion Gardens from this gabled Edwardian house. There's no lounge, but in the cheery breakfast room you can savour a fine spread including hostess Caroline's home-made bread and preserves. Make your breakfast choice the evening before. The nine smart, ensuite rooms (some on the ground floor) look spick and span, offering bottles of Buxton water and modern shower rooms. Off-road parking. **Double rooms from £70 B&B**

### ■ Roseleigh

☎ 01298 24904

[www.roseleighhotel.co.uk](http://www.roseleighhotel.co.uk)

This Victorian guesthouse is in an enviable spot – on the delightful Broad Walk promenade overlooking the town's Pavilion Gardens. Hospitable Maggi and Gerard can give advice about hikes in the Peak District and provide plenty of homely appeal, from the fresh flowers in the breakfast room to the plethora of travel books in the lake-facing residents lounge. Ornaments gathered from their global travels, bygone Buxton miniature paintings and antiques

enhance the décor. Four of the 14 smartly furnished rooms have sash window views over the Gardens. Free internet access and off-road parking. **Double rooms from £74 B&B**

### ■ Stoneridge Guesthouse

☎ 01298 26120

[www.stoneridge.co.uk](http://www.stoneridge.co.uk)

Trendy 'boutique' touches enhance this welcoming late-Victorian guest house close to the town centre, particularly in the four spacious bedrooms. Here you'll find pristine shower rooms, black and white tones, a substantial welcome folder and Buxton spring water. Equally modern is the dining room, where you might meet Hamish the Westie while tucking into an omelette. Hostess Claire will (on request) supply packed lunches, evening meals, fresh milk, cycle maps and repair kits, drying facilities and even a foot spa after a long day's hiking! Off-road parking. **Double rooms £65 B&B (only cash accepted)**

### ■ The Old Hall Hotel

**The Square**

☎ 01298 22841

[www.oldhallhotelbuxton.co.uk](http://www.oldhallhotelbuxton.co.uk)

Over the past four centuries, Buxton has built up around what is reputedly one of England's oldest hotels, and the former residence of Mary Queen of Scots. The spring water source is under this now creeper-clad hotel which stands opposite St Ann's Well and beside the Georgian Crescent. There's plenty of historic character throughout, such as displays of the old Hall keys, an ancient map of Buxton showing the Hall, and Elizabethan portraits and a settle in the beamed George Potter bar. There are creaky, uneven floors in some of the rooms, and some areas could do with a bit of refurbishment, though. Parking permit - £3 for 24 hours. Also see 'Good places to eat and drink'.

**Double rooms from £100 B&B**

## GOOD PLACES TO EAT AND DRINK

### ■ Columbine

**7 Hall Bank**

☎ 01298 78752

Halfway up steep Hall Bank, in the town centre, this sweet little restaurant can soon fill up so it may be advisable to phone ahead. Fresh flowers adorn candlelit tables and genial staff serve simply presented dishes, such as roast rack of High Peak lamb and black pudding in red wine sauce, or cheese-topped butterbean pie. There are vegetarian and specials menus, and a good selection of wines. Starters £4-£6, mains £12-£15. Open Mon-Sat evenings from 7pm.

### ■ 6, The Square

[www.no6tearooms.co.uk](http://www.no6tearooms.co.uk)

Fronted by a colonnaded arcade and facing the Opera House, this charming, Regency-era tearoom (formerly medical consulting rooms) makes a great afternoon refuelling stop. Despite the teapot collection lining the walls, the range of teas on offer is surprisingly limited, but there's no shortage of appetising home-made cakes. Hot snacks include toasted Derbyshire oatcake topped with fruit or mushrooms and sage Derby cheese. Most dishes are around £7. Pot of tea £1.70, cakes £2.25, cream tea £4.10.

### ■ The Old Hall Hotel

(also see under 'Good places to stay')

The most prominent dining area in the hotel is a grand restaurant overlooking Pavilion Gardens, with ornate corning and bookshelves in niches. But we ate in the more informal, cheaper Wine Bar, also known as the Cock Bar due to the many rooster and hen prints on the walls and poultry ornaments above the decoratively tiled fireplace. In keeping with the theme, the fairly limited menu includes chicken breast in pepper cream sauce, but also offered are High Peak lamb and feta cheese burgers or crab and spring onion risotto. Portions are generous (local ale on tap), although we found service rather slow. Starters £4-£7, main meals mostly £10.

### ■ The Old Sun Inn

Old wood doors have been remodelled into snug partitions in this olde-worlde pub that offers several real ales. Sup at tree-shaded tables on the street-facing terrace or under low-slung beams, surrounded by exposed stone walls, bookshelves and early 20th century photos of town scenes.



## USEFUL INFORMATION

The tourist information centre is sited in the Pavilion Gardens beside the Conservatory. Staff charge a £3 booking fee to book you

accommodation.

[www.visitbuxton.co.uk](http://www.visitbuxton.co.uk)

[www.visitpeakdistrict.co.uk](http://www.visitpeakdistrict.co.uk)

Eventually, people will be able to bathe in the natural thermal waters and taste water from a renovated Pump Room at the five-star Buxton Crescent Hotel and Thermal Spa. Visit [www.buxtoncrescent.co.uk](http://www.buxtoncrescent.co.uk) for more info.

■ **Buxton Festival** between 7-25 July 2010

[www.buxtonfestival.co.uk](http://www.buxtonfestival.co.uk)