

Here's a thoughtfully paced **2-day history itinerary for Southern Oxfordshire**, balancing medieval towns, Civil War sites, grand estates, and riverside heritage.

Day 1 – Medieval Wallingford, Dorchester & the Thames

Morning: Wallingford

One of England's most important Saxon and medieval towns.

Why it matters:

Wallingford was a major fortified town under Alfred the Great and later a key stronghold during the English Civil War.

What to see:

- **Wallingford Castle** – Once one of the most powerful castles in England; held for the Royalists during the Civil War until 1646.
- Medieval town walls and Saxon street layout
- **St Mary-le-More** – Historic parish church at the market place

Optional riverside walk along the Thames Path.

Late Morning: Dorchester-on-Thames

A small village with huge historical depth.

Highlight:

- **Dorchester Abbey** – A stunning Norman abbey built on a site of Roman and Saxon settlement.

Why it's special:

- Roman roots
- Saxon cathedral site
- Medieval monastic wealth
- Beautiful surviving wall paintings and architecture

Allow time to explore the abbey museum and riverside meadows.

Afternoon: Goring-on-Thames & Streatley

Twin villages straddling the Thames.

Historical note:

The Goring Gap has been an important Thames crossing point since prehistoric times.

- Walk the riverside
 - Visit the 12th-century church of St Thomas of Canterbury (Goring)
 - Enjoy views of the Chiltern Hills (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
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Evening Base: Henley-on-Thames

Stay in Henley for a charming historic market town atmosphere

Day 2 – Nuneham, Ewelme & the English Civil War

Morning: Nuneham Courtenay

An 18th-century landscaped estate relocated as a "model village."

See:

- **Nuneham House** (exterior views; check access)
- The picturesque church of All Saints (designed in the 18th century)

Good example of Georgian landscape planning and aristocratic power shaping villages.

Late Morning: Ewelme

A remarkably preserved medieval village.

Key sites:

- **St Mary the Virgin Church** – Burial site of Alice de la Pole, granddaughter of the poet Geoffrey Chaucer.
- Medieval almshouses (still in use)
- Village watercress beds

This is one of the best-preserved medieval village ensembles in England.

Afternoon: English Civil War Focus – Chalgrove

Site of the **Battle of Chalgrove Field (1643)**.

Why it matters:

Royalist forces defeated Parliamentarians here; Parliamentarian leader John Hampden was mortally wounded.

Walk the battlefield (interpretation boards explain the action).

Optional Add-On (If Time Allows)**Grey's Court**

A Tudor manor house with earlier medieval origins, managed by the National Trust.

Or:

Mapledurham House

Elizabethan manor with Civil War associations and a working watermill.

Practical Tips

- **Best base:** Henley-on-Thames (central for both days)
- **Transport:** A car is highly recommended; public transport is limited between villages.
- **Best season:** Late spring to early autumn (gardens and riverside walks at their best)
- Many churches are open during daylight but check ahead in winter.