



Fireplaces provide a warm welcome at the Lamb at Hindon in Wiltshire.

the garden. Walks start from the door: you can be deep in the countryside within half a mile. Come back to Anna's delicious cooking: mustard and cress soup, roast loin of lamb, and rhubarb crumble.

■ Doubles £95-£175

WINDLESTRAW LODGE

17 Tweed Valley, Walkerburn, Scottish Borders 01896 870636; www.windlestraw.co.uk

Food is a big part of the pleasure of staying at this comfortable country house, built as a wedding gift for a mill owner in the Tweed valley. Tuck into the house terrine of quail, duck and venison followed by beef fillet with honey mustard mash and Madeira sauce. All the beef and lamb is sourced from the Scottish borders, fish is from Eyemouth and the hotel grows its own salad and herbs. Inside, a dazzling refurbishment has softened the grandness, giving a homely feel. You get stripped floors, painted ceilings, roaring fires and a panelled dining room. Upstairs, the six bedrooms are stylish, many with wrought-iron beds.

■ Doubles £130-£180

THE KINGS HEAD INN

18 The Green, Bledington, Oxfordshire 01608 658365; www.kingsheadinn.net

You can't get more quintessentially English than this achingly pretty Cotswold village with stone cottages set around a green with a pond, quacking ducks and a pub with a cobbled courtyard. Owner Archie is young, affable and charming with locals and guests, but wife Nic is his greatest asset – a milliner, she has done up the bedrooms on a shoestring and they look fabulous. The bar is lively – not with music but with talk – so choose rooms over the courtyard if you prefer a quiet evening. Breakfast and supper are taken in the pretty flagstoned dining room, while you can lunch by the fire in the bar on devilled kidneys, sausage and mash, or perhaps fish pie.

■ Doubles £70-£125

FARMERS INN

19 Slough Green, Higher West Hatch, Taunton, Somerset 01823 480480;

www.farmersinnwesthatch.co.uk

It's worth braving the narrow country

■ Doubles £90-£120

THE PEACOCK AT ROWSLEY

20 Bakewell Road, Rowsley, Matlock, Derbyshire 01629 733518;

www.thepeacockatrowsley.com

The Peacock began life in 1652. It was once the dower house to Haddon Hall, and stands by the bridge in the middle of the village. It opened as a coaching inn 200 years ago and its lawns sweep down to the river Derwent. Fishermen come to try their hand at catching rare wild rainbow trout, but those who want to walk can follow the river up to Chatsworth, then sweep back over gentle hills and return for a night at this warmly contemporary hotel. Expect mullioned windows, hessian rugs, open fires, fresh flowers everywhere and good art on the walls; the fire in the bar smoulders all year. Rooms come in different shapes and sizes, all with a surfeit of style: crisp linen, good beds. Drop down for dinner and nip into the restaurant for imaginative seasonal dishes. Six circular walks start from the front door, so you can walk off any excess in the hills that surround you.

■ Doubles £165-£210

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