

**NEW**



Shakespeare's Birthplace

# Shakespeare, the Cotswolds & the Welsh Marches

September 23 to October 4, 2026 ◆ From \$7,300 per person

*Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast on this exciting tour, where we uncover the intriguing story of one of the world's greatest playwrights. Starting with the iconic Globe Theater along the south bank of the River Thames, we trace William Shakespeare's journey back to his beginnings in pretty Stratford-upon-Avon, exploring significant time capsules such as his fascinating birthplace and Anne Hathaway's idyllic cottage. Continuing to the nearby Cotswolds, we discover how its medieval heritage, ancient woodland, bubbling rivers and fairytale castles provided the perfect inspiration and setting for the mischief, drama and courtship that the Bard's plays are so famous for.*

## What's Included

- ◆ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ◆ 2 nights at the Hyatt Regency London – The Churchill, London
- ◆ 2 nights at the Hotel du Vin, Stratford-upon-Avon
- ◆ 3 nights at the Diglis House Hotel, Worcester
- ◆ 2 nights at Ellenborough Park, Cheltenham
- ◆ 1 night at Hartwell House & Spa, near Aylesbury
- ◆ Welcome drink & canapés
- ◆ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 6 nights at the hotels\*\* (with after-dinner tea & coffee)
- ◆ 1 lunch at a local pub
- ◆ Services of a tour director
- ◆ Travel to & from all excursions
- ◆ All excursion costs
- ◆ Porterage where available
- ◆ 2 bottles of water per person per day

\*Supplement applies for transfers from all other airports and all other locations, including central London.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course table d'hôte dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**September 23:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

### September 24: Arrival

Upon arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to our hotel, Hyatt Regency London – The Churchill, where we stay for two nights. In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink and canapés, followed by dinner.

*Meals: Dinner*

### September 25: Globe Theater & the British Library

For our first visit, we head to Shakespeare's Globe on the River Thames, where we enjoy a fascinating tour to learn more about this iconic theater and its most famous playwright; from colourful stories of the original 1599 Globe to the faithful reconstruction process of the 1990s.

We then have lunch at a riverside pub before visiting the British Library, one of the world's greatest research libraries representing items from every age of written civilisation. From manuscripts and journals to maps and books, there is plenty to discover, including first editions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Richard III*.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

*Medieval heritage, ancient woodland, bubbling rivers and fairytale castles.*

### September 26: Banqueting House

After checking out of the hotel, we visit Banqueting House, open once again after an extensive renovation programme. A survivor of the lost royal Palace of Whitehall (the residence of English monarchs from 1530 to 1698), the crowning glory here is the magnificent nine ceiling paintings by Peter Paul Rubens, installed in 1636 and commissioned by Charles I.

Later, we travel to Stratford-upon-Avon and check into Hotel du Vin, where we stay for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast*

### September 27: Shakespeare's Birthplace, RSC Swan Theater & Shakespeare's New Place

An exciting day awaits, beginning with Shakespeare's Birthplace in the heart of Stratford-upon-Avon. We explore the beginning of the Bard's extraordinary story in the half-timbered house where he was born and grew up in, admiring the treasures of the permanent exhibition and exploring the fascinating rooms.

Next, we visit the iconic RSC Swan Theater, housed in a Grade II listed building and where Shakespeare's plays are regularly performed.

After lunch in Stratford, and as part of our part of our Shakespeare's Story ticket, we also visit Shakespeare's New Place, the family home from 1597 until Shakespeare's death in 1616. Although the house was demolished in 1759, a beautiful garden has been designed to commemorate the importance of the site with commissioned artworks plus a sunken Knot Garden and exhibition center.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*



Hidcote Manor Garden



Sudeley Castle

- Croft Castle
- Newton Court
- Worcester Cathedral
- Eastnor Castle
- Hellens Manor
- Coughton Court
- Shakespeare's Birthplace
- Hidcote Manor Garden
- Snowhill Manor
- Sudeley Castle
- Waddesdon Manor

### September 28: Anne Hathaway's Cottage & Newton Court

Today, we travel to Anne Hathaway's idyllic thatched cottage, the setting of the young Shakespeare's courtship with his future bride. Here we can see original furniture and rooms, preserved to reflect the 16<sup>th</sup>-century lifestyle, and uncover the stories of 13 generations of the Hathaway family who lived here.

Afterward, we head to Newton Court, which sits on a 157-acre Herefordshire farm, for an interesting cider tour to learn about how the Stephens family have been crafting their organic cider here for decades. Be sure to pick up a few treats in the lovely farm shop too!

Later, we check into the Diglis House Hotel, our base for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 29: Croft Castle & Eastnor Castle

After breakfast, we head to Croft Castle, home to the Croft family for almost a thousand years and believed to have been built by a Norman knight (Bernard de Croft). We learn more about the captivating history of the family and the house during our guided tour of the grand Georgian interiors.

We then make our way to Eastnor, a dramatic fairytale castle at the foot of the Malvern Hills, surrounded by a beautiful deer park, arboretum and lake, boasting magnificent views of the rolling countryside. The princely and imposing fortress (as it was described in 1812 when it was being built to pitch the owner, the 1st Earl Somers, into the aristocracy), continues to be inhabited by the 1st Earl's descendants; the Hervey-Bathurst family. The State Rooms offer a wonderful dive into this world, adorned with fine art, tapestries and medieval armour.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 30: Worcester Cathedral & Coughton Court

Today we take a guided tour of Worcester Cathedral, which rises majestically above the River Severn. Built between 1084 and 1504, the cathedral represents every style of English architecture, from Norman to Perpendicular Gothic, and boasts royal tombs, medieval cloisters, a Norman crypt and magnificent Victorian stained glass.

We continue to the stunning Coughton Court, where we enjoy an indulgent afternoon tea. Home to the Throckmorton family for 600 years,

Coughton is still very much a family home with an intimate feel. While the interior gives us a unique insight into the history of the Catholic faith in this country, the spectacular award-winning gardens feature colourful rose displays in the walled garden, herbaceous borders, a bog garden, orchards and a lake and a pleasant riverside walk.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea*

### October 1: Sudeley Castle & Hidcote Manor Garden

Today begins with a behind-the-scenes tour of the exquisite Sudeley Castle, focusing on its important role in England's turbulent past. It remains the only private castle in England to have a queen buried within the grounds – Queen Katherine Parr. The castle rooms contain many fascinating treasures from ancient Roman times to the present day while outside are award-winning gardens.



Eastnor Castle

Next, we head to Hidcote Manor Garden, an exquisite Arts and Crafts garden created by American horticulturist, Major Lawrence Johnston. Laid out as a series of colourful 'rooms', it's believed to be the inspiration behind the magical settings of Shakespeare's comedies. We enjoy exclusive entry in the garden with a guided tour and two glasses of Prosecco or refreshing elderflower.

Afterward, we make our way to Ellenborough Park, where we stay for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### October 2: Hellens Manor & Snowhill Manor

This morning, we are treated to a private visit to Hellens Manor, a Tudor/Jacobean gem in the Herefordshire village of Much Marcle. Renowned for its spectacular collection of art, discover paintings by the likes of Gainsborough, Van Dyck and Goya, along with the English Renaissance frieze in the panelled Music Room, heirlooms of Anne Boleyn and the supposed haunted bed chamber prepared for Queen Mary Tudor. Outside, the grounds are perfect for a stroll, ranging from

ancient Site of Special Interest woodland and wildflower meadows to a rare octagonal dovecote and a knot garden, all framed by the stunning Malvern Hills.

Our next stop is Snowhill Manor, which dates back to the 16th century. It was bought by the eccentric Charles Wade for just one purpose; to house the extraordinary treasures he collected over his lifetime. Every room is filled with hundreds of objects, from the everyday to the extraordinary, including Japanese samurai armour, bicycles and musical instruments.

*Meals: Breakfast*

### October 3: Waddesdon Manor

We make our way to Waddesdon Manor, built by the wealthy Rothschild family in the style of a Renaissance chateau. We discover the fine collection of art on a guided tour, followed by a sumptuous afternoon tea amidst these lavish surroundings. Outside, the formal gardens are one of England's finest examples of late Victorian gardens.

This evening, we stay at Hartwell House & Spa, one of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

### October 4: Departure

A private transfer will take you back to Heathrow Airport for your return flight home.

*Meals: Breakfast*

*Please note: the order of excursions is subject to change and guided tours are subject to restrictions.*

## Albion Experiences

- ◆ Guided tour of the Globe Theater
- ◆ Shakespeare's Story ticket (includes Shakespeare's Birthplace, the RSC Swan Theater & Shakespeare's New Place)
- ◆ Afternoon tea at Coughton Court
- ◆ Guided tour of Croft Castle
- ◆ Cider tour at Newton Court
- ◆ Private visit at Hellens Manor
- ◆ Guided tour at Worcester Cathedral
- ◆ Guided tour & Prosecco at Hidcote Manor Garden
- ◆ Behind-the-scenes tour at Sudeley Castle
- ◆ Introductory talk at Snowhill Manor
- ◆ Guided tour & afternoon tea at Waddesdon Manor

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How do I make a booking?

Call National Trust Tours at **888-484-8785** to register by phone (preferred method) **Monday - Friday from 9am to 5pm (EST)** or register online at **www.nationaltrusttours.com**.

**Please note:** featured prices are inclusive of the National Trust membership discount. If you are not a National Trust Member, please visit **savingplaces.org/membership-benefits** to sign up. Thank you for your support.

## When are payments due?

When you confirm your booking with us, a non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to secure your place. The final balance payment must be paid to us no later than 90 days prior to the tour departure date. Of course, full payment can be made at the time of booking if you prefer and for bookings made less than 8 weeks before the tour departs this will be a requirement.

## How can I pay?

We accept debit and credit cards for deposits and full payment.

## What paperwork will I receive?

When your booking is confirmed, we will email you a booking confirmation document along with a copy of our full Terms and Conditions and the reading list. Approximately 28 days prior to the tour, we will prepare and send you our Travel Pack with your finalized information and tour itinerary details.

## Do I need travel insurance?

Yes, this is essential; we can only accept a booking on the basis that you have taken out a full and comprehensive travel insurance policy to cover the full duration of your trip. We will ask you to confirm this to us. If you choose not to take out travel insurance, this is done so against our advice and at your own risk; we will ask you to sign a declination form indemnifying us from any responsibility or cost in the event of medical emergency or repatriation.

## Do I need a passport and visa?

**Important UK Entry requirements**  
It is your responsibility to ensure you have a full passport and we recommend that it is valid for 6 months after the return date of your trip. Tourist visas are not required for US citizens visiting the UK however a new Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) will now be required.

Electronic Travel Authorisations (ETA) are being introduced for visitors to the UK who currently do not require a visa for short stays, they are digitally linked to a traveller's passport and ensure more robust security checks are carried out before people begin their journey to the UK, helping prevent abuse of immigration systems.

An ETA costs £10 and permits multiple journeys to the UK for stays of up to 6 months at a time and is valid for 2 years or until the holders passport expires – whichever is sooner. An ETA does not permit entry to the UK – it

authorises an individual to travel to the UK. British & Irish citizens do not need an ETA.

## Apply for an ETA

Applications can done via a smartphone app - UK ETA app or online at Apply for an electronic travel authorisation (ETA) - **GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**

This is a simple process, and decisions are usually communicated within 3 days.

It remains your responsibility to ensure you have the correct travel documentation for your trip.

## Are there single traveler room supplements?

Yes, you can contact us to enquire about single supplement prices. Please book early as single rooms sell fast.

## Are room upgrades available?

All of the hotels on these tours have been handpicked for their high quality of accommodation and service. However, in some instances room upgrades are available and we would be happy to assist you to arrange these should you be interested. For more information on the hotels please visit our website.

## Can you arrange extra hotel nights?

Yes, if you decide to arrive a few days before the start of the tour or leave a few days after the end of the tour, we are happy to arrange extra nights' accommodation. However, this service is only available at hotels that feature in the tour on which you are traveling and a \$35 administration fee is charged for this service.

## Are meals included?

All breakfasts are included on all tours. Certain lunches and dinners are also included and you should study the tour itinerary in this brochure to determine what meals are included on your chosen tour. Meals not mentioned are not included and all beverages are at your own expense throughout the tour.

## What do I do about any dietary requirements?

Please inform us at the time of booking, we will pass your information on to the hotel, property or restaurant who will do their best to accommodate your requirements.

## How many passengers will be in the Albion Journeys tour group?

Typically, between 10 and 30.

## What is the role of the Tour Director?

Our friendly Tour Director will meet you for a welcome dinner at the beginning of each tour. Their role is to facilitate the smooth organization of all operational aspects of the tour. If you have any queries or experience any issues during the tour, they are there to assist you.

## Will the excursions change?

Please note that we plan our tours far in advance and the order and availability of excursions may be subject to change. In the event of a property not being available to visit, we will substitute with a similar visit, and you will be informed of the full details.

## How much walking will there be on these tours?

As much or as little as you like. Any included guided tours will operate at a fairly relaxed pace, as with many historic houses and gardens, you may experience some uneven flooring and steps along the way. Of course, you will always have the option to explore any venue by yourself at your own pace. If you have any specific concerns, please contact us.

## What are the arrangements for luggage?

The standard luggage allowance is one item of hand luggage and one suitcase per person restricted to a maximum weight of 20kgs (44 pounds). We do provide porterage at each of the hotels used on our tours where available, however, as with all things of a personal nature, it is your responsibility to ensure your suitcase is loaded onto the vehicles we use throughout the tour.

## What clothing should I bring?

Comfortable leisurewear is recommended for the daytime. In the evening many participants prefer to wear smarter dress for dining. While gentlemen may choose to wear a jacket in the restaurant in the evening, at most hotels this is not obligatory, we will of course inform you if any hotel does have a dress code. It is advisable to bring layered clothing and a light waterproof jacket. We recommend sturdy footwear when visiting gardens as the ground may be soft underfoot. Many historic properties request ladies do not wear high heels which may damage flooring.

## Can you arrange my flights to the UK?

Albion Journeys do not arrange your air travel for our tours; this is your responsibility and gives you the flexibility to decide on your own routing.

## What should I budget for tipping?

While it is not compulsory, it is customary to tip the coach driver and Tour Director as well as offering a small gratuity to the transfer drivers to acknowledge the services they have provided. As a guideline we suggest a rate of £5 (about \$6.50 as of this printing) per day for your coach and transfer drivers and £10 (about \$13 as of this printing) per day for your Tour Director. Gratuities for hotel staff and the tour guides you may meet at properties are at your discretion.

*All tours offered subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply. Errors and omissions excepted.*



# Terms & Conditions Extract

It is important that you read the following booking conditions extract and the full booking conditions shown on our website at [albionjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions](http://albionjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions). These online booking conditions form the basis of your contract with us. Please read them and the extract below carefully as they apply to all bookings you make with us unless otherwise specified.

**1. VACATION PAYMENT:** When you make a booking you must pay a deposit for every person named on the booking. Deposits per person and the balance due date (the period before the departure date on which your full balance normally becomes due) are:

Deposit	Balance due date
\$1,000 (USD)	90 days before departure

If you cannot make a payment by card at the time of booking, please speak to one of our Reservations staff to discuss other options. You can make payments against your balance anytime between making the booking and the balance due date. If the balance is not paid on time we reserve the right to treat your booking as canceled by you and apply cancellation charges as set out in clause 3 below. For bookings made after the balance due date, the full amount is due at the time of booking.

**2. OUR AGREEMENT:** A contract is formed when we issue to you the booking confirmation document and terms and conditions. It is important you read through these and any other documents you receive and advise us of any inaccuracy within 14 days of the document date. By accepting the booking is correct you agree to our terms and conditions.

We regret we cannot accept any liability if we are not notified of any inaccuracy in any document within 14 days of our sending it out. This contract and all matters arising out of it will be governed by English law and will be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

**3. VACATION CANCELLATION BY YOU:** If you want to cancel your booking after we have confirmed it with you either verbally, over the telephone or by email, you can do so over the phone or in writing. The following cancellation charges will apply:

91 days or more prior to departure	\$1,000 (USD)
90 days or less before departure	100% of the program cost is non-refundable

If any member of your party is prevented from traveling, that person may transfer their place to someone else (introduced by you) providing we are notified no less than two weeks before departure.

*Full terms and conditions will be provided with your booking confirmation. They are also available on request or via our website: [albionjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions](http://albionjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions).*

*Bookings are accepted on the basis that you have read and understood them.*

**ALBION**  
Journeys Inspired By Heritage