



National Trust for Historic Preservation

National Trust Tours

Literary Legends of the Lake District

MAY 2-13, 2026

With its sparkling lakes, jagged fells, idyllic villages and rolling countryside, it's no wonder that the breathtaking scenery of the UNESCO-listed Lake District has proved an inspiring backdrop for some of Britain's greatest poets, writers and artists for centuries. Classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, we explore this spectacular part of England while discovering how it influenced the life and work of famous writers: William Wordsworth's Dove Cottage, 'the loveliest spot that man hath ever found,' offers the chance to discover remarkable collections with an expert curator, while a visit to Beatrix Potter's charming Hill Top immediately reveals why this setting helped to create some of the most enchanting little stories and characters. We follow in Arthur Ransome's footsteps aboard the National Trust-owned Steam Yacht Gondola across Coniston Water, the delightful inspiration for his popular Swallows and Amazons adventure novel, and also discover a range of impressive estates, ancient castles and grand houses during our tour, where centuries of stories are woven into the fabric of these special places. Crossing over into glorious Yorkshire, a fascinating visit to the Brontë Parsonage Museum completes this imagination-igniting journey into the world of literary legends.

Special extras included in your itinerary

- Private guided tour of Lyme Park House & Gardens
- History of the Gardens tour with a Senior Craftsmen Gardener at Tatton Park
- Private guided house & garden tour & light lunch at Chatsworth House
- Heritage journey on the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway with afternoon tea
- Guided house tour at Blackwell House
- Guided tour at Hutton in the Forest
- Guided behind-the-scenes tour & cream tea at Dalemain Mansion
- Cruise on Lake Windermere
- Private guided tour of Holker Hall
- Steam Yacht Gondola cruise on Coniston Water
- Private after-hours tour & dinner at Muncaster Castle
- Stories of Wordsworth tour at Dove Cottage & the Wordsworth Museum
- Introductory talk at Speke Hall

PRICES FROM \$7,300p/p

DAY 1 & 2

Arrival

Upon arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, the Cottons Hotel & Spa in Knutsford. In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink and canapés, followed by dinner.

Meals: Dinner

DAY 3

Lyme Park & Tatton Park

For our first visit we experience the beauty of Lyme Park in all its wide, expansive glory. Nestled on the edge of the stunning Peak District, the impressive house here is surrounded by 1,400 acres of rugged moorland, ancient woodland and formal gardens. We take a private guided tour of the property, a treasure chest of precious objects and family keepsakes, followed by the formal gardens, which demonstrate a masterful appreciation of geometry. Wander through the clipped hedges and columns of yew trees before entering the historic parkland, home to deer and other wildlife as well as some historic gems such as The Cage, The Lantern and Paddock Cottage.

We continue to one of Britain's most well-known and complete estates, Tatton Park, designed by Samuel Wyatt. There is plenty of time to explore the Neo-classical mansion, crammed with collections of silver, china, glass and fine furniture made by Gillows. This grandeur also extends outside to the garden, where year-round color is provided by the Rose, Italian and Japanese gardens. To learn more about these exquisite formal gardens, we take a History of the Gardens tour with a Senior Craftsmen Gardener.

This evening, we stay at the Losehill House Hotel in Hope Valley.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4

Chatsworth House

Today is spent at Chatsworth House, where we're treated to a house and gardens tour followed by a light lunch. This magnificent estate is home to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and has witnessed sixteen generations of the powerful Cavendish family after they acquired it in 1549, featuring grandiose interiors and a superlative art collection. Chatsworth also boasts a 1,000-acre park, chiefly designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, and the impressive property also appeared as Pemberley in the 2005 movie adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

This evening, we stay at the Coniston Hotel, Country Estate & Spa near Skipton.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5

Brontë Parsonage Museum & Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway

We head to the picturesque hilltop village of Haworth, where the Brontë sisters spent much of their lives. Their former home is now the Brontë Parsonage Museum, which has been lovingly preserved and contains the largest and most important Brontë collection in the world. It's fascinating to wander round the historic rooms, marvelling at the unique collections and looking at the very spot where classics were created, including *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Be sure to purchase a book from the gift shop and receive the special parsonage stamp here too!

Next, we take a trip on the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway, a preserved heritage railway that runs for four miles between the award-winning Bolton Abbey station and Embsay station, which was built in 1888. Most trains are hauled by beautifully-restored steam engines, the oldest one dating back to 1908. As you sit back and relax, imagine you are travelling in the Golden Age of steam while admiring the Yorkshire Dales landscapes and enjoying a delicious afternoon tea.

Later, we check into the Macdonald Old England Hotel & Spa on the shores of Lake Windermere, where we stay for the next five nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner

DAY 6

Blackwell House

The morning is spent at leisure, offering the perfect chance to enjoy the hotel's facilities or perhaps a treatment in the spa and a stroll along the shores of the lake. In the afternoon, we take a guided tour of the Grade I listed Blackwell, one of Britain's finest Arts and Crafts houses with breathtaking views of Windermere and Coniston Fells. Designed by MH Baillie Scott, Blackwell retains many of its original decorative features, including spectacular plasterwork and stained glass, while the rooms contain furniture and objects by many of the leading Arts and Crafts designers.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 7

Hutton in the Forest & Dalemain Mansion

Today begins with a guided tour of Hutton in the Forest, a spectacular historic house on the northern edge of the Lake District with a charming Walled Garden. Occupied by the same family since 1605, each generation of has made their mark, resulting in a remarkable journey through time, from the medieval Stone Hall to the Victorian Drawing Room. You can expect fine period furniture, contemporary ceramics,

decorative weaponry, William Morris wallpapers and an interesting collection of portraits by 17th and 18th-century women artists.

Afterward, we head to Dalemain Mansion, finely dressed in a salmon-pink Georgian façade which almost glows in the sunlight. We learn how behind Dalemain's orderly frontage are the remnants of a 12th-century pele tower and an Elizabethan manor, and we trace its roots back to the reign of Henry II. There is much to discover inside; a helter-skelter of secret passages, spiral staircases, a priest's hiding hole, as well as Chippendale furniture and priceless oil portraits. Our guided tour includes access to unseen areas of the house and provides a fascinating behind-the-scenes insight into life here, continuing outside with the Tudor knot garden and a splendid rose walk. After our included cream tea, don't forget to visit the World's Original Marmalade Shop too!

Meals: Breakfast, Cream Tea

DAY 8

The World of Beatrix Potter, Lake Windermere Cruise & Holker Hall

A delightful day awaits, beginning with the enchanting World of Beatrix Potter. Here, an endearing short film presentation, exhibition and garden bring Beatrix Potter's celebrated characters to life, complete with the Peter Rabbit Garden and all the sights and sounds of the glorious countryside.

Next is a leisurely cruise on Lake Windermere, England's largest lake. Sit back and relax as we take in the breathtaking scenery of towering mountains, secluded bays and wooded islands, journeying from pretty Bowness-on-Windermere to Ambleside.

Lastly, we visit Holker Hall, the family home of Lord and Lady Cavendish, once described as 'the best Elizabethan Gothic house in the north of England'. The property is a true reflection of an age of confidence, spaciousness and prosperity, and the craftsmanship in many of the rooms is outstanding, while the award-winning gardens are simply sublime. On our private guided tour, we discover fine displays of antique furniture and art, including portraits of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza, and even visit the bedroom where Queen Mary stayed in 1937.

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9

Steam Yacht Gondola, Brantwood & Muncaster Castle

We discover another beautiful lake today with a memorable trip aboard the Steam Yacht Gondola across Coniston Water. The original Gondola was first launched in 1859 and this Victorian steam-powered yacht has now been completely rebuilt by the National Trust. With its backdrop of spectacular scenery, Coniston Water is the Lake District's third largest lake and was the inspiration for Arthur Ransome's

Swallows and Amazons enchanting childhood adventure book – it's a real joy to explore.

Our second stop of the day is Brantwood House, former home of John Ruskin. Uncover many fine paintings, beautiful furniture and Ruskin's personal treasures, offering a fascinating insight into the world of the famous Victorian writer, artist and social reformer.

We continue on to Muncaster Castle for a private after-hours tour. Home to the Pennington family since 1208, the castle has a colorful history and an extensive collection of 16th and 17th-century furniture, paintings and family portraits across rooms such as the renowned library and atmospheric Tapestry Room. The castle is believed to be haunted by several ghosts, including the infamous court jester, Thomas Skelton, better known as Tom Fool! Take a look at his eery portrait in the castle before enjoying the lovely gardens, home to one of Europe's largest collections of rhododendrons. Our time here is rounded off by a special dinner in the castle.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 10

Hill Top (Beatrix Potter's House), Dove Cottage & the Wordsworth Museum

After checking out of our hotel, we head to Hill Top, Beatrix Potter's beloved farmhouse, purchased with the earnings from *Peter Rabbit* in 1905. With a lovely cottage garden, this charming house was the inspiration for many of her little children's books and is a veritable time capsule of her life, full of her favourite things.

We then visit another home of a British literary icon, William Wordsworth. The famous poet fell in love with Dove Cottage and Grasmere while on a walking tour of the Lake District in 1799 and went on to live here with his sister Dorothy. Little changed since Wordsworth's tenure, the story of the house and family is vividly told here, with many of Wordsworth's furniture and possessions on display, along with original letters, journals, manuscripts and artworks. We enjoy a special Stories of Wordsworth tour with an expert curator, where we have the opportunity to see items from the collection which are not ordinarily viewed by the public, including first edition books, Dorothy's Grasmere journal and letters written by the family.

Later, we check back into the Cottons Hotel & Spa in Knutsford, where we stay for the remainder of our tour.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 11

Speke Hall

Our last visit is to Speke Hall, a lovely timber-framed Tudor National Trust property, nestled within rural grounds near the banks of the River Mersey. The house was built by the Norris family, who, as devout Catholics living under Elizabeth I's Protestant rule, incorporated a series of protective hideaways including a priest's hole, a whispering gallery and a secret hole under the eaves known as an 'eavesdropper'. We find out more about its fascinating history during our introductory talk before exploring the peaceful grounds, with highlights including the restored Secret Garden and the Moat Garden.

This evening, we enjoy a farewell dinner together at the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 12

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.

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:

More than 127 days prior to departure \$1000

126 days or less before departure 100% of the program cost is non-refundable

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

You may cancel your vacation without paying a cancellation fee before the start of the vacation in the event of unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances in the place of destination or immediate vicinity which may significantly affect (a) the performance of the package or (b) carriage of passengers to the destination.

PLEASE NOTE: Although Tourist visas are not required for US citizens visiting the UK however a new Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) will now be required. (Please see below).

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.

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US and other Non-European citizens now requiring an ETA can apply in advance from 27 November 2024. An ETA will be required for travel from 08 January 2025.

European visitors now requiring an ETA can apply from 05 March 2025. An ETA will be required for travel from 02 April 2025.

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.