



RHS Chelsea Flower Show

# The RHS Chelsea Flower Show and Kent - the Beautiful Garden of England

May 14 to 22, 2025 ♦ From \$5,300 per person

The prestigious Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show has come a long way since its humble single-marquee beginnings in 1913; the kaleidoscopic event is now an unmissable highlight of the British calendar and is world-famous for its stunning displays, vibrant colors and innovative designs. We are lucky enough to be visiting on Member's Day, where RHS members, royals and celebrities take an exclusive first look at the floral extravaganza, set in the grounds of London's Royal Hospital Chelsea. The beautiful blooms continue with our exploration of Kent, often referred to as the Garden of England thanks to its rolling orchards, mild climate and fruitful allotments. There's time to stop and smell the flowers at a host of horticultural wonders during our delightful guided tours, including the striking Hole Park Estate and Lullingstone Castle's unique World Garden.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 1 night at the Castle Hotel
- ♦ 3 nights at the Ashdown Park Hotel & Country Club
- ♦ 3 nights at the Hyatt Regency London – The Churchill
- ♦ Welcome drink & canapés
- ♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner & two-course buffet dinner on 5 nights at the hotels (with after-dinner tea & coffee)
- ♦ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ♦ Travel to & from all excursions
- ♦ All excursion costs
- ♦ Porterage where available

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

## Itinerary

**May 14:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

**May 15:** Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, the Castle Hotel. In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink and canapés, followed by dinner.

Meals: Dinner



Hole Park

“Admire stunning displays, vibrant colors and innovative designs.”

**May 16:** RHS Garden Wisley & Great Comp Garden

This morning, we head to the flagship RHS Garden Wisley. Extending over 240 acres, Wisley offers a wealth of inspirational ideas on design, innovation and cultivation techniques. The state-of-the-art Glasshouse is divided into three main planting zones representing desert, tropical and temperate climates.

Next, lunch and a guided tour await at Great Comp, an RHS Partner Garden surrounding a lovely 17<sup>th</sup>-century manor. As one of Kent's finest horticultural gems, it's full of stunning plants such as salvias, magnolias, azaleas, rhododendrons and hellebores and also features an Italian Garden, pretty woodland walks plus the Old Dairy Tearooms.

Later, we check into the Ashdown Park Hotel & Country Club, where we stay for the next three nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Great Dixter House

**May 17:** Great Dixter House & Gardens & Hole Park

We start the day at Great Dixter, home of gardener and writer Christopher Lloyd. The Head Gardener here treats us to a guided tour of the famous gardens, home to a spectacular mix of topiary, mixed borders, an orchard and a wildflower meadow. We also take a peek around the house which, although largely medieval, has several later additions by Edwin Lutyens.

Afterward we continue to Hole Park, a delightful private home situated in a picturesque parkland setting and owned by the Barham family for the last four generations. This afternoon we enjoy refreshments with a guided tour of the garden, admiring the wide range of colors from beautiful blooms such as tulips, roses, clematis, wisteria, rhododendrons and azaleas.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Sissinghurst Castle Garden

**May 18:** Sissinghurst Castle Garden & Lullingstone Castle

This morning we head to Sissinghurst Castle Garden, created in the 1930s by novelist Vita Sackville-West and her husband Harold Nicolson. Set around the ruins of an Elizabethan manor house, these world-famous gardens are laid out as a series of individually-planted 'rooms'.

We then make our way to Lullingstone Castle, one of the oldest family estates in England and even recorded in the Domesday Book. Altered extensively in Queen Anne's time, the house boasts fine state rooms and beautiful grounds, including a stunning 15-acre lake and the World Garden, home to thousands of unique species collected from around the world by Tom Hart Dyke, the current heir. Incredibly, the ideas for this garden were started during Tom's nine-month kidnap ordeal in the early 2000s, a result of rare plant hunting in the Colombian jungle. We find out more during our captivating tour with a Blue Badge guide.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Kew Gardens

**May 19:** Eltham Palace & Kew Gardens

Our first stop today is the unique Eltham Palace, where a young Henry VIII spent much of his childhood. Once a medieval palace, then highly popular for Christmas celebrations in Tudor times, it was leased from the Crown and transformed by millionaires into an Art Deco mansion in the 1930s. Outside, we are treated to a guided tour with the Head Gardener, who shows us stunning areas such as the Sunken Rose Garden, quiet Rock Garden, idyllic wildflower meadow, medieval embankment and more.

Later, we check into the Hyatt Regency London – The Churchill, where we stay for the last three nights of our tour.

A springtime stroll is the order of the afternoon with a guided walking tour of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Dating back to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century as a royal palace, Kew Gardens is now a globally renowned institution for plant-based research. Exploding with color and with no less than 50,000 plants, there is a range of different areas to explore including the Arboretum, the peaceful Japanese garden and the remarkable indoor rainforest climbing within the Palm House.

Meals: Breakfast



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**May 20:** Secret Garden Tour of London

We join our enchanting Secret Garden Tour of London, taking in a host of hidden gems and tucked away green spaces. We discover the striking oasis of St Dunstan-in-the-East, followed by All Hallows-by-the-Tower, St Mary Aldermanbury Garden, St Lawrence Jewry, Church of St Bartholomew the Great, Postman's Park and the Grade I listed Guildhall, time permitting.

This evening we have a farewell dinner together ahead of our busy day at the show.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



**May 21:** RHS Chelsea Flower Show

Today we enjoy Member's Day entry to the Royal Horticultural Society's most sought-after event, the Chelsea Flower Show, held in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Here we take an exclusive first look at the show, discover the finest in garden design, listen to superb expert advice and soak up the unique atmosphere of this world-famous floral extravaganza. The Great Pavilion is the wonderful centrepiece, while the Show Gardens illustrate the exceptional talent of a handful of carefully selected garden designers, delivering a broad range of design styles and themes. We also indulge in a quintessentially British afternoon tea during our delightful springtime day here.

Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea

**May 22:** 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. Entrance to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show may not be guaranteed for late bookings.*

## Tour Highlights

- ♦ Lunch & guided tour at Great Comp Garden
- ♦ Guided tour of Great Dixter Gardens with the Head Gardener
- ♦ Guided garden tour & refreshments at Hole Park
- ♦ World of Gardens tour with a Blue Badge guide at Lullingstone Castle
- ♦ Guided tour of Eltham Palace Gardens with the Head Gardener
- ♦ Guided walking tour of Kew Gardens
- ♦ Secret Garden tour of London
- ♦ Entry to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show on Member's Day with afternoon tea