

NEW

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Exclusive Access to a Taste of Stately Life in the Shires

September 28 to October 7, 2025 ♦ From \$6,300 per person

Sample the delights of stately life in the picturesque Shires, beautiful rolling English landscapes dotted with majestic castles, spectacular manors and quaint cottages. We uncover captivating stories about the rise and fall of these properties and the families who occupied them, from aristocracy to royalty, with guided tours to inspire our visions of how life once was and, in some instances, how it still is today. We delve into the intricate histories of strongholds such as Waddesdon Manor, Highclere and Broughton Castle, discovering the opulent décor and antique gems contained within. The culinary delights of the Shires await too, from lunch in the lavish gardens of Highgrove to traditional country pub cuisine and fine wine and cheese tasting.

What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ♦ 3 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ♦ 5 nights at the Ellenborough Park Hotel
- ♦ Welcome drink & canapés
- ♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 4 nights at the hotels (with after-dinner tea & coffee)
- ♦ 3 dinners at local restaurants
- ♦ 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.



Windsor Castle

rooms, including the striking Grand Reception Room, extraordinarily decorated with real gold and prominent pieces on display, such as the urn once presented to Queen Victoria by Tsar Nicholas I in 1839.

Meals: Breakfast

October 1 : Highclere Castle & Bombay Gin Distillery

After breakfast, we make our way to the world-famous Highclere Castle, home to the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon and the filming location for the much-loved *Downton Abbey* TV series and movies. Walk in the footsteps of your favorite characters, explore the Egyptian Exhibition in the cellars and admire the spectacular Capability Brown parkland.

We enjoy afternoon tea at the castle and from here, we make our way to the nearby Bombay Sapphire Distillery, where we are taken on a tour and enjoy a complimentary drink in the Mill Bar. Bombay Sapphire's heritage began in 1761 when distiller Thomas Dakin purchased his first site in England and the popularity of a good old G&T continued to surge throughout the British Empire during Queen Victoria's reign.

This evening, we check into the Ellenborough Park Hotel, where we stay for the next five nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner



Waddesdon Manor

October 2: Waddesdon Manor & Cheeseworks

We make our way to Waddesdon Manor. Built by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in the 1870s, the French-inspired château was lavishly designed to entertain guests and showcase his enthusiastic interest in art. Outside is a fine example of late Victorian gardens, featuring a Rococo-style aviary, a Parterre and sculptures. We have time to explore the interiors and are treated to a tour, a private Rothschild Wine Cellar experience and lunch at the house.

Next is a visit to Cheeseworks Cheltenham, one of Britain's finest cheesemongers, for an indulgent evening sampling a spectacular selection of fine wines and speciality cheese. We return to our hotel later for our evening meal.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Highgrove Gardens

October 3: Highgrove & Berkeley Castle

Today we are treated to a guided tour of Highgrove Gardens, the organic gardens of Their Majesties. Over 30 years in the making, Highgrove has one of the most creatively inspired and innovative gardens in the country and embodies The King's environmental philosophy 'it is better to work with nature than against it'. Each area has its own purpose and includes the Kitchen Garden, the stunning Wildflower Meadow and a National Collection of Beech trees.

We enjoy lunch at Highgrove before moving on to Berkeley Castle, ordered by Henry II to defend the Severn estuary and the Welsh border and a near complete medieval survival. Reigning monarch Edward II was sent to the castle as a prisoner after his wife Isabella and her lover Roger Mortimer usurped his power, and we see the room where he is supposedly murdered in 1327. The castle is also the oldest building in the country to be inhabited by the same family who built it.

We stop at a traditional English pub to enjoy a delicious fish and chips supper before returning to our hotel for the evening.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Highclere Castle

October 4: The Firs, Weston's Cider Brewery & Eastnor Castle

We visit The Firs, a small country cottage and childhood home of one of the country's greatest composers, Edward Elgar. The quaint spa town is nestled in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and it's easy to see why walking and cycling through the beautiful surroundings inspired Elgar's music.

Next, we visit Weston's Cider Brewery, founded in 1880 by Henry Weston and still independently owned by the family. On our guided tour, we learn about the traditional techniques used and the passion for sustainability when producing premium homegrown cider. Afterward, we take time for a delicious sandwich and cider lunch at The Scrumpy House restaurant here.

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 Herefordshire countryside. The imposing fortress continues to be inhabited by the first Earl's descendants; the Hervey-Bathurst family.

On the way back to our hotel, we stop for dinner in Longhope at a traditional country pub, the Farmers Boy Inn, for one of their special pies.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Broughton Castle

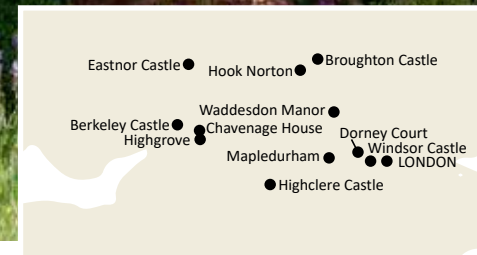
October 5: Broughton Castle, Hook Norton & Daylesford

Predominantly built in the early 14th century, Broughton Castle is a stunning moated manor house, set in idyllic parkland. The manor has been a hive for political exchanges and royal stays throughout the centuries, serving as a meeting place for leading parliamentary opponents of Charles I. James I occupied the king's chamber in the early 15th century, whilst recent residents include current monarch King Charles III. We have the chance to try some delicious Banbury cakes, a traditional treat.

We then head to the picturesque village of Hook Norton to visit its brewery, housed within a five-storey Victorian tower. Our tour takes us through the intricate brewing process, and we finish with a tasting session at the cellar bar.

Later, we visit Daylesford farm shop in the quaint Moreton-in-Marsh, with its award-winning artisan products. We have our evening meal at one of Daylesford's restaurants and indulge in their delicious Sunday roast.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



October 6: Chavenage & Dorney Court

After breakfast, we make our way to Chavenage House, a unique 16th-century family home. With a hands-on approach to opening the doors of their wonderful home, members of the Lowsley-Williams family offer truly memorable tours of Chavenage, featuring the property's history, engaging personal family stories, humorous anecdotes and myths of the Chavenage curse. We explore the lavish rooms, discover the secrets of the room where Cromwell stayed during the Civil War and spot the famous filming locations of BBC's *Poldark*.

We then journey to Dorney Court, one of England's finest Tudor manor houses and home of the Palmer family for more than 450 years. We are treated to a guided connoisseur tour and learn more about the family portraits and varied collections of art that tell a visual tale of everyone who has lived here.

Later, we check back into the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

October 7: 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.

Tour Highlights

- ♦ Guided tour of Mapledurham
- ♦ Private guided tour of Windsor Castle
- ♦ Afternoon tea at Highclere Castle
- ♦ Guided tour of Bombay Gin Distillery
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch at Waddesdon Manor with private Rothschild Wine Cellar Experience
- ♦ Cheese & wine tasting at Cheeseworks
- ♦ Guided tour at Hook Norton Brewery
- ♦ 'Story of the Country House in England' talk at Bromesborough Place
- ♦ Guided garden tour & lunch at Highgrove
- ♦ Guided tour with the owner & lunch at Chavenage House
- ♦ Guided tour & meet & greet with the owner at Berkeley Castle
- ♦ Guided connoisseur tour of Dorney Court