



South of England Stately Homes & the Isle of Wight

May 6 to 16, 2025 ♦ From \$6,300 per person

Renowned for its idyllic countryside and stunning coastline, the picturesque South of England is peppered with spectacular estates and unique homes. Here we uncover captivating stories and antique gems in properties such as the impressive Polesden Lacey and opulent Petworth House, home to the National Trust's finest collection of art and sculptures. We combine these fascinating discoveries with a trip to the Isle of Wight, a delightful holiday destination popularized in Victorian times. Here we delve into the history of the 'Garden Isle', with visits to some of the island's finest treasures including Osborne House, the Italianate seaside retreat of Queen Victoria.

What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ♦ Return ferry crossings to the Isle of Wight
- ♦ 2 nights at the Audleys Wood Hotel
- ♦ 4 nights at the Royal Hotel
- ♦ 2 nights at the Harbour Hotel
- ♦ 1 night at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ♦ Welcome drink & canapés
- ♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 9 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

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

Itinerary

May 6: Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

May 7: Arrival

Upon arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to, the Audleys Wood Hotel, where we stay for the next two nights. In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink and canapés, followed by dinner.

Meals: Dinner



Idyllic countryside, stunning coastline, captivating stories and antique gems.

May 8: The Vyne, Chawton House & Jane Austen's House Museum

This morning, we visit The Vyne, a splendid Tudor mansion set in attractive gardens. Built for King Henry VIII's Lord Chamberlain, the Tudor chapel is still largely in its original condition while the richly decorated Oak Gallery is another wonderful survival from this era.

We then travel to Chawton House, an Elizabethan manor house that once belonged to Jane Austen's brother. It now accommodates a unique library of titles focusing on women's contributions to English literature from 1600 to 1830. We enjoy a guided tour here, followed by lunch.

Continuing our Austen theme, we take a private visit to the nearby Jane Austen's House Museum, where she completed most of her mature writing.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



May 9: The Grange & the Isle of Wight

Today we head to the Grange, a Grade II listed building, originally a farmhouse in 1820 expanded into a Gothicized villa, with stone oriel windows and bargeboard gabled wood porch. We tour the vineyard here before lunch and some delicious fine wine.

Later, we catch the ferry to the Isle of Wight and check into the Royal Hotel, where we stay for the next four nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

May 10: Mottistone Gardens & Farringford House

Mottistone Manor is an Elizabethan manor house surrounded by beautiful gardens overflowing with Mediterranean plant life, colorful flower borders and shrub-filled banks. We explore special features of the gardens, including an olive grove and organic kitchen garden as well as 'The Shack', used as an architects' summer drawing office.



We then take a guided tour of Farringford House, the home of Alfred Lord Tennyson. The famous poet lived here from 1853 until his death, and the house remained in the family until 1945. More than half a century later, this dramatic Gothic house has been meticulously restored to its 19th-century splendor to reflect Tennyson's tastes and lifestyle.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

May 11: Godshill, Carisbrooke Castle, Garlic Farm & Isle of Wight Steam

The beautiful village of Godshill awaits, with its charming combination of thatched-roofed cottages and quaint tea rooms dotted along the winding streets, plus a medieval church.

Following this, we head to Carisbrooke Castle, an Elizabethan artillery fortress, a prison for a king and a royal summer residence over the years. Here, you can explore the museum (founded by Queen Victoria's youngest daughter), walk around the award-winning Edwardian-style garden and admire the panoramic views from the castle walls.

Our next stop is the island's award-winning Garlic Farm, in the picturesque Arreton Valley. Visit the rustic farm shop, filled with speciality condiments, before we are treated to a show and lunch at the restaurant here.

Then we climb aboard the award-winning Isle of Wight Steam Railway, wonderfully preserved with a history dating back to the 19th century, with restored Victorian and Edwardian carriages. After our scenic journey we visit the Engine House to learn more, with a guided tour.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



May 12: Quarr Abbey & Osbourne House

Our first visit today is to Quarr Abbey, home to a small group of Benedictine monks. Founded in 1132, the abbey was demolished under the reign of King Henry VIII, so today we see the ancient ruins and explore the newer buildings, lovely gardens and informative visitor center.

We are then treated to a lovely visit to Osbourne House, purchased by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1845 as a seaside retreat. We take an intimate glimpse of royal family life as we wander through the magnificent Royal Apartments as well as the grounds where we find the charming Swiss Cottage.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

May 13: Bembridge Windmill

After checking out of the hotel, we enjoy some free time to explore the picturesque Victorian resort of Ventnor before we visit Bembridge Windmill, the only surviving windmill on the Isle of Wight, built in 1700.

Later, we take the ferry back to the mainland and check into the Harbour Hotel, where we stay for the next two nights. After dinner, we enjoy a fascinating talk from a guest speaker.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



May 14: Arundel Castle & Goodwood House

This morning we make our way to Arundel Castle for a private guided tour. This imposing architectural gem is one of the longest inhabited country houses in England, having been the seat of the Dukes of Norfolk and their ancestors since 1067. Although remodelled in the 19th century, many original features remain such as the Norman keep and gatehouse.

Later, we make our way to Goodwood House, famous for its sporting heritage and private art collection. The family of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon have lived here for over 300 years, dating back to the 1st Duke of Richmond – the illegitimate son of Charles II. We enjoy a guided tour of the Old House and the State Apartments, restored to their original Regency splendor, followed by a delicious afternoon tea.

Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner

May 15: Petworth & Polesden Lacey

Immortalized in the work of English Romantic Painter Turner, our next stop of Petworth House is an impressive estate that combines a deer park landscaped by Capability Brown with a vast 17th-century mansion, which houses the National Trust's finest collection of art and sculptures.

We then visit one of the National Trust's most popular properties, Polesden Lacey, described as a 'delicious house' by the Queen Mother on her honeymoon there. This peaceful countryside retreat is most closely connected to Dame Margaret Greville, who entertained royalty and celebrities with lavish parties at the manor, still home to her extensive collection of art and ceramics.

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

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

May 16: 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 at the Vyne
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch at Chawton House
- ♦ Private visit to Jane Austen's House Museum
- ♦ Guided tour, lunch & wine tasting at The Grange
- ♦ Guided tour of Farringford House
- ♦ Show & lunch at the Garlic Farm, Isle of Wight
- ♦ Heritage train journey on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway
- ♦ Guided tour of Engine House
- ♦ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker
- ♦ Private guided tour of Arundel Castle
- ♦ Guided tour & afternoon tea at Goodwood House
- ♦ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker