

NEW

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A la Ronde

“Colourful gardens, charming fishing towns, remote islands and wild moors.”

April 24: Jane Austen’s House Museum & Chawton House

For our first visit, we head to Jane Austen’s House Museum, where she spent the last eight years of her life. It was in this country cottage where Austen completed the majority of her mature writing, including the timeless *Pride and Prejudice*. The museum tells the story of the author and her family through a host of treasures, including first editions of Austen’s books, jewellery and furniture.

We continue to Chawton House, an Elizabethan manor house that once belonged to Jane Austen’s brother, Edward Austen Knight. It now accommodates a unique library of titles focusing on women’s contributions to English literature from 1600 to 1830. We find out more during our guided tour, preceded by lunch.

Later, we check into our overnight hotel, the Devon Hotel in Exeter.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



West Bay

April 25: Broadchurch Country, Jurassic Coast (West Bay & Lyme Regis) & A la Ronde

Today we head down to Broadchurch Country to take in some of the highlights of the Jurassic Coast. We start with the scenic marvel of West Bay, filming location for the popular TV series *Broadchurch*, where the striking sand-hued cliffs are instantly recognizable. Next stop is Branscombe, a quaint village of thatched houses, a renovated water mill, an Old Bakery tea room and a working forge, restored by the National Trust. We continue to the charming seaside town and fishing port of Lyme Regis, home to Britain’s most famous paleontologist, Mary Anning, and the site where she made many of her findings. This ‘Pearl of Dorset’ is nestled in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the Jurassic Coast and features the Cobb, an iconic jetty which starred in the five-time Oscar-nominated movie, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*.



©Jane Austen’s House Museum

Jane Austen’s House Museum

Itinerary

April 22: Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

April 23: Arrival

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

Meals: Dinner

Write Around the Finest Homes of Cornwall, Devon & Dorset

April 22 to May 5, 2025 ♦ From \$8,300 per person

With its ancient myths, unique culture, sparkling seas and breathtaking landscapes, the south-west corner of England has provided a source of literary, artistic and culinary creativity for centuries. We explore it’s finest historic gems while treading the path of British icons; see the very spot where Jane Austen penned her classics, have lunch in the famous smuggler’s tavern immortalized in Daphne du Maurier’s *Jamaica Inn*, traverse the idyllic countryside that is inextricably linked to Thomas Hardy’s works and follow in the footsteps of Agatha Christie, firstly at her beloved Greenway, and secondly during our trip to the same Art Deco hotel where the Queen of Crime wrote two of her most celebrated novels. The stunning counties of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset hold a distinctive magic that needs to be experienced to be understood. From storied castles, grand stately homes and colourful gardens to charming fishing towns, remote islands and wild moors, this tour uncovers a world of inspiration.

What’s Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow*
♦ 1 night at the Audleys Wood Hotel
♦ 1 night at the Devon Hotel
♦ 2 nights at the Bovey Castle Hotel
♦ 5 nights at the Headland Hotel
♦ 2 nights at the Lincombe Hall Hotel
♦ 1 night at the Castle Hotel
♦ Welcome drink & canapés
♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
♦ 3-course table d’hôte dinner on 10 nights at the hotels (with after-dinner tea & coffee)
♦ 1 dinner at a local restaurant
♦ 1 lunch at a local restaurant
♦ 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.



Lanhydrock

We then step into another world at A la Ronde, a unique 16-sided house built at the request of two spinster cousins in the 18th century.

This eccentric house, with it’s quirky diamond-shaped windows and fascinating interior decoration, is crammed full of extraordinary artifacts, curiosities and mementoes from the cousins’ grand European tour.

This evening, we check into the special Bovey Castle Hotel, where we stay for the next two nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

April 26: Knightshayes & Killerton

We begin our day with a visit to Knightshayes, one of England’s finest Victorian Gothic houses by eccentric designer William Burges. Full of quirks and curiosities, the mansion boasts intricate carvings and impressive ceilings plus a medieval Great Hall with minstrels’ gallery. The garden is also a delight to explore with over 1,200 plant species unique to Knightshayes, representing one of the most varied collections of the National Trust.



©NPT/Rupert Truman

Knightshayes

Home to the Acland family until 1944, our next stop of Killerton is a fine 18th-century house surrounded by a glorious landscape garden and parkland. Here we find out more about the history of the house and its vast 6,400 estate as well as the captivating story of how Sir Richard Acland’s strong political beliefs led him to give up the family home and inheritance to the National Trust. Killerton also boasts the largest fashion collection cared for by the National Trust, with over 20,000 pieces of clothing, accessories and objects.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

April 27: Jamaica Inn & Lanhydrock

Leaving Dartmoor National Park, we drive through the breathtaking Bodmin Moor to Jamaica Inn, Cornwall’s most famous smuggling inn, located high up on this wildly rugged moor. Steeped in legend, this historic coaching house was made famous by Daphne du Maurier’s tale of smugglers, rogues and pirates and has been welcoming travellers for nearly 300 years. A light lunch is included here.



Jamaica Inn

We continue to Lanhydrock, one of the most fascinating and complete late 19th-century houses in England. Bursting with period atmosphere and with extensive servants’ quarters, we discover two sides of Victorian life and admire the extensive gardens, with their beautiful herbaceous borders and a formal parterre.

Later, we check into the Headland Hotel in Newquay, where we stay for the next five nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

April 28: Godolphin & St Michael’s Mount

This morning, we take a guided tour of Godolphin, which played a pivotal role in Cornwall’s mining history and its transformation of life in Britain. While evidence of human existence on this site dates back to the Bronze Age, the land was acquired in the 12th century by the rising powerful Godolgun family, who proceeded to build a moated house here. With the exploding popularity of tin mining in the area, the family’s wealth greatly increased during the Tudor period and beyond. Today, Godolphin is recognised as a Cornwall and West Devon mining landscape UNESCO World Heritage Site and showcases

a range of fascinating features, including a medieval garden, Piggery tea room, Grade II listed farm buildings and a Grade I listed house, all surrounded by 500 acres of stunning rural countryside.

A delightful afternoon tea awaits at St Michael’s Mount, one of the most iconic of Cornwall’s sights and connected to the mainland by a cobbled causeway. The little sister of Brittany’s Mont St Michel, this craggy island features a medieval castle which has been home to the St Aubyn family since the 17th century, a harbor and village with a close-knit island community. Depending on tide times, we either enjoy a boat ride to and from the island or a 15-minute walk along the ancient cobbled walkway.

Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner



Tresco Abbey Garden

April 29: Tresco Abbey Garden

We take a helicopter ride across to Tresco, the second largest of the Isles of Scilly. Here we explore the glorious Tresco Abbey Garden, a horticultural paradise where some 20,000 exotic species from 80 countries thrive in the sub-tropical climate. Originally established as a private garden in the 19th century by island owner Augustus Smith, the diversity of plant life found within the garden is as extraordinary as it is unique.



Pencarrow House

If the weather isn't on our side, we enjoy lunch and a wander around at the Eden Project, built into the Cornish countryside and often described as the Eighth Wonder of the World. With thousands of species of plants to see both indoors and out and a wealth of activities taking place every day, there is always something new to set our eyes on. The aerial walkway affords lovely views over the Rainforest Biome, the largest rainforest in captivity.

Meals: Breakfast

We then visit the nearby Barbara Hepworth Museum & Sculpture Garden, the former home and studio of the eminent British sculptor. Opened in 1976 by Hepworth's family, it contains the largest collection of her works and a stunning garden with sculptures placed by the artist herself, decades ago. As we wander and feel the sea breeze, it's easy to see why 'finding Trewyn Studio was a sort of magic...here was a studio, a yard and garden where I could work in open air and space.'

Our next stop is Roswarne House, once an ancient farmhouse and extended in 1810 by landed gentry. Nestled in six acres of picturesque parkland, the property has now returned to its former glory, after an extensive restoration project, and highlights include a delightful Orangery, Ballroom, Library and Drawing Room. We find out more when we meet the current owner, and also enjoy some refreshments here.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

May 1: Port Isaac, Pencarrow House & Gardens, Prideux Place & Padstow

Any travelers who have seen the British TV series *Doc Martin* or the *Fisherman's Friends* movies will no doubt recognise charming Port Isaac. We visit various filming locations in the small fishing village, which boasts winding streets lined with whitewashed cottages and a quaint harbor with clear waters (when the tide is in!), sheltered by rolling verdant scenery. Don't miss the lovely pasty shop here – it's a must when in Cornwall!

A warm Cornish welcome awaits at Pencarrow House, nestled on the edge of Bodmin Moor and the family home of the Molesworth-St Aubyns for almost 500 years. Our guided tour uncovers the secrets of this magnificent house, along with hidden passageways, glorious portraits, fine porcelain and marble busts sporting a variety of hats as per the wishes of the Lady of the Manor. There is plenty to explore outside too, from a colourful Italian garden and wild woodlands to walking routes, an Iron Age hill fort and a grotto, believed to have once been a secret meeting place.

We continue with a guided tour of Prideaux Place on the north coast, located close to Padstow and the home to fourteen generations of the Prideaux-Brunes. Completed in 1592, this Elizabethan manor house has changed little over the last four centuries and the magnificent rooms offer a captivating slice of history and plenty of unique treasures, including Italian paintings, elegant antiques, an ever-growing collection of teddy bears and England's oldest cast iron canon in the armoury. The author of *Poldark*, Winston Graham, became a great friend of the family and regularly visited the house. Part of the estate was used for dramatic cliff-top scenes in the 2015 BBC adaptation of the popular novel. Outside, the grounds are gradually being restored to their former glory with an 80-tree lime avenue and a remodelling of the Victorian formal garden.

For an early dinner we head to the charming port resort of Padstow, famous for its connection to chef Rick Stein and pretty harbor.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Port Isaac

May 2: Charlestown & Plymouth

After checking out of the hotel, we enjoy some time in Charlestown, an unspoiled example of a late Georgian working port, constructed in response to the growth of the local mining industry. Other businesses were established such as pilchard curing and ship building, with many attractive period properties built up in the village. Charlestown is also a popular filming location with credits including the BBC's hugely successful *Poldark* TV series, and there are often square rigger ships in the harbor.

We travel to Plymouth, a handsome city with a wonderful waterfront that boasts the historic Sutton Harbor and Barbican, a vibrant place of cobbled streets and narrow lanes. Lunch is served at Rockfish, which specialises in local, fresh fish on the harborfront, before we take a look at the famous Mayflower Steps. Flanked by British and American flags, this spot marks the final departure point of the pilgrims who journeyed to the New World, reaching America after a gruelling 10 weeks at sea.



Burgh Island Hotel



Imagine Christie reading her latest mystery to her guests.

Later we check into the Lincombe Hall Hotel, where we stay for the next two nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

May 3: Greenway, Burgh Island Hotel & Agatha Christie Walk

After a journey on the foot ferry we arrive at Greenway, the much-loved holiday home of noted author Agatha Christie and her family. Nestled on the side of the River Dart and surrounded by a picturesque woodland garden, this atmospheric house is set in the 1950s and contains many of the family's collections. As you wander through the atmospheric rooms, it is easy to imagine Christie reading her latest mystery novel to her guests here.



Hardy's Cottage

We then take a special trip to the beautiful Art Deco Burgh Island Hotel, accessed by a unique sea tractor from Bigbury on Sea Beach. Built in 1929 and extended in 1932, the hotel hosted notable guests, such as Winston Churchill, Josephine Baker, Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson. Now restored to its 1930s era glamour, you can just visualize Agatha Christie writing two novels here (*Evil Under the Sun* and *And Then There Were None*), with the glitz of the hotel appealing to her as a literary setting.



National Trust Images/Neil Gairn

Later, we return to Torquay, not only famous for its continental harbor and palm-tree lined promenade, but also as the birthplace of The Queen of Crime. Did you know that this is where Agatha Christie learned about poisons while working as a pharmacist? We take a walking tour of the Agatha Christie Mile and tick off the seafront locations connected to her life and works.

Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner

May 4: Hardy's Cottage, Max Gate & Clouds Hill

Leaving Cornwall, we travel to Thomas Hardy's birthplace, Hardy's Cottage. Surrounded by a delightful cottage garden, this is where he wrote *Far From the Madding Crowd*.

We continue to the outskirts of Dorchester and the atmospheric Victorian house Max Gate, designed by Hardy in 1885 and where he lived until his death in 1928. Hardy wrote some of his most famous novels here including *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*.

For our final visit we head to Clouds Hill, the idyllic retreat of writer, army officer, archaeologist and friend of Thomas Hardy, T.E. Lawrence, perhaps better known as Lawrence of Arabia. Designed and furnished to his personal taste, the fascinating rooms have largely been unchanged since Lawrence lived, wrote, read and entertained guests here. Other highlights include his shed where he kept his beloved motorcycles, the lovely views from the hill that overlooks the cottage and the little Greek inscription above the front door: 'why worry?'

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

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

May 5: 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 & lunch at Chawton House
- ◆ Lunch at Jamaica Inn
- ◆ Afternoon tea at St Michael's Mount
- ◆ Helicopter to Tresco Abbey Garden
- ◆ Meet and greet with the owner & refreshments at Roswarne House
- ◆ Guided tour of Pencarrow House
- ◆ Guided tour of Prideux Place
- ◆ Afternoon tea at the Burgh Island Hotel
- ◆ Agatha Christie-themed guided walk in Torquay
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker