

# Discover Britain's Glorious Heritage

## 2025 Departures



National Trust for  
Historic Preservation



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**No Single Supplements!\***

*\*limited availability*





# A Wonderful Opportunity to Explore & Experience...



© National Trust Images/Robert Morris

Hardwick Hall

## Dear National Trust Traveler,

'How many generations have passed away since the first possessor of the castle, watched from its heights as we do now, the glorious sun sinking to his rest; how many suns have set, how many inhabitants of the castle have gone to their rest; changing scenes flit over the imagination like optic illusions of fading pictures.'

While William Taylor penned these words in 1850 about Norfolk's Castle Rising, he could indeed be stood before any of the properties visited on an Albion tour. No matter where we go, it will always be a universally fascinating experience to envisage what's gone before us, discover the stories of past residents and step into a different era.

With that in mind, we are delighted to present our 2025 program, produced in partnership with Albion Journeys, one of the leading heritage travel providers in the UK. Over the year ahead, we invite you to explore Britain's vast cultural and natural heritage first-hand, delving deeper into the intriguing history and hidden wonders of these spectacular nations through behind-the-scenes tours, after-dinner talks, special access and insights from various property owners themselves.

In addition to popular favorites returning, we are pleased to include some enthralling new tours. *Write Around the Finest Homes of Cornwall, Devon & Dorset* takes us on a literary journey throughout the South West while *Exclusive Access to a Taste of Stately Life in the Shires* combines grand treasures in the idyllic Cotswolds and beyond with plenty of culinary delights. See the best of Yorkshire on *A Gloriously Grand Tour of God's Own Country: Moors, Dales & Coast*, or for those planning ahead, there are now two delightful Christmastime vacations.

As well as featuring storied properties and unique spaces, there are also many special experiences to look forward to on these tours, from member's day entrance at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and singing along to classic Christmas carols at the iconic Royal Albert Hall to enjoying a taste of rural life on a traditional Irish farm. Indulge in afternoon tea in the same Art Deco Hotel where Agatha Christie penned two of her novels, follow in the footsteps of Their Royal Highnesses with lunch and a guided tour at Highgrove Gardens or join in with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo – there is certainly plenty of choice.

Whichever tour you pick, Albion's years of experience and attention to detail mean that you will always be well looked after while traveling. By joining any one of these fascinating trips, you will also have the unique opportunity to see the results of the important work taken on by our counterparts, the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, in preserving and protecting their nations' treasures.

We look forward to welcoming you soon.

**Meg Annacone-Poretz**  
Director, National Trust Tours



© Andy Bulmer

A guide shares stories of the house in the Turquoise Drawing Room at Castle Howard



Middlethorpe Hall & Spa



© National Trust Images/James Dobson

Hartwell House & Spa



© National Trust Images/Sybil Walker

Bodysgallen Hall & Spa

## Delve Deeper into Britain's Heritage

It's the little extras that set Albion Journeys apart from the rest...

### Albion Journeys

Albion Journeys specializes in heritage tours of Great Britain. We create fascinating escorted tours with carefully crafted and unique itineraries that unlock Britain's rich history with behind-the-scenes tours, guest lectures and insights from the owners of the properties themselves. Our years of experience and attention to detail mean that you will always be well looked after when you travel with us.

### Heritage Partners

Albion Journeys is partnered with a number of key heritage organizations based in the UK, to give guests privileged access to their captivating properties. Albion Journeys is proud to pledge support to these great causes, helping them to conserve our heritage for years to come. We also operate a collection of tours in partnership with The Royal Oak Foundation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation based in the USA, with a contribution of the tour cost going to help the work of these two charities. We are very proud to have the support of these two wonderful organizations.

### About our partners in the USA

#### National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation protects significant places in America where history happened, representing diverse cultural experience by taking direct action and inspiring broad public support. Albion Journeys has been working with the organization since 2014



#### The Royal Oak Foundation

The Royal Oak Foundation seeks to raise awareness of and advance the work of the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland by inspiring support from the United States for the Trust's efforts to preserve and protect historic places and spaces. Albion Journeys has been working with Royal Oak since 2013.



### Expertly planned itineraries

We work closely with our partner heritage organizations to create unique and insightful itineraries that truly unlock Britain's history and culture. Our tours are carefully researched to ensure that they provide a valuable and enriching experience and our knowledgeable in-house planners are always on hand should you have any questions before you travel with us.

### Special Albion experiences

We arrange tours by the house owners themselves wherever possible, to really bring historic houses alive. We also offer behind-the-scenes or private tours with special access, and even talks by curators at atmospheric properties, to make sure you get the full story and the most out of your visit. Other unique extras include private singing performances, immersive demonstrations, cultural experiences and more.

### Exclusive themed talks by experts

The majority of our tours include an after-dinner talk by an expert in their field that promises to be both informative and engaging. Whether it is a leading historian, fascinating writer or learned expert, we arrange guest speakers who will enhance the themes of your tour and provide some captivating background or intriguing insight. With the chance for you to ask questions at the end of the talk, these interactive experiences are an opportunity not to be missed.

### Tailored reading lists

If you want to understand more about the themes of your tour, we provide a full reading list that should enable you to fully engage with the subject before your tour begins. We ensure that our reading lists are entertaining as well as informative, and they often include a mix of fiction as well as factual tomes. It is up to you how much you want to use the reading list, but you can be sure that it will help spark lively conversation!

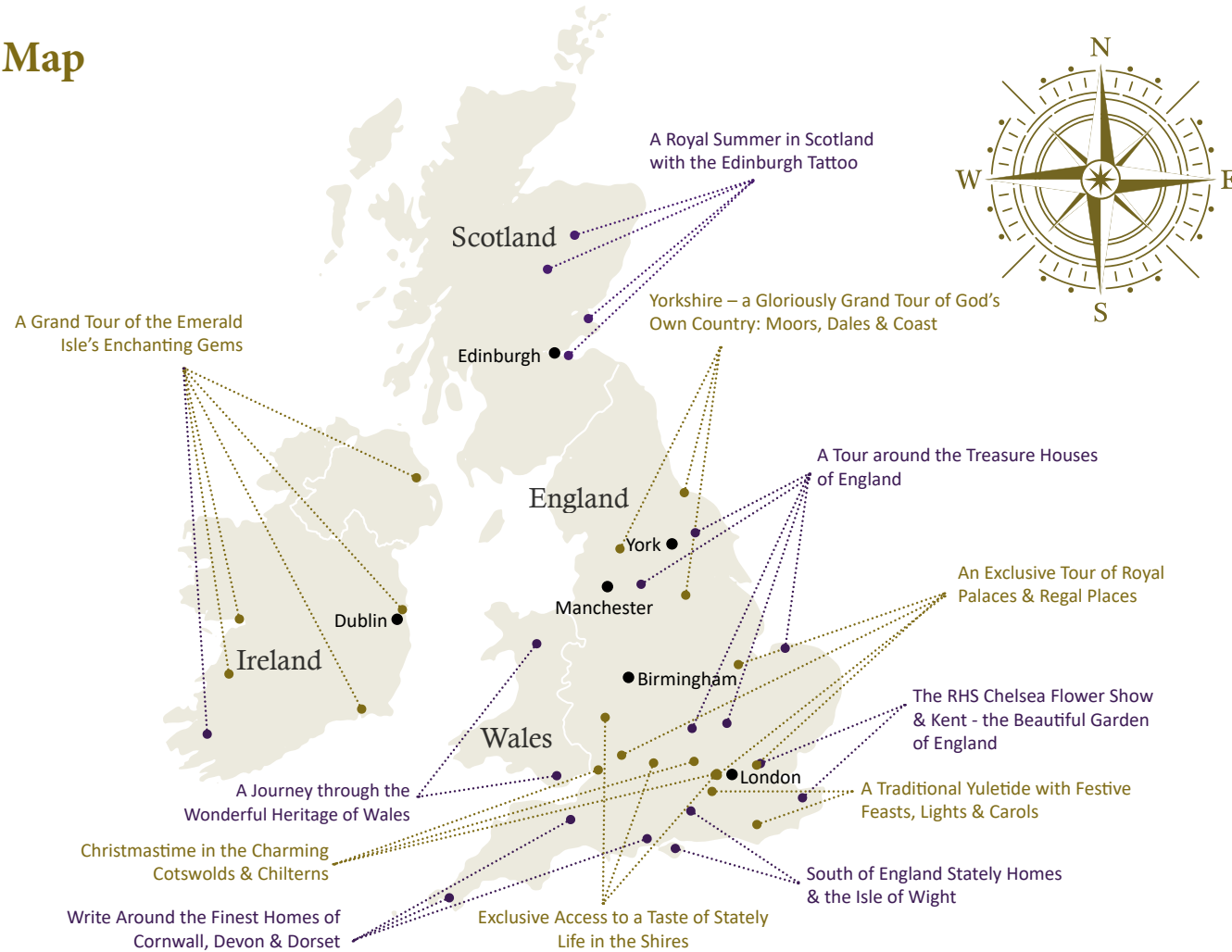
**Please note:** featured prices are inclusive of the National Trust membership discount. If you are not a National Trust Member, there is a \$150 increase on the prices shown.





**Tour Directors**  
 Here at Albion Journeys, we are aware that as well as an excellent itinerary and quality hotels, exceptional Tour Directors help make your vacation special. We use the most experienced and popular Tour Directors who look forward to welcoming you to the UK. They are there to ensure the smooth organization of all operational aspects of the tour. You will also be joined by expert guides and guest speakers throughout the tour.

## Tour Map



For a more detailed map for each tour, please see the tour pages

### Handpicked hotels

Your journey through Britain's colorful past won't end after a day of excursions. We've chosen your principal hotels for their character and history and full descriptions can be found on our website. These hotels are complemented by conveniently located overnight hotels at the beginning and end of your stay.

Three hotels featured on these tours that are of particular interest are Historic House Hotels of the National Trust, with all profits supporting the charity's conservation work. **Middlethorpe Hall** is a beautiful red brick country house which was built at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, while **Bodysgallen Hall** is believed to have begun life as a watchtower for Conwy Castle in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. **Hartwell House's** most famous resident was Louis XVIII, exiled King of France, who lived there with his Court for five years.

For more information on the hotels, please visit our website. We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement. These sell quickly.



## Contents

<b>NEW</b> Write Around the Finest Homes of Cornwall, Devon & Dorset	6-7
South of England Stately Homes & the Isle of Wight	8-9
The RHS Chelsea Flower Show & Kent - the Beautiful Garden of England	10-11
A Tour around the Treasure Houses of England	12-13
A Journey through the Wonderful Heritage of Wales	14-15
A Royal Summer in Scotland with the Edinburgh Tattoo	16-17
An Exclusive Tour of Royal Palaces & Regal Places	18-19
<b>NEW</b> Yorkshire – a Gloriously Grand Tour of God's Own Country	20-21
A Grand Tour of the Emerald Isle's Enchanting Gems	22-23
<b>NEW</b> Exclusive Access to a Taste of Stately Life in the Shires	24-25
<b>NEW</b> A Traditional Yuletide with Festive Feasts, Lights & Carols	26-27
Christmastime in the Charming Cotswolds & Chilterns	28-29
Frequently Asked Questions	30
Terms & Conditions Extract	31





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Knights Hayes

# Write Around the Finest Homes of Cornwall, Devon & Dorset

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

With its ancient myths, sparkling seas and breathtaking landscapes, the south-west corner of England has provided a magical world of inspiration for centuries. We explore their finest historic gems while treading the path of British icons; we 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 at the same Art Deco hotel where the Queen of Crime wrote two of her most celebrated novels.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 1 night at the Audleys Wood Hotel
- ♦ 1 night at the Belmont 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.

## 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*

### April 24: Jane Austen's House Museum & Chawton House

For our first visit, we head to Jane Austen's House Museum, the charming house where she spent her later years and wrote the timeless *Pride and Prejudice*.

We continue to Chawton House, an Elizabethan manor house that once belonged to Jane Austen's brother, Edward Austen Knight. We find out more during our guided tour, preceded by lunch.

Later, we check into our overnight hotel, the Belmont Hotel in Sidmouth.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### April 25: Broadchurch Country & Jurassic Coast (West Bay & Lyme Regis)

Today we head to Broadchurch Country to take in some of the highlights of the Jurassic Coast, including the striking West Bay, the quaint village of Branscombe, with its thatched houses, renovated water mill, Old Bakery tea room and National Trust-restored forge, and the seaside town of Lyme Regis. This 'Pearl of Dorset' was home to Britain's most famous palaeontologist, Mary Anning, and was where she made many of her findings.

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

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### April 26: Jamaica Inn & Lanhydrock

We drive through the breathtaking Bodmin Moor to the Jamaica Inn, made famous by Daphne du Maurier's iconic tale. A light lunch is included here.

We continue to Lanhydrock, one of the most fascinating and complete late 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses in England, where we discover two sides of Victorian life.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### April 27: Knightshayes & Killerton

We begin our day with a visit to Knightshayes, one of England's finest Victorian Gothic houses by eccentric designer William Burges, boasting a medieval Great Hall and diverse gardens.

Our next stop of Killerton is a fine 18<sup>th</sup>-century house surrounded by a glorious landscape garden and home to the largest fashion collection cared for by the National Trust.

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

*Meals: Breakfast, 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 showcases a range of fascinating features, including a medieval garden, Grade II listed farm buildings and more.

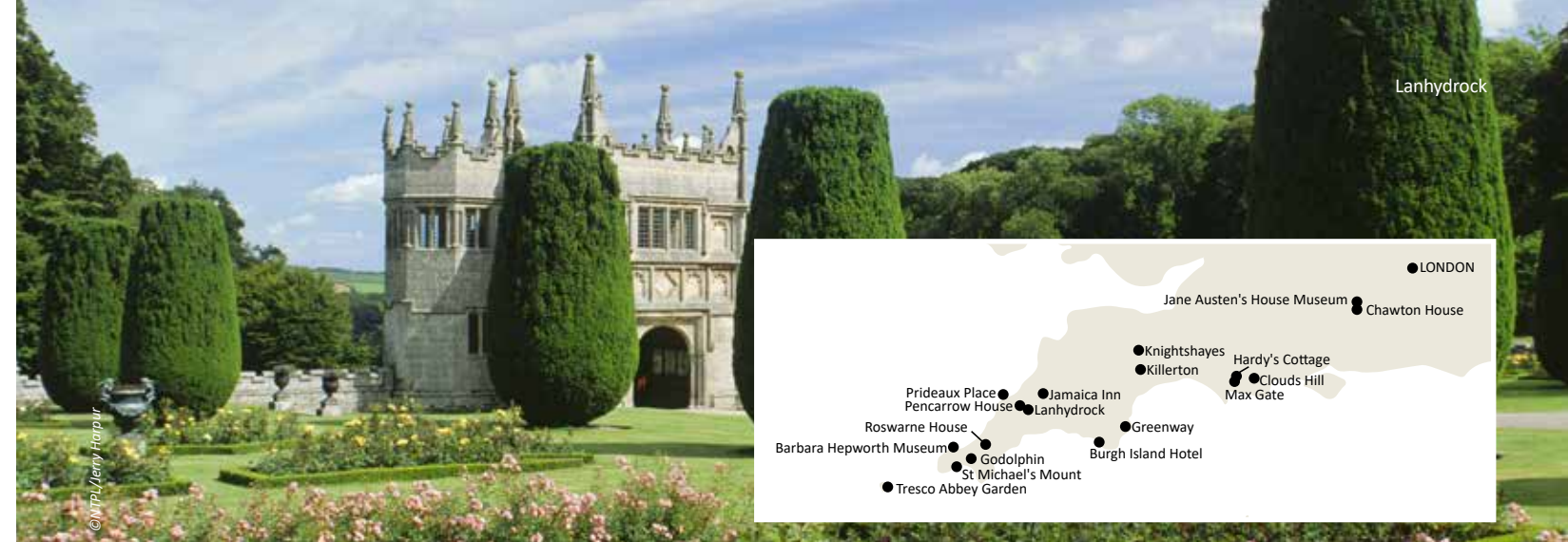
A delightful afternoon tea awaits at St Michael's Mount, one of Cornwall's most iconic sights. Depending on tide times, we either enjoy a boat ride to and from the island or a 15-minute walk along the ancient cobbled walkway.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

### 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. If the weather isn't on our side, we enjoy lunch and a wander around at the Eden Project, often described as the Eighth Wonder of the World.

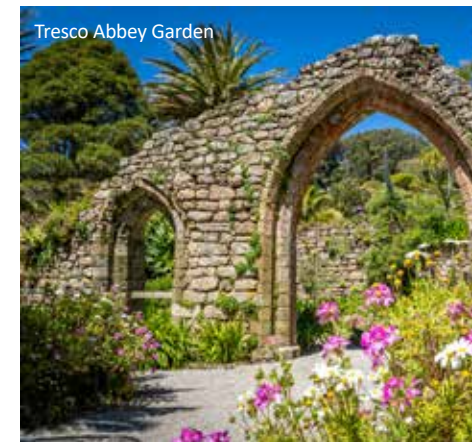
*Meals: Breakfast*



Lanhydrock

### April 30: Port Isaac, Pencarrow House & Gardens, Prideaux 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 follow in their footsteps and visit various filming locations in the small fishing village.



Tresco Abbey Garden

A warm Cornish welcome awaits at Pencarrow House, the family home of the Molesworth-St Aubyns for almost 500 years. Our guided tour uncovers the secrets of this magnificent house, and there is plenty to explore outside too, from a colourful Italian garden to an Iron Age hill fort.

We continue with a guided tour of Prideaux Place, home to fourteen generations of the Prideaux-Brunes. Completed in 1592, this Elizabethan manor house has changed little over the last four centuries and offers fine paintings, elegant antiques and more.

For an early dinner we head to charming Padstow, famous for its connection to chef Rick Stein.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### May 1: St Ives, Barbara Hepworth Museum & Sculpture Garden & Roswarne House

Today we see why artists have long been drawn to Cornwall. We begin with the holiday town of St Ives, home to a maze of cobbled streets and pretty cottages plus the Cornwall branch of the Tate Gallery.

We then visit the nearby Barbara Hepworth Museum & Sculpture Garden, the former home and studio of the eminent British sculptor, with works placed by the artist herself.

Our next stop is Roswarne House. After an extensive restoration project, this gem has returned to its former glory and includes a delightful Orangery, Ballroom, Library and Drawing Room. We find out more when we meet the current owner, and also enjoy some refreshments.

After dinner at the hotel, we enjoy a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### 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 and a filming location for the BBC's *Poldark* TV series.

We travel to Plymouth, a handsome city that boasts the historic Sutton Harbor and Barbican. Lunch is served at Rockfish, which specialises in local, fresh fish, before we take a look at the famous Mayflower Steps.

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 Agatha Christie and her family. As you wander through the atmospheric rooms, imagine reading her latest mystery novel to her guests here.

We then take a special trip to the beautiful Art Deco Burgh Island Hotel, accessed by a unique sea tractor and where Christie wrote two novels (*Evil Under the Sun* and *And Then There Were None*).

Later on, we return to Torquay, the birthplace of the Queen of Crime, where we take a walking tour of the Agatha Christie Mile.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

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

Leaving Cornwall, we travel to Hardy's Cottage, surrounded by honeysuckle, climbing roses and japonica, where Thomas Hardy was born and wrote some of his early poetry and famous novels.

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.

For our final visit we head to Clouds Hill, the idyllic retreat of writer, army officer and archaeologist T.E. Lawrence, where the fascinating rooms have largely been unchanged.

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.*



West Bay

## 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 Prideaux Place
- ♦ Afternoon tea at the Burgh Island Hotel
- ♦ Agatha Christie-themed guided walk in Torquay
- ♦ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker





Osborne House

# 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

- ♦ Return 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 Berystede Hotel & Spa
- ♦ 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)
- ♦ 1 lunch at a local restaurant
- ♦ 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*



The Vyne

*“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*



Farringford House

### 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 Estate

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.



Polesden Lacey

We then head to Farringford Estate, the former home of the famous poet Alfred Lord Tennyson. Our visit includes an introductory talk as well as time in the exhibition center, which charts the history of the house, and the beautiful grounds, where the walled kitchen garden has been lovingly restored.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### May 11: Godshill, Carisbrooke Castle & 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.

For lunch we head to Hewitt's, a lovely restaurant located in Newport.

Then we climb aboard the award-winning Isle of Wight Steam Railway, wonderfully preserved with a history dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> 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*



Carisbrooke Castle

### May 12: Quarr Abbey & Osborne 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 Osborne 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*



Arundel Castle

### 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup>-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 Berystede Hotel & Spa, 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
- ♦ Introductory talk at Farringford Estate
- ♦ 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



LIMITED AVAILABILITY FOR 2025 - Pre-register for 2026



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

Upon 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*



RHS Chelsea Flower Show

**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





# A Tour Around the Treasure Houses of England

June 1 to 13, 2025 ♦ From \$8,100 per person

The Treasure Houses of England are a collection of the most magnificent palaces, houses and castles, each with their own unique charm, stunning architecture and beautiful gardens. Most are still homes to the great families who have owned them for generations and together, the houses display some of the most important art collections in the world, showcasing exquisite examples of fine furniture, porcelain, china and portraiture. Our selection includes spectacular Blenheim, Burghley, Chatsworth, Castle Howard and Harewood, where their stories are just waiting to be discovered and their honey-colored hues glint in the English summer sunshine like real-life treasure boxes, framed by acres upon acres of idyllic grounds. On this captivating tour, we explore these impressive abodes, alongside other historic gems, giving us a fascinating insight into life in England over the centuries.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 2 nights at the Audleys Wood Hotel
- ♦ 2 nights at the Colwick Hall Hotel
- ♦ 2 nights at the The Peacock at Rowsley
- ♦ 3 nights at Middlethorpe Hall & Spa
- ♦ 2 nights at Hartwell House & Spa
- ♦ Welcome drink & canapés
- ♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner every night 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

**June 1:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

### June 2: Arrival

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

*Meals: Dinner*

### June 3: Highclere Castle

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, celebrating the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon's discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922, and admire the spectacular Capability Brown parkland.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

A collection of the most magnificent palaces, houses and castles.

### June 4: Delapré Abbey, Lamport Hall & Gardens & Kelmarsh Hall & Gardens

For our first visit today we head to Delapré Abbey, where our guided tour illuminates its 900-year history. Built in 1145, it was once a nunnery but changed hands on many occasions and even played an important role in the Wars of the Roses.

Next stop is the Grade I listed Lamport Hall. Its fascinating story began as a fine Tudor manor house, but Lamport has since had many different purposes; a hunting lodge, a country club, a base for the Northamptonshire Records Office, an army base, an Italian prisoner of war camp and a family home, with plenty of treasures purchased during a grand tour of Europe in the 1670s on display. We find out more during our guided tour, followed by lunch.



Highclere Castle

We round off our lovely day with a trip to the Palladian-style country manor of Kelmarsh Hall, set in award-winning gardens. During our visit we discover what Victorian life was like here 'below stairs', a stark contrast to the finery of the rooms above.

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

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### June 5: Burghley House & Priest's House

This morning we enjoy a guided tour of the State Rooms at Burghley House, cited as England's greatest Elizabethan house. Home to William Cecil, Lord High Treasurer to Queen Elizabeth I, Burghley offers a unique glimpse into the way great houses have been lived in from the time of Elizabeth I to the present day.

We then make a brief stop at Priest's House in pretty Stamford, one of the National Trust's smallest buildings, where a chantry priest would have lived until the dissolution of the monasteries.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### June 6: Belton House & Belvoir Castle

Our first visit of the day takes us to Belton House. Built in the 1680s, this historic gem is a classic example of an English country house estate, surrounded by formal gardens and a 1,300-acre deer park. Inside Belton, its wealth is evident with grand rooms and impressive collections of porcelain, paintings and over 11,000 books amassed by two families.

Pronounced 'Beaver', fans of *The Crown* will no doubt recognise our next stop, the magnificent Belvoir Castle. This has been the ancestral home of the Duke of Rutland since the first Lord of Belvoir came to England with William the Conqueror in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, the family have lived in an unbroken line here, standing the test of vast remodelings, familial squabbles, wars and even a damaging fire in 1816. We find out more during a guided tour followed by afternoon tea.

This evening, we check into the The Peacock at Rowsley, our base for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*



Hardwick Hall

### June 7: Chatsworth House & Hardwick Hall

Today we travel to Derbyshire where we enjoy a guided tour of grandiose Chatsworth House before either a light lunch or afternoon tea. This magnificent treasure has witnessed 16 generations of the powerful Cavendish family, evolving through the centuries to reflect the tastes of succeeding generations and boasting a superlative art collection.

Our next visit is to Hardwick Hall, ordered in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Bess of Hardwick, England's richest woman after her Queen, Elizabeth I. The lavish number of windows (at a time when glass was a luxury) inspired the neat phrase, 'Hardwick Hall, more glass than wall'.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch or Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

### June 8: Harewood House & Harrogate

When Edwin Lascelles started building Harewood House in 1759, he employed the finest craftsmen of the time: architect John Carr, interior designer Robert Adam, England's greatest furniture maker Thomas Chippendale and visionary landscape gardener Capability Brown. Still home to the Lascelles family, we learn more on our fascinating guided tour, followed by lunch.

Our next stop is the elegant Victorian spa town of Harrogate for some free time. From here, we make our way to Middlethorpe Hall & Spa near York, where we stay for the next three nights. After dinner, we enjoy a fascinating talk from a guest speaker.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### June 9: Treasurer's House, York & Castle Howard

This morning we visit Treasurer's House, boasting a 2,000-year-old history and the first house given complete with its contents to the National Trust in 1930.

We then enjoy some free time in York, where just one must-see is the glorious York Minster.

This evening, we are treated to a private guided tour of Castle Howard, home to the Howard family for over 300 years and a famous filming location. This magnificent 18<sup>th</sup>-century residence, surmounted by its iconic gilded dome, offers world-renowned collections and stunning architecture, all set within breathtaking scenery.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### June 10: Nostell Priory

Today we visit Nostell Priory, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century architectural masterpiece which has been the home of the Winn family for 300 years. Surrounded by wildflower meadows, peaceful lakes, fairytale woodland and colourful gardens, Nostell is also home to England's best documented collection of Chippendale furniture.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### June 11: Blenheim Palace

After checking out of our hotel, we head to Sir Winston Churchill's awe-inspiring birthplace of Blenheim Palace. As part of our afternoon celebration experience, we marvel at the lavish State Rooms on a guided tour, take a stroll through the pretty water terraces, indulge in a champagne afternoon tea and enjoy some free time to explore.



We continue on to Hartwell House & Spa, one of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels, where we stay for the two remaining nights of our tour.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

### June 12: Waddesdon Manor

We make our way to Waddesdon Manor, built by the wealthy Rothschild family in the style of a French Renaissance château with late Victorian gardens, a Rococo-style aviary, a Parterre, sculptures and more. We enjoy a guided tour to find out more about Waddesdon's history and are treated to lunch.

Later, we enjoy a farewell dinner at the hotel together.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### June 13: Departure

A private transfer will take you back to Heathrow Airport for your return flight home.

*Meals: Breakfast*

*Please note: as this tour travels from the south to the north of England and back, some days will involve fairly long journeys. The order of excursions is subject to change and guided tours are subject to restrictions.*

## Tour Highlights

- ♦ Guided tour of Delapré Abbey
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch at Lamport Hall & Gardens
- ♦ Guided tour of Burghley House
- ♦ Guided tour & afternoon tea at Belvoir Castle
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch or afternoon tea at Chatsworth House
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch at Harewood House
- ♦ Private evening tour of Castle Howard
- ♦ Celebration Experience at Blenheim Palace (includes guidebook, guided State Rooms tour & Champagne afternoon tea)
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch at Waddesdon Manor
- ♦ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker





# A Journey through the Wonderful Heritage of Wales

June 17 to 29, 2025 ♦ From \$7,800 per person

Meandering from the South of glorious *Cymru* to the North, our exciting journey through Welsh heritage encompasses the highlights of this rugged and beautiful country. We discover the 'Land of Castles' with visits to five magnificent fortresses, step back in time aboard the preserved Welsh Highland Railway and delve into the nation's mining past at the Rhondda Heritage Park, where we are also treated to a private Welsh choir performance. In a country where sheep outnumber people at a ratio of three to one, no visit here is complete without a trip to a working farm, and famous agriculturalist Gareth Wyn Jones welcomes us to his rural idyll for an unforgettable afternoon to round off our tour.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 1 night at the Sofitel London Heathrow Hotel
- ♦ 3 nights at the Parkgate Hotel & Spa
- ♦ 4 nights at Bodysgallen Hall & Spa
- ♦ 2 nights at the Rookery Hall Hotel & Spa
- ♦ 1 night at the Macdonald Windsor 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 at Ty'n Llwyfan Farm
- ♦ 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

**June 17:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

**June 18:** Arrival

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

*Meals: Dinner*

**June 19:** Tintern Abbey & Chepstow Castle

We head first to Tintern Abbey in the beautiful Wye Valley, located on the border between England and Wales. There's time to enjoy some lunch here (not included) before we continue to Chepstow Castle, which again sits on the border between Wales and Gloucestershire. The castle was built in 1067 by Earl William FitzOsbern, a friend of William the Conqueror, to defend the Welsh Marches and was once known as Striguil (from the Welsh *ystraigl* for river bend).

Afterward, we enjoy a photo stop at the England/Wales sign on the border before continuing to Cardiff. Here we check into the Parkgate Hotel, where we stay for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**June 20:** Cardiff, The Royal Mint & Rhondda Heritage Park

Today begins with a coach and walking tour of Cardiff, the capital of Wales since 1955, but with a fascinating history stretching back through the centuries.

Afterward, we visit The Royal Mint Experience on the outskirts of Cardiff, an interactive exhibition on coin production. During our guided tour, we watch as workers mint coins and discover fascinating facts about British coins, giving us a wonderful insight into one of the UK's oldest institutions. We are treated to a private talk from the curator while we enjoy lunch.

A memorable experience awaits at the Rhondda Heritage Park, where we follow in the footsteps of the coal miners who once worked in the valley and learn about the area's mining heritage. After our guided tour with a retired miner we are treated to a traditional male Welsh choir performance, complete with Welsh cakes and refreshments.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**June 21:** Newton House at Dinewr Park & Craig y Nos

We start the day with a visit to Newton House, a beautiful Grade II listed mansion with a fairytale castellated structure in the heart of the Dinewr estate. Afterward we head to Craig Y Nos Castle on the southeastern edge of the Black Mountain, the former home of the famous Italian 19<sup>th</sup>-century opera singer, Adelina Patti.

We are treated to lunch and a guided tour, learning all about the history of the property, Patti's time here and the Grade I listed opera house, built to be her private auditorium, as well as the castle's transformation into a tuberculosis hospital.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**June 22:** Elan Valley Visitor Center

This morning we head to Elan Valley Visitor Center, set against a magnificent Victorian stone dam. The exhibition and audio-visual show provide an insight into the history and wildlife of the area, and we learn more during our Ranger coach tour.

Later we check in to Bodysgallen Hall & Spa, where we stay for the next four nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



**June 23:** Plas Newydd House & Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens

Today we cross the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Menai Bridge to spend the day on the Isle of Anglesey, where our first visit is to the fine country house of Plas Newydd. The elegant interior reflects the 1930s, thanks to its associations with the artist, socialite and fallen WWII soldier Rex Whistler.



We continue on to Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens, a series of historic gardens which are gradually being restored to their former glory, where we enjoy a guided tour and lunch.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



**June 24:** Welsh Highland Railway & Portmeirion

We head to Beddgelert and board the Welsh Highland Railway for a picturesque trip to the quaint coastal town of Porthmadog, admiring the awe-inspiring scenery of the Snowdonia National Park along the way.

We then continue to Portmeirion, an Italianate village created by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, inspired by his visits to the Mediterranean. Its unique atmosphere has been featured on camera many times, most famously in the iconic 1960s British TV series, *The Prisoner*. After a guided tour, we are treated to afternoon tea here.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

**June 25:** Great Orme Victorian Tramway, Conwy Castle, The Smallest House in Great Britain & Ty'n Llwyfan Farm

This morning takes us to the traditional seaside resort of Llandudno, where we enjoy a trip on the Great Orme Victorian tramway. Delighting passengers since 1902, this is Britain's only cable-hauled tramway that travels on public roads and the tramcars have been carefully restored to provide a nostalgic experience.

From here, we head to the medieval walled town of Conwy to visit the imposing Conwy Castle. Classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this imposing castle was built by Edward I during his conquest of Wales in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century and is considered to be among the finest surviving medieval fortifications in Britain with soaring curtain walls, round towers and fortified gateways.

We also visit another of Conwy's highlights, The Smallest House in Great Britain. Standing at just 72 inches wide and 122 inches tall, this extraordinary house was lived in until May 1900 (the last occupant was a 6 foot 3 fisherman!) and has since become a popular national treasure.

This afternoon we visit Ty'n Llwyfan Farm for a truly immersive experience. Celebrity farmer Gareth Wyn Jones and his wife Rhian love sharing their passion and vision for sustainable farming with guests and they invite us to take a peek into their way of life. We also enjoy a tractor pull, sheep shearing and sheepdog demonstrations as well as a local Welsh lamb dinner and a private Welsh harpist performance.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**June 26:** Bodnant Gardens & Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

We begin our day with a visit to Bodnant Garden, nestled in the Snowdonian foothills. Created over 150 years, this world-famous garden is home to National Collections and Champion Trees and boasts sweeping lawns, grand terraces and verdant woodland.

Next we enjoy a slice of traditional Bara Brith as part of our unique canal journey, which features a trip along the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, a World Heritage Site. Translated in English as 'the bridge that connects,' this incredible feat of Victorian engineering carries the Llangollen Canal across the River Dee and offers stunning views of the surrounding countryside.

Later we check in to the Rookery Hall Hotel & Spa, where we stay for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**June 27:** Chirk Castle & Erddig Hall

The day starts with a guided tour of Chirk Castle, the last of Edward Longshanks' magnificent fortresses still inhabited today and boasting over 700 years of history contained within its walls.

Next stop is Erddig Hall, an atmospheric early 18<sup>th</sup>-century house that reflects the 'upstairs, downstairs' life of a gentry family, and offers a fascinating insight into the lives of the family and their servants. Outside, don't miss the superb walled garden, now restored to its former 18<sup>th</sup>-century formal design.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



**June 28:** Charlecote Park

Today we head further into the south of England. While nearby Stratford is synonymous with Shakespeare's theatrical success, there lurks in nearby Charlecote Park's history a far less respectable connection; the famous playwright is rumoured to have been caught poaching deer here. Home to the Lucy family for 900 years, this lovely Tudor manor is a real treasure, and there's time for lunch here (not included).

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

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**June 29:** 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 The Royal Mint
- ♦ Guided tour, Welsh choir performance, Welsh cakes & refreshments at Rhondda Heritage Park
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch at Craig Y Nos
- ♦ Ranger coach tour at Elan Valley
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch at Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens
- ♦ Heritage train journey on the Welsh Highland Railway
- ♦ Guided tour & afternoon tea in Portmeirion
- ♦ Journey on the Great Orme Victorian Tramway
- ♦ Sheep shearing and sheepdog demonstrations, tractor pull, dinner & Welsh harpist performance at Ty'n Llwyfan Farm
- ♦ Canal cruise on the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct with refreshments
- ♦ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker





Balmoral Castle

# A Royal Summer in Scotland with the Edinburgh Tattoo

July 21 to August 2, 2025 ◆ From \$8,800 per person

Join us for an unforgettable summertime tour of regal Scotland, a land of awe-inspiring scenery peppered with storied castles and beloved by royalty for centuries. We discover a treasure trove of sites which played a key role in Scotland's turbulent history, including Stirling Castle, Scone Palace and Edinburgh Castle, and follow in the footsteps of past kings and queens at Falkland Palace, adored by James V and Mary, Queen of Scots, as well as Glamis Castle, forever linked with Queen Elizabeth II's maternal lineage, and iconic Balmoral Castle, the cherished home of the British monarchy since the Victorian period. Along the way, we celebrate *Caledonian* culture with a behind-the-scenes peek at a *wee* whisky distillery, a trip to the emblematic St Andrews Highland Games and a truly remarkable evening at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, with an exclusive dining package and prime location seats. Set against the city's impressive fortress and a spectacle like no other, the Tattoo combines music, dance, lights and marching bands with daredevil displays of skill and military showmanship; it's the perfect way to experience a real flavour of Bonnie Scotland.

## What's Included

- ◆ Arrival/departure airport transfers from Edinburgh\*
- ◆ 1 night at the Norton House Hotel & Spa
- ◆ 3 nights at the Old Manse of Blair Hotel
- ◆ 2 nights at the Fairmont Hotel
- ◆ 5 nights at the InterContinental Edinburgh The George Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink & canapés
- ◆ Full Scottish/Continental breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 6 nights at the hotels (with after-dinner tea & coffee)
- ◆ 1 dinner at a local restaurant
- ◆ 2 lunches at local restaurants
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and 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

**July 21:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in Edinburgh

### July 22: Arrival

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

*Meals: Dinner*

### July 23: Dunfermline Abbey & Scone Palace

This morning we head to the ancient capital of Scotland, Dunfermline, to discover the city's impressive abbey and monastic ruins. Dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it was once used as the burial site of Scottish monarchs and includes the exquisite tomb of King Robert the Bruce.

Our next stop is Scone Palace, the crowning place of Scottish kings. There are plenty of treasures

## Taste the true flavour of Bonnie Scotland.

enclosed within, while outside, there is a Victorian Pinetum, gardens and nature trails; look out for red squirrels and roe deer along the way.

Later we check into the Old Manse of Blair Hotel, an exquisite country house and our base for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### July 24: Blair Castle & Blair Athol Distillery

We head to Perthshire's Blair Castle, home to the Atholl family for over seven centuries and besieged by Oliver Cromwell's army in 1650. Today, the opulent rooms boast collections of weapons, family souvenirs, paintings and furniture.

For a true flavour of Scotland, we then visit Blair Athol Distillery, where we see how the *uisge beatha* whisky is made on a guided tour.

This evening we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant in Pitlochry.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Stirling Castle

### July 25: Braemar Castle, Balmoral Castle & Crathie Kirk

Our first visit today is to Braemar Castle, built by the 2nd Earl of Mar as a hunting base in 1628. It was set alight in the first Jacobite Uprising, then later seized by the Crown. Government troops were stationed here following the Battle of Culloden and it was later transformed into a family home.

Nearby Balmoral is a fine example of Scots Baronial architecture and the Scottish home of British monarchs since it was purchased for Queen Victoria. We enjoy access to the grounds of the estate plus the Castle Ballroom where fascinating displays of art, china and artifacts are exhibited, complete with an audio-guided tour. There is also time to take a peek at Crathie Kirk, the charming place of worship for the Royal Family.

**Please note:** the other rooms of Balmoral are closed to the public.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### July 26: JM Barrie's Birthplace & Glamis Castle

We pay a visit to the birthplace of JM Barrie, the creator of the much-loved *Peter Pan*. The house is now a museum dedicated to the author's story.



St Andrews



Next, we travel to the spectacular Glamis Castle, home to the Earls of Strathmore and Kinghorne and restored in an elaborate French chateau style. As the childhood home of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and the birthplace of Princess Margaret, its legendary tales are brought to life on our guided tour.

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

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### July 27: St Andrews & Highland Games

Today we follow in the footsteps of William and Kate, Prince and Princess of Wales with a guided coach and walking tour in St Andrews, home to a crumbling castle and an ancient cathedral.

We're in for a real Scottish treat this afternoon with St Andrews Highland Games. A unique part of Scotland's heritage and a celebration of Celtic culture, you can expect plenty of unique sports, kilts, bagpipes and whisky.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### July 28: Falkland Palace & Hopetoun House

After checking out of the hotel, the fairytale-like, French-inspired Falkland Palace is our first stop today. Our visit is a wonderful opportunity to tread the path of royalty and discover a true pleasure palace; Falkland was the Balmoral of its day and was commissioned in 1501 by James IV to create a base for country pursuits.



Palace of Holyroodhouse

In the afternoon we enjoy a guided tour of the imposing Hopetoun House, widely recognized as Scotland's finest stately home. The magnificent interiors reflect the elegance of the Georgian era and are decorated with lovely period furniture, paintings, tapestries and clocks.

This evening, we check into the InterContinental Edinburgh The George Hotel, where we stay for the remainder of our tour.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### July 29: Edinburgh & Firth of Forth Bridges Boat tour

After breakfast there is some time to spend at leisure in Edinburgh. We reconvene for famous *smørrebrød* open sandwiches at Canny Man's, which has stayed in the Kerr family since its humble beginnings in 1871.

We enjoy a sightseeing cruise on the River Forth, with magnificent views of the UNESCO World Heritage Forth Railway bridge and more.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

### July 30: Linlithgow Palace & Stirling Castle

We begin our day at the ruins of Linlithgow Palace. Built by successive Stuart kings, Linlithgow was once a royal rest stop before it was ravaged by fire after British troops ransacked the house searching for retreating Jacobites.

For lunch, we are treated to some Scottish tapas at Christie's in Falkirk before a private guided tour of the impressive Stirling Castle. Originally built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and allegedly haunted by Mary, Queen of Scots, the fortress looks as it might have in the 1540s and features the Great Hall, lavish chambers, the Great Kitchens and the Chapel Royal.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

### July 31: Royal Yacht Britannia & Palace of Holyroodhouse

Today we step aboard the *Royal Yacht Britannia*, which was Elizabeth II's floating Royal residence for over 44 years, used for state visits, official receptions, family holidays and honeymoons. We take a fascinating private tour before enjoying afternoon tea at Scotland's first luxury floating hotel.

This evening we enjoy a private guided tour of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, The King's official residence in Scotland. Our tour offers a unique opportunity to go behind the ropes in selected rooms and into the West Drawing Room, not normally open to the public.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea*

### August 1: Edinburgh Castle & Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

We discover Edinburgh Castle on an audio-guided tour, one of the most important strongholds in the Kingdom of Scotland, where highlights include the Crown Jewels of Scotland, the Royal Palace and the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Great Hall.

There is then some time at leisure before our three-course celebratory Scottish meal with wine and a *wee dram* of single malt whisky, followed by tea or coffee and traditional fudge. Afterward, we are escorted to the Castle Esplanade to take our seats for the spectacular Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. There is so much to marvel at, including the Massed Military Bands, the famous Lone Piper, daredevil displays, Highland dancers and a grand finale featuring fireworks and an emotive rendition of *Auld Lang Syne*.

**Please note:** we advise you to be prepared with waterproofs in case of inclement weather during the Tattoo.

*Meals: Breakfast, Pre-Show Meal*

### August 2: Departure

A private transfer will take you back to Edinburgh 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.



Edinburgh Castle

## Tour Highlights

- ◆ Guided tour of Blair Athol Distillery
- ◆ Audio-guided tour at Balmoral Castle
- ◆ Guided tour of Glamis Castle
- ◆ Guided tour of St Andrews
- ◆ Ticket to St Andrews Highland Games
- ◆ Guided tour of Hopetoun House
- ◆ Firth of Forth Bridges boat tour
- ◆ Private guided tour of Stirling Castle
- ◆ Private guided tour of *Royal Yacht Britannia*
- ◆ Afternoon tea at the Fingal Hotel
- ◆ Private out-of-hours guided tour of the Palace of Holyroodhouse
- ◆ Audio-guided tour of Edinburgh Castle
- ◆ Hospitality package at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo





©NP/John Miller

Highgrove

“*Idyllic estates, country retreats and the most glorious gardens in England.*”

Victoria’s re-imagined childhood rooms and take in the majestic King’s State Apartments.

Afterward we visit Kew’s Royal Botanic Gardens. Discover the Arboretum, the peaceful Japanese garden and the indoor rainforest within the Palm House. Before leaving we also discover Kew Palace, a royal retreat in the heart of the gardens, complete with an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Great Pagoda and Georgian kitchens.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**August 4: Buckingham Palace, Lunch at the Goring Hotel, Tower of London & the Ceremony of the Keys**

The world-famous Buckingham Palace, our first stop today, has served as the official London residence of the United Kingdom’s sovereigns since 1837. We discover the stunning State Rooms; where members of the Royal Family entertain their guests on ceremonial, State and official occasions.

Our Royal Day Out ticket also includes entry to The Queen’s Gallery in the palace, showcasing historic paintings, rare furniture and unique photographs. We then continue to the Royal Mews, home to the Royal Family’s state vehicles and horse-drawn carriages.



©NP/John Miller

Blickling Hall

Next, we enjoy lunch at Belgravia’s iconic Goring Hotel, the only remaining luxury family-owned hotel in London.

To round off the day, we head to the Tower of London, the oldest building in London, for a special evening tour. A particular highlight is the Crown Jewels, the dazzling symbols of the British monarchy. Afterward, we are treated to the Ceremony of the Keys, a 700-year-old tradition that forms part of the locking-up process.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

**August 5: Eltham Palace & Hampton Court Palace**

We take a guided tour of Eltham Palace, once a medieval residence and playground for a young Henry VIII, who spent much of his childhood here in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was leased from The Crown and transformed into an Art Deco mansion in the 1930s.



Hampton Court Palace



# An Exclusive Tour of Royal Palaces and Regal Places

August 1 to 12, 2025 ♦ From \$9,300 per person

You are cordially invited on an exclusive tour of England’s palaces to follow in the footsteps of famous royals past and present. We discover a range of iconic landmarks; starting in London with Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London, before venturing further afield to the Althorp Estate, world-famous Sandringham in Norfolk and Highgrove in the Cotswolds, where the spectacular gardens of King Charles III and Queen Camilla await. As we weave our way around a collection of exquisite castles, idyllic estates, country retreats and the most glorious gardens in England, our series of private tours illuminate the history of these stately treasures.

## What’s Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 4 nights at the May Fair Hotel
- ♦ 3 nights at the Graduate Hotel
- ♦ 2 nights at the Ellenborough Park Hotel
- ♦ 1 night at the Castle Hotel
- ♦ Welcome drink & canapés
- ♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d’hôte* dinner on 6 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

**August 1:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

**August 2: Arrival**

Upon arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to the May Fair Hotel, our base for the first four nights of our tour. In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink and canapés, followed by dinner.

*Meals: Dinner*

**August 3: Kensington Palace & Kew Palace & Gardens**

A private guided tour of Kensington Palace awaits this morning. The Palace boasts the impressive Sunken Garden, a favorite of the late Diana, Princess of Wales. A statue honoring the People’s Princess was unveiled here on what would have been Diana’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. We wander through

Onward to Hampton Court Palace for a dive into the world of the Tudor court during our guided tour. We experience the private life (and public dramas) of Henry VIII, while we explore one of Europe’s most sophisticated palaces. We see Henry’s Great Hall, which still houses Anne Boleyn’s falcon badge, and the Tudor kitchens.

*Meals: Breakfast*

**August 6: Belvoir Castle**

Fans of *The Crown* will no doubt recognise Belvoir Castle, standing in for Windsor Castle during seasons 1-3. Not only do we tread the path of Hollywood stars but also past monarchs, with James I, Charles I, Queen Victoria and Elizabeth II all leaving their footprints on the estate. We find out more about Belvoir’s history during a guided tour followed by lunch.

Later, we check into the Graduate Hotel, where we stay for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**August 7: Holkham Hall & Sandringham**

Our day begins with a private out-of-hours guided tour of Holkham Hall, a Neo-Palladian masterpiece. The Marble Hall, with its splendid colonnade and 50ft domed ceiling, was inspired by the Temple of Fortuna Virilis and the Pantheon in Rome, while the state rooms boast collections of ancient statuary, original furniture, tapestries and works of art.

Next, we visit the Sandringham Estate, much loved by Elizabeth II. We learn all about its royal connections during our private out-of-hours guided tour, from the Transport Museum to the magnificent walled and water gardens. We also indulge in an afternoon tea here.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea*

**August 8: Blickling Hall & Blue Badge Guided Tour of Cambridge**

Set at the heart of a magnificent garden, our first stop is Blickling Hall, one of the country’s finest Jacobean houses and once home to the Boleyn family. It is also home to one of the country’s most significant libraries, featuring the National Trust’s largest book collection.

This afternoon we enjoy a Blue Badge guided tour, beginning in Cambridge, renowned for its architecture, ancient colleges and the pleasant river.

*Meals: Breakfast*

**August 9: Althorp Estate**

Leaving Cambridge, we head to Althorp Estate. Built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it has been home to 19 generations of the Spencer family and houses one of Europe’s finest private collections of furniture, paintings and ceramics. Althorp was also the childhood home of Diana, Princess of Wales and is her final resting place.

Later, we check into the delightful Ellenborough Park Hotel, where we stay for the next two nights. After dinner at the hotel, we enjoy a fascinating royal-themed talk by a guest speaker.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Althorp Estate

**August 10: 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. We also enjoy lunch here.

Our second guided tour of the day is at Berkeley Castle, built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The oldest building in the country to be inhabited by the same family who built it, Berkeley is an almost complete medieval survival that allows us to imagine how it might have been to live there during that time.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**August 11: The Savill Garden, Windsor Great Park & Windsor Castle**

After checking out of our hotel, we make our way to The Savill Garden in the heart of Windsor Great Park. Created in the 1930s, acres of interconnected areas include the Hidden Gardens, Spring Wood, the Summer Gardens and The Glades.

We enjoy some more fresh air during our royal heritage tour of Great Windsor Park, part of the Windsor Estate. Today we learn about the history of the estate, visiting various spots such as the Coronation Groves, the Deer Park, Royal Equestrian Statues, The Guards Polo Club, The Royal School and the world-famous Long Walk.

Our last stop is a private out-of-hours guided tour of Windsor Castle, the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world. Established in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by William the Conqueror, it has been remodeled by successive kings and queens and is used for ceremonial and State occasions.

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

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**August 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.*

## 📷 Tour Highlights

- ♦ Private guided tour of Kensington Palace
- ♦ Royal Day Out (Buckingham Palace State Rooms, The Queen’s Gallery & the Royal Mews)
- ♦ Lunch at the Goring Hotel
- ♦ Evening guided tour of the Tower of London with the Ceremony of the Keys
- ♦ Guided tour of Eltham Palace
- ♦ Guided tour of Hampton Court Palace
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch at Belvoir Castle
- ♦ Out-of-hours guided tour at Holkham Hall
- ♦ After-hours guided tour & afternoon tea at Sandringham
- ♦ Blue Badge guided tour of Cambridge
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch at Highgrove Gardens
- ♦ Guided tour of Berkeley Castle
- ♦ Guided royal heritage tour of Windsor Great Park
- ♦ Private out-of-hours guided tour of Windsor Castle
- ♦ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker



NEW



Hardwick Hall

# Yorkshire – a Gloriously Grand Tour of God’s Own Country

September 2 to 14, 2025 ♦ From \$7,300 per person

Often referred to ‘God’s Own Country’ and world renowned for its wild and evocative landscape, the county of Yorkshire showcases natural beauty on a grand scale. Poets, painters and storytellers throughout the ages have been inspired by the windswept moors, dramatic countryside and picturesque rural villages, and peppered throughout this rugged landscape are time capsules of a distant past that hold the memories and keepsakes of former generations. We combine this magnificent scenery with an exploration of the architectural grandeur, superb collections and fascinating heritage of some of the region’s finest houses and estates. Our tour is a window to bygone eras, shown to us by the proud stately homes and impressive manors, historic castles and ancient ruins.

## What’s Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 1 night at the Windsor Castle Hotel
- ♦ 2 nights at the Losehill Hotel & Spa
- ♦ 2 nights at Crathorne Hall Hotel
- ♦ 3 nights at the Grand Hotel
- ♦ 2 nights at the Devonshire Arms Hotel & Spa
- ♦ 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 where available

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

## Itinerary

**September 2:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

**September 3:** Arrival

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

*Meals: Dinner*

**September 4:** Hardwick Hall

Our visit today is to the National Trust’s Hardwick Hall. Ordered in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Bess of Hardwick, England’s richest woman after her Queen, Elizabeth I, Hardwick is a striking Elizabethan treasure. The lavish number of windows (at a time when glass was a luxury) inspired the neat phrase, ‘Hardwick Hall, more glass than wall’.

Admire the fine collection of centuries old needlework, furniture and portraits here, along with the beautiful garden, set against rolling hills.

Later we check into the Losehill House Hotel & Spa for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**September 5:** Chatsworth House & Bakewell

We start the day at Chatsworth House, where we’re treated to a guided tour. This magnificent estate is home to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and has witnessed sixteen generations of the powerful Cavendish family and boasts grandiose interiors, wonderful grounds and a superlative art collection. Chatsworth also appeared as Pemberley in the 2005 movie adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*.

Afterward we visit Bakewell, located on the banks of the River Wye in the heart of scenic Yorkshire. Known for its delicious and unique pudding, legend has it that the Bakewell Tart was created by mistake by a local cook in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, the delicious ‘jam tart that went wrong’ can be savored at various bakeries and cafés and even ordered online from anywhere in the world! We also include a tasting here today.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Renishaw Hall

**September 6:** Wentworth Woodhouse & Renishaw Hall

Built by the First Marquess of Rockingham between 1725 and 1750, Wentworth Woodhouse consists of two joined houses of totally different architectural styles; the Baroque-style west front and the east front in the later Palladian style.

After our visit, we journey south, past Sheffield, whose name derives from the River Sheaf which runs through it, and arrive at Renishaw Hall in the afternoon. We enjoy a guided tour of the historic estate and Italianate gardens, home to the Sitwell family for nearly 400 years.

Afterward we check in to the Crathorne Hall Hotel, where we stay for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**September 7:** Whitby Abbey & Scarborough

We head to the charming seaside town of Whitby to visit the 13<sup>th</sup>-century ruins of Whitby Abbey, perched high on a cliff above the town. The abbey’s soaring gothic splendor also provided Bram Stoker with a dramatic location for scenes in his 1897 classic horror novel, *Dracula*.

Next, we journey to Scarborough to take in the coastal views from Scarborough Castle. Built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the castle was transformed into



Chatsworth House



a mighty royal fortress by Henry II, King John and William III. Located in St Mary’s burial ground, we stop by the grave of Ann Brontë, famous author of *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**September 8:** Castle Howard & Fountains Abbey

We head to Castle Howard, home to the Howard family for over 300 years, where we enjoy a private guided tour and refreshments. Designed by Sir John Vanbrugh, Castle Howard has twice appeared as *Brideshead* in movie and television adaptations of Evelyn Waugh’s classic novel, as well as providing the backdrop for various scenes in the hit Netflix series, *Bridgerton*.

Our next stop of the day is the largest monastic ruin in Britain, Fountains Abbey, for a fascinating guided tour.

We then make our way to the Grand Hotel in York, our home for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast*



Burton Constable Hall

**September 9:** Burton Constable Hall & Burton Agnes Hall

We enjoy a guided tour of Burton Constable Hall, taking us through over thirty rooms of fine art and furniture; this grand house truly is a time capsule.

This afternoon we enjoy a change of pace with a visit to the charming village of Burton Agnes. Here we enjoy a guided tour of the impressive Elizabethan manor house, Burton Agnes Hall. Built in 1598 by Sir Henry Griffith and designed by Robert Smythson, the Master Mason to Queen Elizabeth, this architectural gem has been called a ‘splendid and glittering composition’ with ‘beautiful proportions.’

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**September 10:** York Minster, Fairfax House & Treasurer’s House

We spend the day in York, starting with a guided tour of York Minster, the largest Gothic cathedral in northern Europe and home to some of the most stunning stained glass windows that have led to the Minster being described as ‘the Sistine Chapel of England’.



Lyme Park

Next is a guided tour of Fairfax House, an impressive Georgian town house that has been restored to its former glory, providing a perfect time capsule of life in Georgian times with a richly-decorated interior and a fine collection of English 18<sup>th</sup>-century furniture.

We complete our day at Treasurer’s House in the heart of the city. The house has a 2,000-year-old history and was the first house given complete with its contents to the National Trust in 1930.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**September 11:** Harewood House

This morning we journey west for a guided tour of Harewood House. Built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Harewood House is one of the greatest Treasure Houses in England, with interiors designed by Robert Adam, furniture by Thomas Chippendale and an outstanding art collection ranging from Renaissance masterpieces to 20<sup>th</sup>-century art.

Later we check in to the Devonshire Arms Hotel & Spa, where we stay for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**September 12:** Bolton Castle & Bolton Abbey

Our first stop today is one of the country’s best-preserved medieval castles which perfectly demonstrates the balance between defence, comfort and what was known as ‘aesthetically considered orderliness.’ We are treated to a

guided tour of the castle and with over 600 years worth of history, the castle has a few fair stories to tell, including tales of Mary, Queen of Scot’s imprisonment here between 1568 and 1569.

A short distance from Bolton Castle, in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales, is Bolton Abbey. Here we enjoy a guided tour of the historical Abbey ruins and look out for the many woodland birds which populate the area, including Curlews and endangered Wader Safaris.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**September 13:** Lyme Park

We spend the day at Lyme Park, a large estate managed by the National Trust. Here, we experience the vastness of Yorkshire in all its wide, expansive glory. At the centre is the House, where we have our lunch.

We take a guided tour of the house, a treasure chest of precious objects and family keepsakes, and then 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 built in strategic places across the landscape.

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

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**September 14:** Departure

A private transfer will take you back to Heathrow Airport for your return flight home.

*Please note: the order of excursions is subject to change and guided tours are subject to restrictions.*

## Tour Highlights

- ♦ Guided tour of Chatsworth House
- ♦ Bakewell Tart tasting
- ♦ Guided tour of Castle Howard
- ♦ Guided tour of Fountains Abbey
- ♦ Guided tour of Burton Constable Hall
- ♦ Guided tour of Burton Agnes Hall
- ♦ Guided tour of York Minster
- ♦ Guided tour of Fairfax House
- ♦ Guided tour of Harewood House
- ♦ Guided tour of Bolton Castle
- ♦ Guided tour of Bolton Abbey
- ♦ Guided tour & lunch at Lyme Park





Mount Stewart House & Garden

# A Grand Tour of the Emerald Isle's Enchanting Gems

September 13 to 27, 2025 ◆ From \$7,300 per person

Join us on an unforgettable grand tour of magical Ireland, steeped in folklore and sprinkled with mystical castles, atmospheric houses and charming cities. We saunter through breathtaking landscapes and natural wonders, including the Wild Atlantic Way, Achill Island, the Cliffs of Moher, the Ring of Kerry and the Giant's Causeway, all while exploring a host of historic gems and delving into Irish cultural heritage. Fascinating experiences illuminate the fabric of this enchanting little isle; we get a taste of rural life at Glen Keen Farm, journey back in time aboard the Dunbrody Famine Ship, sample a perfect pint of Guinness atop a Dublin rooftop, kiss the iconic Blarney Stone of Eloquence, enjoy the craic at a traditional Celtic show and so much more – *sláinte!*

## What's Included

- ◆ Arrival/departure airport transfers from Dublin\*
- ◆ 3 nights at the Dylan Hotel
- ◆ 3 nights at the Fitzwilliam Hotel
- ◆ 3 nights at the Delphi Resort Hotel
- ◆ 2 nights at the Muckcross Park Hotel & Spa
- ◆ 1 night at the Baileys Hotel
- ◆ 1 night at the Faithlegg 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)
- ◆ 2 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.

## Itinerary

**September 13:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in Dublin

### September 14: Arrival

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

*Meals: Dinner*

### September 15: Guided City Tour, Titanic Belfast & Hillsborough Castle

This morning we cross the border into Northern Ireland and head to the vibrant capital of Belfast where we enjoy a guided city tour. Afterward, we visit Titanic Belfast, a fantastic interactive exhibition located on the site of the original shipyard where the famous liner was built.

We are then treated to a private evening guided tour of Hillsborough Castle, a beautiful late Georgian mansion created in the 1770s by Wills Hill, the first Marquis of Downshire. Later we check into the Fitzwilliam Hotel, our base for the

## An unforgettable grand tour of magical Ireland.

next three nights, and enjoy dinner at the Cloth Ear, nestled in the oldest quarter of Belfast.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 16: Castle Ward, Strangford Lough & Mount Stewart House & Garden

We head to Castle Ward, an eccentric 18<sup>th</sup>-century house that features a curious mixture of architectural styles, including classical Palladian and elaborate Gothic. Set in 820 picturesque acres of demesne with superb views over Strangford Lough, the estate also has a stable yard that houses a tea room and second-hand bookshop.

To get to our next stop, we take the picturesque Strangford Lough ferry before continuing to the magnificent Mount Stewart House and Garden, located on the shores of the lough. This recently restored and much-loved family home offers a wealth of treasures, which we discover on our intriguing guided tour.

This evening, we sample a delicious Irish stew at the traditional Crown Liquor Saloon in Belfast, one of North Ireland's best-known pubs.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 17: North Coast Scenic Drive, Dunluce Castle, Mussenden Temple & the Giant's Causeway

Today we head out on a scenic drive along the north coast, known as the Causeway Coastal Route. Dunluce Castle is our first stop, a ruined medieval fortress which sits atop a striking basalt outcrop.

Next is the Italian-inspired Mussenden Temple, built in 1785 as a summer library and precariously poised above the Atlantic. Make sure your camera is on hand, as it's now one of the most photographed spots in the country.

We meander along to the Giant's Causeway, so-named for the enormous basalt columns produced by volcanic eruptions some sixty million years ago, and now a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

*Meals: Breakfast*

### September 18: Castle Coole & Florence Court

After checking out of our hotel, we make our way to Castle Coole, one of Ireland's first Neo-classical houses where the grandeur of its sumptuous Regency interior is matched by the stunning wooded landscape park.

We continue to 18<sup>th</sup>-century Florence Court, an idyllic Irish mansion featuring exquisite Rococo decoration and fine furniture, surrounded by lush parkland, peaceful woodland, stunning gardens and an apple orchard.

Later, we check into the Delphi Hotel in Galway, where we stay for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Giant's Causeway

### September 19: Achill Island

Today we enjoy a scenic drive around the enchanting Achill Island, the largest of Ireland's offshore isles. The island's striking natural beauty and rugged landscapes has it all; spectacular mountains, remote lakes, soaring cliffs and secluded beaches.

The rest of the day is left free to relax at the hotel or to perhaps enjoy a treatment at the luxurious spa.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 20: Glen Keen Farm & Kylemore Abbey

This morning we get an authentic taste of rural life with a visit to Glen Keen Sheep Farm, one of Ireland's largest sheep farms located on the Wild Atlantic Way and with a spectacular backdrop of picture-perfect mountains. Here we enjoy a sheep herding and wood spinning demonstrations plus delicious homemade Irish scones.

We take a drive past the stunning Killary Fjord en-route to our next destination, Kylemore Abbey, where we can wander through the restored rooms of the beautiful Gothic Abbey, home to a monastic community of nuns since 1920.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 21: Quiet Man Museum, Dungaire Castle & Cliffs of Moher

We head to The Quiet Man Museum after checking out of our hotel this morning. Perfect for fans of the classic 1952 American film, the museum is an exact replica of White O'Morn cottage from the movie. We find out more during our introductory talk.

The next stop is Dungaire Castle, an atmospheric 16<sup>th</sup>-century town house nestled on the shores of Galway Bay. We continue to the magnificent Cliffs of Moher, stretching for eight miles along County Clare's Atlantic Coast and 214m at their highest.

Later, we check into the Muckcross Park Hotel & Spa in Killarney, our base for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 22: Ross Castle, Jaunting Car & the Ring of Kerry

Located on the shores of Lough Leane, Ross Castle is a 15<sup>th</sup>-century tower house built by Irish chieftain O'Donoghue Mór (who still slumbers under the gentle waters according to local legend!) Here we enjoy a jaunting car ride, which are horse-drawn carts operated by the local *jarvies*, as well as a tranquil boat trip on the lake.

We then take a scenic drive through the Ring of Kerry, journeying across an untouched landscape of peaceful lakes and a skyline of dozing mountainous peaks.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 23: Blarney Castle & Rock of Cashel

The medieval Blarney Castle awaits, built nearly 600 years ago by a powerful Irish magnate and now one of the country's most famous attractions.

The iconic sites continue with a trip to the Rock of Cashel, one of Ireland's top archaeological spots, set on a rocky outcrop. The prominent hill is dotted with a range of ancient fortifications, including a storied 12<sup>th</sup>-century round tower, 13<sup>th</sup>-century Gothic cathedral and 15<sup>th</sup>-century castle.

This afternoon we check into the Baileys Hotel in Cashel, where we stay overnight.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 24: Kennedy Homestead & Dunbrody Famine Ship

Our first stop is Dunganstown, the birthplace of John F. Kennedy's great-grandfather, Patrick Kennedy.

Next, Ireland's history is brought to life at the Dunbrody Famine Ship. We learn about the bravery of Irish people onboard an authentic replica of an 1840s emigrant boat, complete with costumed performers, insightful displays and details of their harrowing journey.

This evening we stay overnight at the Faithlegg Hotel in Waterford.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

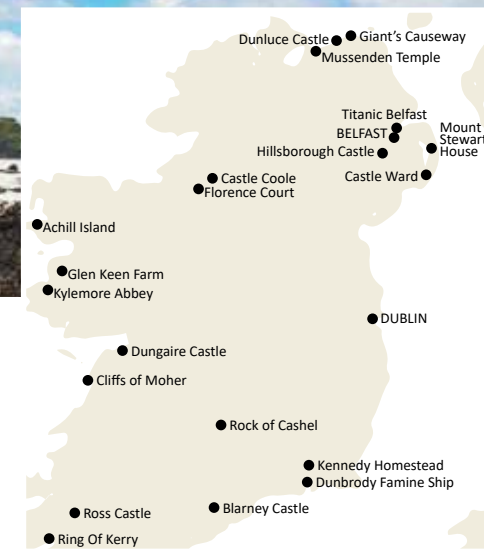
### September 25: Abbey Theatre & Guinness Storehouse

Today we take a backstage tour of the Abbey Theatre, also known as the National Theatre of Ireland, where Irish creativity is celebrated.

We continue our dive into Irish heritage with a visit to Guinness Storehouse, to uncover the history of the world-famous drink through a seven-storey interactive experience.

Later, we check back into the Dylan Hotel in Dublin, where we stay for the remaining two nights of our tour. There's time to freshen up before we are treated to dinner at Celtic Nights, a traditional Irish Dance show known for its great *craic!*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



### September 26: Trinity College, Book of Kells & The Old Library

We start the day with a guided tour of Trinity College, Ireland's oldest university, founded in 1592. The college's magnificent Old Library displays Ireland's greatest cultural treasure, the Book of Kells.

There is then some free time in Dublin, with its historic attractions, shopping streets, abundance of convivial pubs and fascinating landmarks, from the ancient Dublin Castle to the modern Spire of Dublin. This evening we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 27: Departure

A private transfer will take you back to Dublin 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 city tour of Belfast
- ◆ Private evening tour of Hillsborough Castle
- ◆ Boat trip on Strangford Lough
- ◆ Guided tour of Mount Stewart House & Garden
- ◆ Scenic drive along the North Coast
- ◆ Guided tour of Achill Island
- ◆ Sheep dog & wood spinning demonstrations plus Irish scones at Glen Keen Farm
- ◆ Introductory talk at the Quiet Man Museum
- ◆ Jaunting car (horse & carriage) ride & cruise at Ross Castle
- ◆ Backstage tour at the Abbey Theatre
- ◆ Ticket to Celtic Nights Dinner & Show
- ◆ Guided tour of Trinity College & The Old Library



NEW



Eastnor Castle

# 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.

## Itinerary

**September 28:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

**September 29: Arrival**

Upon arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to the Macdonald in Windsor, where we stay for the next two nights. Join the group for a welcome drink and canapés in the evening, followed by dinner.

*Meals: Dinner*

**September 30: Mapledurham & Windsor Castle**

We visit the 12<sup>th</sup>-century house and farming estate of Mapledurham, which boasts a tranquil watermill, the only one on the Thames that is still in use. The atmospheric Elizabethan manor was passed down by marriage to different owners throughout the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and our guided tour provides the perfect chance to discover the many artifacts on display.

Later, we explore Windsor Castle, the world's oldest and largest occupied castle, founded in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by the first Norman King of England, William the Conqueror and still used by the Royal Family today. We enjoy a private tour of the castle's decadent Ceremonial

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**

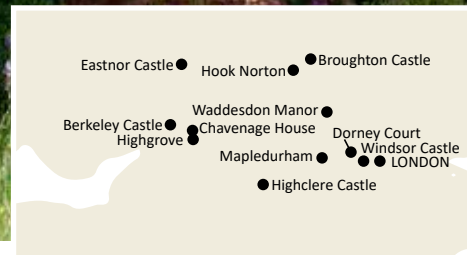
We make our way to Waddesdon Manor. Built by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in the 1870s, the French-inspired château was lavishly designed to entertain guests and showcase his enthusiastic interest in art. Outside is a fine example of late Victorian gardens, featuring a Rococo-style aviary, a Parterre 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup>-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 Bromesberrow 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



Windsor Castle



NEW



Hever Castle

## A Traditional Yuletide with Festive Feasts, Lights & Carols

December 7 to 15, 2025 ♦ From \$5,300 per person

Combining the captivating blend of Kent's natural beauty with the festive magic of Christmas, we embark on an enchanting yuletide journey through historic treasures, including wonderful castles and grand stately homes, all culminating with a thrilling evening singing along to carols at the Royal Albert Hall. As we journey from the capital to Kent, we celebrate the spirit of Christmas past and catch a glimpse of festivities of times gone by in a range of beautifully dressed properties, from Hever Castle and Winston Churchill's beloved Chartwell to Bateman's, where we warm up by the crackling fire amidst its Edwardian interiors and sparkling decorations.

### What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 2 nights at the Castle Windsor Hotel
- ♦ 5 nights at the Ashdown Park Hotel & Country Club
- ♦ Welcome drink & canapés
- ♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d'hôte* 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.



Bateman's

### Itinerary

**December 7:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

#### December 8: Arrival

Upon arrival at Heathrow Airport a private transfer will take you to the Windsor Castle Hotel for our overnight stay. In the evening we enjoy a welcome drink and canapés hosted by our tour manager, followed by dinner.

Meals: Dinner

#### December 9: Windsor Castle & Kew Gardens

We start our day with a visit to Windsor Castle, the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world and the final resting place of Elizabeth II. Established in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by William the Conqueror, it has been remodeled by successive kings and queens and is regularly used for ceremonial and state occasions. The magnificent State Apartments are furnished with some of the finest works of art to admire, and are beautifully decorated at this time of year. We find out more about the castle's history on our audio-guided tour.

Later, a festive treat awaits at the world-famous Kew Gardens, where the iconic architecture and

Catch a glimpse of festivities of times gone by in a range of beautifully dressed properties.

tree canopies are brought to life, enriched with Christmas color and sparkling with seasonal decorations. Discover an enchanting festive trail of lights that winds its way through the botanic gardens, before enjoying some tasty treats from one of the many enticing stalls.

From here, we travel to the Ashdown Park Hotel & Country Club, where we stay for the next five nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

#### December 10: Chartwell House & Ightham Mote

Today we first visit Chartwell, Sir Winston Churchill's beloved home from 1924 until the time of his death. The house is still home to many of the great statesman's personal and political mementos, including an amazing collection of gifts he received from other world leaders. Amongst these notable possessions are magical touches of the season, such as themed trees and gorgeous garlands transforming the historic house into a cosy Christmas spectacle.



Ightham Mote

We take our leave of the historic country house and head to our second National Trust property of the day, a medieval moated manor house, once described by historian David Starkey as 'the most beautiful and the most interesting of English country houses'. Called Ightham Mote, the name is derived from the Saxon name, Ehta, and 'mote' reflects the residence's location being surrounded by an actual fairytale moat. Built nearly 700 years ago, atmospheric Ightham has been home to medieval knights, courtiers to Henry VIII and Victorian high society. Inside we are treated to a Tudor Christmas scene with music, lights and seasonal scents, all inspired by the history of the property.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Leeds Castle



#### December 11: Canterbury Cathedral & Canterbury Cathedral Lodge

We spend the day in historical Canterbury, where we start with a private guided tour of Canterbury Cathedral, the oldest cathedral in England, dating back to Norman times. The cathedral is a wonder of awe-inspiring architecture, featuring a sweeping Gothic nave and cavernous crypt. In 1170, Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered in the cathedral and ever since, it has been a site of Christian pilgrimage. The cathedral contains one of England's largest collections of early medieval stained glass and it has recently been discovered that these windows may date as far back as the mid-1100s, making them some of the oldest examples in the world. With Christmas trees and a life-size nativity scene, the cathedral offers a magical atmosphere during the festive season.

Next, we visit Cathedral Lodge, a unique hotel set within the grounds of Canterbury Cathedral, where we enjoy a delicious afternoon tea and an insightful talk about the great Charles Dickens from a guest speaker. There is no better Christmastime setting than in the lodge, sitting by an open fire, listening to tales of *A Christmas Carol* and other Dickens classics.

Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea



Hever Castle

#### December 12: Penshurst Place & Hever Castle

We spend the morning at Penshurst Place, a medieval manor house surrounded by stunning formal walled gardens and ancient parkland. Previously used as a hunting lodge by Henry VIII, it has been owned by the Sidney family since 1552 and is still a much-loved family home. We enjoy a behind-the-scenes guided tour of the house which still displays many of its original medieval and Tudor features, a magnificent Great Hall and State Rooms, beautifully decorated for the Christmas season.

In the afternoon we head to Hever Castle, the childhood home of Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn, where we enjoy lunch. Dating back to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, this double-moated castle is home to various historic artifacts including Tudor portraits and furniture, as well as two prayer books inscribed by Anne Boleyn. The castle was lavishly restored by American millionaire, William Waldorf Astor, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Take the time to admire the castle's interior, beautifully decorated for the festive season with fairy lights, welcoming log fires and twinkling Christmas trees.

Later, in the evening, we enjoy an after-dinner talk by a guest speaker at the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Penshurst Place

#### December 13: Bodiam Castle & Bateman's

This morning we visit Bodiam Castle, one of Britain's most picturesque and romantic ancient fortifications. This archetypal 14<sup>th</sup>-century moated castle with a ruined interior gives us a glimpse of medieval splendour and boasts an original wooden portcullis, spiral staircases, tower rooms and battlements. As we take in the enchanting decorations, just imagine medieval revellers enjoying a cup of Wassail, a festive delight made of mulled ale, curdled cream, roasted apples, eggs and spices.

Afterward we head to Bateman's, a 17<sup>th</sup>-century house which so enchanted Rudyard Kipling when he discovered it, that he made it his home in 1902. With its stone-mullioned windows and Sussex oak beams, it's a lovely retreat that has been left virtually untouched since Kipling's tenure here. During our visit, the ground floor is decorated for a Kipling family Christmas with a roaring fire, a traditionally decorated tree and a table set for dinner, all adding to the warming, festive feel of an Edwardian home at Christmas.

We complete our day with a journey on the Kent & Sussex Steam Train, the perfect way to relax and unwind in a first-class carriage, watching the scenic Kent countryside pass by to the sounds of Christmas carols in the background.

Meals: Breakfast

#### December 14: Leeds Castle & Royal Albert Hall

After breakfast, we check out of the Ashdown Park Hotel and make our way to the magnificent Leeds Castle, a quintessential moated castle set in 500 acres of glorious parkland. Dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it has been a Norman stronghold, the royal residence of six medieval queens and was once home to Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. Latterly, it became an elegant early 20<sup>th</sup>-century retreat for the influential and the famous. Our visit gives us a chance to explore the castle's impressive state rooms which are lavishly decorated for Christmas.

Later, we enjoy a highlight of our tour, Christmas Carols at the Royal Albert Hall. This iconic venue hosts some of Britain's most famous concerts including BBC Proms and the Royal Variety Performance. A trip to the world-famous venue is always a magical experience, but there is something extra special about this annual Christmas concert, offering the perfect chance to sing along to much-loved carols and enjoy a truly unique shared festive experience.

After the performance, we drive back to the hotel via Oxford and Regent Street to see the famous London Christmas lights. At the Windsor Castle Hotel, we toast the festive season with a farewell dinner.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

#### December 15: 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 Canterbury Cathedral
- ♦ Afternoon tea at Cathedral Lodge
- ♦ Behind-the-scenes guided tour at Penshurst Place
- ♦ Festive lunch at Hever Castle
- ♦ Ticket to Christmas Carols at the Royal Albert Hall
- ♦ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker





Blenheim Palace

# Christmastime in the Charming Cotswolds & Chilterns

December 6 to 13, 2025 ♦ From \$5,000 per person

With sleepy villages dotted throughout rolling hills, honey-hued buildings embellished with fairy lights, roaring fires in cozy pubs and sparkling trees adorning picture-perfect towns, the Cotswolds is a magical place to spend the run-up to the holidays. Our memorable tour meanders through a stunning cluster of Cotswolds favorites to the southern tip of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the UNESCO World Heritage city of Bath, where the delightful Christmas Market and twinkling Georgian streets await. We also weave our way across the lovely landscapes of another AONB, the Chilterns, to explore the stunning Tudor mansion of Grey's Court and château-inspired Waddesdon Manor, both sumptuously dressed for a classic country house Christmas. We enjoy plenty more seasonal delights, from the enchanting illuminations trail at Kew Gardens to a Victorian-style carol singing performance in celebration of enduring yuletide traditions.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ♦ 1 night at the Queens Hotel Cheltenham – MGallery
- ♦ 3 nights at Hartwell House & Spa
- ♦ Welcome drink and canapés
- ♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 4 nights at the hotels (with after-dinner tea and coffee)
- ♦ 1 dinner at a local restaurant
- ♦ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ♦ Travel to and 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

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

### December 7: Arrival

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

*Meals: Dinner*

### December 8: Windsor Castle & Kew Gardens

We start our day with a visit to Windsor Castle, the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world and the final resting place of Elizabeth II. Established in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by William the Conqueror, it has been remodeled by successive kings and queens and is regularly used for ceremonial and state occasions. The magnificent State Apartments are furnished with some of the finest works of art for you to admire, beautifully

“Roaring fires in cozy pubs and sparkling trees adorning picture-perfect towns, the Cotswolds is a magical place to spend the run-up to the holidays.”

decorated at this time of year. We find out more of the castle's history on our audio-guided tour. Later, a festive treat awaits us at the world-famous Kew Gardens, where the iconic architecture and tree canopies are brought to life, enriched with Christmas color and sparkling with seasonal decorations. Discover an enchanting festive trail of lights that winds its way through the botanic gardens, before enjoying some tasty treats from one of the many enticing stalls.

This evening, we enjoy dinner at a local restaurant in Richmond.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### December 9: Bath Assembly Rooms & Bath Christmas Market

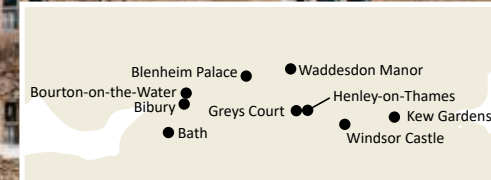
After checking out of the hotel we head to Bath, an elegant Regency city graced with wonderfully well-preserved Georgian architecture. The Roman Baths are a must-see attraction in Bath, offering a fascinating glimpse into the city's ancient past. This historic site consists of the remains of one of the greatest religious spas of the ancient world, where natural hot springs still flow with steaming water. We enjoy a guided tour of the magnificent Great Bath, the Sacred Spring, and the Roman Temple, all while learning about the daily life and rituals of the Romans through interactive exhibits and artifacts.



Bath Christmas Market



Stow-on-the-Wold



We then explore the enchanting Bath Christmas Market, bursting with traditional chalet-style stalls selling a variety of handmade items. Whether you'd like to start your Christmas shopping early, treat yourself to a tempting seasonal offering or simply browse the high-quality Christmas gifts, homewares, jewelry and more, there's plenty to get you into the festive spirit.

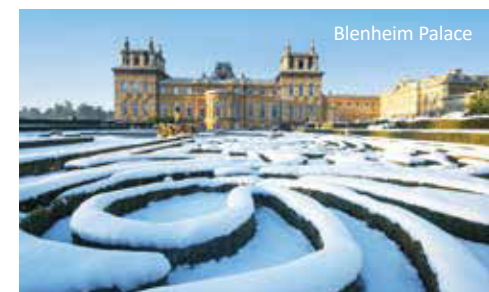
Later we check into the Queens Hotel Cheltenham – MGallery, where we stay overnight.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### December 10: Cotswolds Villages

Leaving Regency Cheltenham, we take a scenic drive through the Cotswolds, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where quintessentially English villages are peppered throughout rolling hills. We first stop in picturesque Lechlade to visit the unique Cotswold Christmas Shop, established in 1985 but open all year round for lovers of charming ornaments and decorations.

Our other stops include famous Bibury and Bourton-on-the-Water, where you can expect a lovely mix of honey-hued buildings, cozy traditional pubs, independent boutiques, tempting cafés and some of the area's most iconic landscapes.



Blenheim Palace

### December 11: Henley-on-Thames, Greys Court & Blenheim Palace

This morning we make a brief stop in Henley-on-Thames, one of the most picturesque towns in the country and set on the River Thames against the idyllic backdrop of the Chiltern Hills. It's a lovely spot for a riverside stroll, and there are also plenty of historic buildings to admire.

We continue to Greys Court, a filming location of the hugely popular *Downton Abbey* TV series and movies. Set in the rolling hills of the Chilterns, this picturesque Tudor mansion has a rich patchwork of styles, including 18<sup>th</sup>-century additions and 20<sup>th</sup>-century interiors. The house is still furnished as an intimate family home, having been occupied until 2003, and is beautifully decorated during the countdown to Christmas.

Our last visit today is Blenheim Palace, set in over 2,000 acres of beautiful parkland landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. As the seat of the Dukes of Marlborough, the palace is synonymous with the Churchill family and is the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. A permanent exhibition commemorates the life of this famous wartime Prime Minister, whilst the magnificent State Rooms are sumptuously dressed for Christmas and reveal a superb collection of tapestries, paintings, porcelain and furniture. In the courtyard outside, there are plenty of tempting goodies on offer at the enchanting Christmas Market.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### December 12: Waddesdon Manor & Festive Farewell

We travel to Waddesdon to enjoy a festive lunch at the Five Arrows.



©Stuart Bebb

Waddesdon Manor

The Five Arrows Hotel, a Grade II listed building, offers an elegant and intimate setting for a festive lunch. This charming Victorian hotel boasts a rich history and is renowned for its exceptional hospitality and gourmet cuisine. The dining room, adorned with beautiful period features and festive decorations, provides a warm and inviting atmosphere. We enjoy a sumptuous lunch featuring seasonal dishes prepared with the finest local ingredients, complemented by a selection of fine wines.

Afterward, we visit Waddesdon Manor. Built in the Neo-Renaissance style of a French château between 1874 and 1889 for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, Waddesdon Manor is an architectural masterpiece. Inside, the manor houses an impressive collection of art, including works by Gainsborough and Reynolds, as well as exquisite 18<sup>th</sup>-century French furniture and decorative arts. During the festive season, Waddesdon Manor is beautifully decorated with lights and ornaments, creating a magical atmosphere that captivates visitors. Special exhibitions and events are often held, adding to the enchanting experience.

In the evening we enjoy a festive farewell dinner with a drink to the backdrop of Christmas carol singers. This Victorian-style carol singing performance highlights some of the traditions and customs during this special time of year.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### December 13: 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

- ♦ Admission to Christmas at Kew
- ♦ Guided tour of the Roman Baths
- ♦ Scenic drive through the Cotswolds (Bibury, Bourton-on-the-Water and Stow-on-the-Wold)
- ♦ Afternoon tea at Hartwell House
- ♦ Admission to Christmas at Blenheim
- ♦ Festive lunch at the Five Arrows, Waddesdon Estate
- ♦ Private carol singing performance at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel



# Frequently Asked Questions

## How do I make a booking?

Call National Trust Tours at **888-484-8785** to register by phone (preferred method) **Monday - Friday from 9am to 5pm (EST)** or register online at **www.nationaltrusttours.com**.

**Please note:** featured prices are inclusive of the National Trust membership discount. If you are not a National Trust Member, there is a \$150 increase on the prices shown.

## When are payments due?

When you confirm your booking with us, a non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to secure your place. The final balance payment must be paid to us no later than 90 days prior to the tour departure date. Of course, full payment can be made at the time of booking if you prefer and for bookings made less than 8 weeks before the tour departs this will be a requirement.

## How can I pay?

We accept debit and credit cards for deposits and full payment.

## What paperwork will I receive?

When your booking is confirmed, we will email you a booking confirmation document along with a copy of our full Terms and Conditions and the reading list. Approximately 28 days prior to the tour, we will prepare and send you our Travel Pack with your finalized information and tour itinerary details.

## Do I need travel insurance?

Yes, this is essential; we can only accept a booking on the basis that you have taken out a full and comprehensive travel insurance policy to cover the full duration of your trip. We will ask you to confirm this to us. If you choose not to take out travel insurance, this is done so against our advice and at your own risk; we will ask you to sign a declination form indemnifying us from any responsibility or cost in the event of medical emergency or repatriation. Information on travel insurance will be sent to you upon tour confirmation. USI Travel Insurance Services offers a plan designed specifically for National Trust Tours travelers. For details, please contact National Trust Tours at 888-484-8785.

## Do I need a passport and visa?

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. At the time of printing, tourist visas are not required for US or Canadian citizens visiting the UK for under 90 days solely for the purpose of tourism. If you are not a US or Canadian citizen or you are combining your visit with business, it is your responsibility to check the requirements for visiting the UK, you can do this by visiting the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) website to determine whether you need a visa to enter the United Kingdom.

## Are there single traveler room supplements?

Yes, you can contact us to enquire about single supplement prices. Please book early as single rooms sell fast.

## Are room upgrades available?

All of the hotels on these tours have been hand-picked for their high quality of accommodation and service. However, in some instances room upgrades are available and we would be happy to assist you to arrange these should you be interested. For more information on the hotels please visit our website.

## Can you arrange extra hotel nights?

Yes, if you decide to arrive a few days before the start of the tour or leave a few days after the end of the tour, we are happy to arrange extra nights' accommodation. However, this service is only available at hotels that feature in the tour on which you are traveling and a \$35 administration fee is charged for this service.

## Are meals included?

All breakfasts are included on all tours. Certain lunches and dinners are also included and you should study the tour itinerary in this brochure to determine what meals are included on your chosen tour. Meals not mentioned are not included and all beverages are at your own expense throughout the tour.

## What do I do about any dietary requirements?

Please inform us at the time of booking, we will pass your information on to the hotel, property or restaurant who will do their best to accommodate your requirements.

## How many passengers will be in the Albion Journeys tour group?

Typically, between 10 and 30.

## What is the role of the Tour Director?

Our friendly Tour Director will meet you for a welcome dinner at the beginning of each tour. Their role is to facilitate the smooth organization of all operational aspects of the tour. If you have any queries or experience any issues during the tour, they are there to assist you.

## Will the excursions change?

Please note that we plan our tours far in advance and the order and availability of excursions may be subject to change. In the event of a property not being available to visit, we will substitute with a similar visit, and you will be informed of the full details.

## How much walking will there be on these tours?

As much or as little as you like. Any included guided tours will operate at a fairly relaxed pace, as with many historic houses and gardens, you may experience some uneven flooring and steps along the way. Of course, you will always have the option to explore any venue by yourself at your own pace. If you have any specific concerns, please contact us.

## What are the arrangements for luggage?

The standard luggage allowance is one item of hand luggage and one suitcase per person restricted to a maximum weight of 20kgs (44 pounds). We do provide portage at each of the hotels used on our tours where available, however, as with all things of a personal nature, it is your responsibility to ensure your suitcase is loaded onto the vehicles we use throughout the tour.

## What clothing should I bring?

Comfortable leisurewear is recommended for the daytime. In the evening many participants prefer to wear smarter dress for dining. While gentlemen may choose to wear a jacket in the restaurant in the evening, at most hotels this is not obligatory, we will of course inform you if any hotel does have a dress code. It is advisable to bring layered clothing and a light waterproof jacket. We recommend sturdy footwear when visiting gardens as the ground may be soft underfoot. Many historic properties request ladies do not wear high heels which may damage flooring.

## Can you arrange my flights to the UK?

Albion Journeys do not arrange your air travel for our tours; this is your responsibility and gives you the flexibility to decide on your own routing.

## What should I budget for tipping?

While it is not compulsory, it is customary to tip the coach driver and Tour Director as well as offering a small gratuity to the transfer drivers to acknowledge the services they have provided. As a guideline we suggest a rate of £5 (about \$6.50 as of this printing) per day for your coach and transfer drivers and £10 (about \$13 as of this printing) per day for your Tour Director. Gratuities for hotel staff and the tour guides you may meet at properties are at your discretion.

*All tours offered subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply. Errors and omissions excepted.*



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Castle Howard



Hever Castle



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# Terms & Conditions Extract

It is important that you read the following booking conditions extract and the full booking conditions shown on our website at [albionjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions](http://albionjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions). These online booking conditions form the basis of your contract with us. Please read them and the extract below carefully as they apply to all bookings you make with us unless otherwise specified.

**1. VACATION PAYMENT:** When you make a booking you must pay a deposit for every person named on the booking. Deposits per person and the balance due date (the period before the departure date on which your full balance normally becomes due) are:

Deposit	Balance due date
\$1,000 (USD)	90 days before departure

If you cannot make a payment by card at the time of booking, please speak to one of our Reservations staff to discuss other options. You can make payments against your balance anytime between making the booking and the balance due date. If the balance is not paid on time we reserve the right to treat your booking as canceled by you and apply cancellation charges as set out in clause 3 below. For bookings made after the balance due date, the full amount is due at the time of booking.

**2. OUR AGREEMENT:** A contract is formed when we issue to you the booking confirmation document and terms and conditions. It is important you read through these and any other documents you receive and advise us of any inaccuracy within 14 days of the document date. By accepting the booking is correct you agree to our terms and conditions.

We regret we cannot accept any liability if we are not notified of any inaccuracy in any document within 14 days of our sending it out. This contract and all matters arising out of it will be governed by English law and will be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

**3. VACATION CANCELLATION BY YOU:** 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:

91 days or more prior to departure	\$1,000 (USD)
90 days or less before departure	100% of the program cost is non-refundable

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

*Full terms and conditions will be provided with your booking confirmation. They are also available on request or via our website: [albionjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions](http://albionjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions).*

*Bookings are accepted on the basis that you have read and understood them.*

**ALBION**  
Journeys Inspired By Heritage





National Trust for Historic Preservation

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Call: **888-484-8785**

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