

NEW



Hever Castle

Yuletide Kent - Country Houses, Festive Feasts & Christmas Carols

December 5 to 13, 2026 ♦ From \$5,550 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 4 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 5: Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

December 6: 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 7: Windsor Castle & Polesden Lacey

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 11th 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.

We then visit one of the National Trust's most popular properties, Polesden Lacey, described as

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

ta 'delicious house' by the Queen Mother on her honeymoon there. During the magical festive period, the house is illuminated by twinkling trees, pretty decorations.

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

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

December 8: 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.



©National Trust Images/John Miller

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 9: 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 10: 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 13th 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 20th 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.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch



Penshurst Place

December 11: Bateman's, Bodiam Castle & the Kent & East Sussex Railway

This morning we visit Bateman's, a 17th-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.

Afterward we head to Bodiam Castle, one of Britain's most picturesque and romantic ancient fortifications. This archetypal 14th-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.

We complete our day with a festive journey on the Kent & East Sussex Railway from Bodiam to Tenterden, the perfect way to watch the scenic Kent countryside pass by to the sounds of Christmas carols in the background.

Meals: Breakfast

December 12 : 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 12th 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 20th-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.

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

- ♦ 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

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.



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. 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.

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

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