

# Discover Britain's Glorious Heritage

## 2026 Departures



**No Single Supplements!\***

*\*limited availability*



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# A Wonderful Opportunity to *Explore & Experience...*

## Dear National Trust Traveler,

I am pleased to share our 2026 tour program produced in partnership with Albion Journeys, featuring a host of inspiring itineraries to a range of captivating places and spaces. These exclusive tours allow you to step into different periods of British history and discover the vast cultural and natural heritage of Great Britain first-hand, including many of the impressive estates owned by the National Trust for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the National Trust for Scotland.

Come along and immerse yourself in the hidden wonders of these nations with behind-the-scenes tours, after-dinner talks and insights from various property owners themselves, letting you delve deeper into living examples of Britain's past. If these historic walls could talk, they would tell fascinating tales of power, conflict, family drama, royal visits and more, and we are excited to share it all with you.

There are several favourites returning, featuring two enchanting festive tours, the RHS Chelsea Flower Show on member's day, exclusive access to regal retreats such as Sandringham and a magical world of inspiration in England's south-west corner.

Indeed, those with a keen interest in literature won't be disappointed by our new offerings for 2026. On *Literary Legends of the Lake District*, discover remarkable collections with an expert curator at William Wordsworth's Dove Cottage ('the loveliest spot that man hath ever found'), see how Beatrix Potter's charming Hill Top inspired some of the most enchanting little characters and follow in Arthur Ransome's footsteps aboard the National Trust-owned *Steam Yacht Gondola* across Coniston Water, the delightful inspiration for *Swallows and Amazons*. Meanwhile fans of the world's greatest playwright can trace his absorbing life story on Shakespeare, *the Cotswolds & the Welsh Marches*, from his beginnings in Stratford-upon-Avon to London's riverside Globe Theater.

Elsewhere, we are pleased to introduce new tours to every corner of Britain, celebrating rich Welsh heritage, Scotland's romantic castles, art and architecture, the breathtaking vistas of mythical Southern Ireland plus Kent's beautiful gardens and fairytale fortresses. On the latter tour, look out for a special visit to the Royal Oak Foundation Conservation Studio – the first of its kind in the National Trust, allowing visitors the unique opportunity to watch conservators at work on objects from collections across the Trust.

Yet by joining any one of our fascinating trips, you will 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.

Whichever you choose, we look forward to seeing you next year.



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



Sissinghurst Castle Garden





A guide shares stories of the house at Castle Howard



Middlethorpe Hall & Spa



Hartwell House & Spa



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.

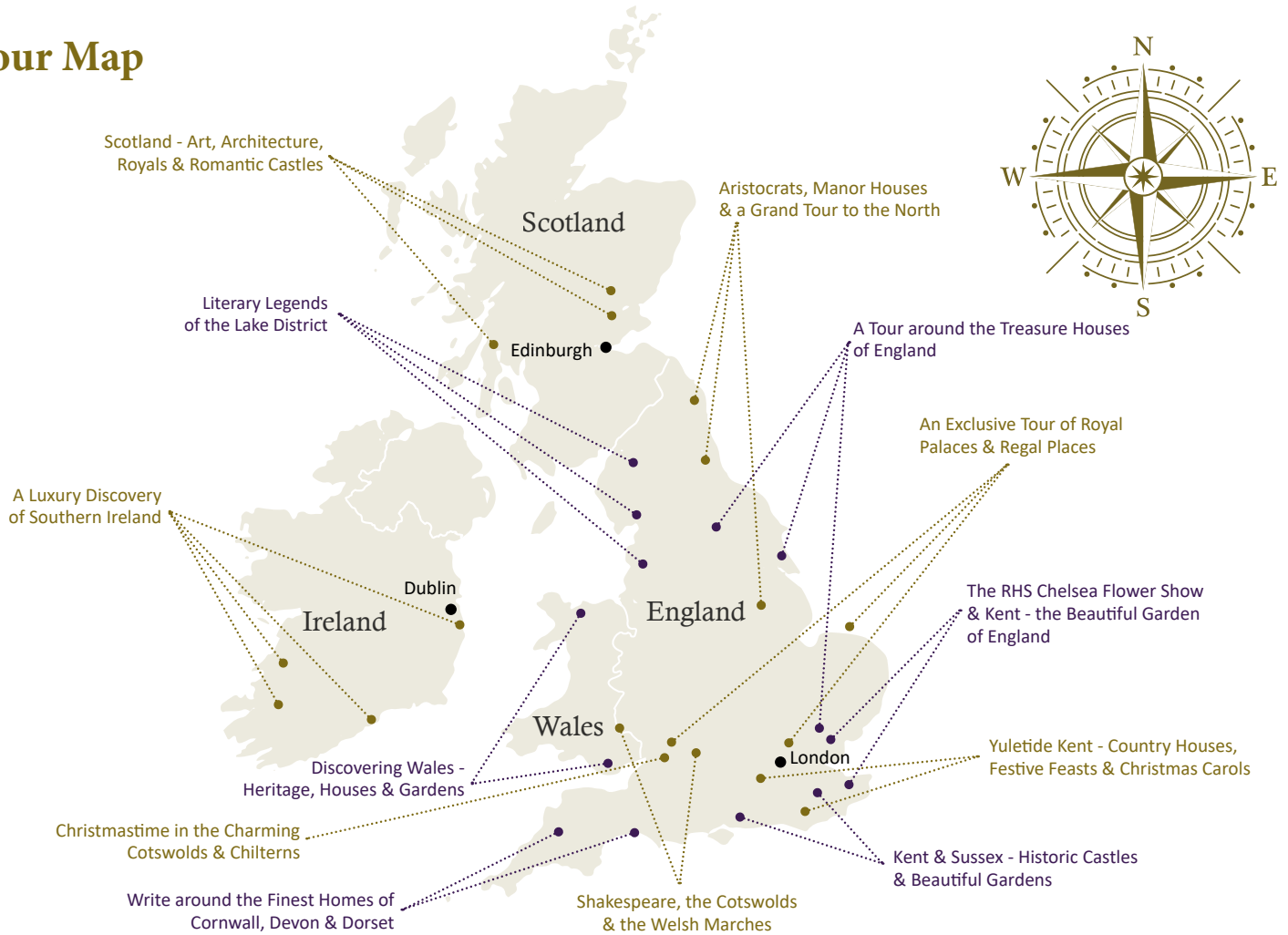
### Tailored reading lists

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, please visit [savingplaces.org/membership-benefits](https://www.savingplaces.org/membership-benefits) to sign up. Thank you for your support.



## 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.*





## 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.



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St Michael's Mount

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

April 18 to May 1, 2026  From \$8,700 per person

With its ancient myths, sparkling seas and beautiful landscapes, the counties of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset have long provided a source of literary creativity. We explore their finest historic gems while treading the path of British icons; we see the very spot where Jane Austen penned her classics, visit 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 at her beloved Greenway. From grand stately homes and castles to colourful gardens and wild moors, this tour uncovers a magical world of inspiration.

## What's Included

- ◆ Arrival/Departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ◆ 1 night at the Audleys Wood Hotel, Basingstoke
- ◆ 1 night at the Belmont Hotel, Sidmouth
- ◆ 2 nights at the Bovey Castle Hotel, Dartmoor National Park
- ◆ 5 nights at the Headland Hotel, Newquay
- ◆ 2 nights at the the Grand Hotel, Torquay
- ◆ 1 night at the Castle Hotel, Windsor
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Services of a tour director
- ◆ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**April 18:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

### April 19: 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 20: Jane Austen's House Museum & Chawton House

For our first visit, we head to Jane Austen's House Museum, the charming house where she completed the majority of her mature writing, including the timeless *Pride and Prejudice*. Admire Austen's first editions, jewellery, furniture and more here.

We continue to Chawton House, an Elizabethan manor house that once belonged to Jane Austen's brother, Edward Austen Knight. Renowned for its titles focusing on women's writing in English from 1600 to 1830, 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 21: A La Ronde & Exeter Cathedral

We step into another world at A La Ronde, a unique 16-sided house built at the request of two spinster cousins in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, crammed full of extraordinary curiosities from their grand European tour.

Afterward, we continue to the magnificent Exeter Cathedral, dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The cathedral boasts the world's longest uninterrupted medieval vaulted ceiling and houses an extensive collection of historical documents, beautiful stained-glass windows and intricate carvings.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### April 22: Dartmoor drive, Buckland Abbey Garden & Tavistock

This morning, we take a drive through spectacular Dartmoor with photo stops along the way, before heading to Buckland Abbey. Here we discover over eight centuries of history and hear stories of how Buckland went from a peaceful Cistercian Abbey through dissolution and restoration to the fascinating house it is today.

Later, we head to the market town of Tavistock for some free time before enjoying an afternoon tea at the Bedford Hotel.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

### April 23: Jamaica Inn & Lanhydrock

We visit the famous Jamaica Inn, located high up on the wildly beautiful Bodmin Moor. Full of legend, this historic coaching house was made famous by Daphne du Maurier's tale of smugglers also houses a fascinating museum. Coffee and cake is included during our visit.

We continue to Lanhydrock, one of the most fascinating and complete late 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses in England. Here we discover two sides of Victorian life, admire the beautiful gardens and enjoy a light lunch.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Lanhydrock



### April 24: Godolphin & St Michael's Mount

We take a guided tour of Godolphin, which played a pivotal role in Cornwall's mining history and its transformation of life in Britain. Features here include a medieval garden, Piggery tea room, Grade II listed farm buildings and a Grade I listed house.

A delightful afternoon tea awaits at St Michael's Mount, one of the most iconic sights of Cornwall and connected to the mainland by a cobbled causeway. 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 25: Immersive Horticulture Experience at the Eden Project

From the steamy rainforests to the fragrant Mediterranean, we enjoy a real feast for the senses at Eden Project, where we are joined by a dedicated Eden horticulturist. Our Immersive Horticulture Experience includes a tour, hands-on gardening, workshop with biocontrol tips, lunch and complimentary Eden gifts.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### April 26: Port Isaac, Pencarrow House & Gardens & Padstow

Any travelers who have seen the British TV series *Doc Martin* or the *Fisherman's Friends* movies will no doubt recognise charming Port Isaac. We visit various filming locations in the fishing village, which boasts winding streets lined with whitewashed cottages and a quaint harbor with clear waters (when the tide is in!).

A warm Cornish welcome then awaits at Pencarrow House, nestled on the edge of Bodmin Moor and the family home of the Molesworth-St Aubyns for almost 500 years. Our guided tour uncovers the secrets of this magnificent house.

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

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### April 27: St Ives, Barbara Hepworth Museum & Sculpture Garden & Trerice House

Today, we see why artists have long been drawn to Cornwall. We begin with the holiday town of St Ives, where one highlight is the Cornwall branch of the Tate Gallery, showcasing stunning pieces from artists who have attracted international attention.

We then visit the nearby Barbara Hepworth Museum & Sculpture Garden, the former home and studio of the eminent British sculptor. It contains the largest collection of her works and a stunning garden with sculptures placed by the artist herself decades ago.

Next is one of Cornwall's hidden gems, Trerice House, for a guided tour and a light lunch. This romantic Elizabethan manor house remains little changed, featuring the Tudor Great Hall, exquisite plasterwork ceilings, a vast collection of longcase clocks and unique paintings.

Later, we enjoy a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.

*Meals: Breakfast, light lunch*

### April 28: Charlestown & Saltram House

We enjoy some time in Charlestown, an unspoiled example of a late Georgian working port and a popular filming location with credits including the BBC's hugely successful *Poldark* TV series.

Later, we head to Saltram, an elegant Georgian mansion set in a rolling landscape park. The house is a rare survival of the period; particularly because it comes complete with its original, impressively lavish contents, including stunning paintings, ceramics and textiles.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### April 29: Greenway & Burgh Island

After a journey on the foot ferry we arrive at Greenway, the much-loved holiday home of Agatha Christie and her family. As we wander through the atmospheric rooms with its unique collections, imagine Christie 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 sea tractor, where we enjoy a champagne afternoon

tea. Previous guests include Josephine Baker and Edward VIII, and you can just visualise Agatha Christie writing two novels here with the glitz of the hotel appealing as a literary setting.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

### April 30: Hardy's Cottage & Max Gate

Leaving Cornwall, we travel to Thomas Hardy's birthplace, Hardy's Cottage. Little altered since the Hardy family left, this delightful cob and thatch cottage is surrounded by a typical cottage garden of honeysuckle, climbing roses and japonica, and is where Hardy wrote *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

We continue to the Victorian Max Gate, where *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was written and where Hardy lived until his death in 1928, followed by Dorchester, Hardy's birthplace. Here we explore the visitor center with its manuscripts, personal belongings and interactive displays.

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

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### May 1: Departure

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

*Meals: Breakfast*

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



### Tour Highlights

- ◆ Guided tour & lunch at Chawton House
- ◆ Coffee & cake at Jamaica Inn
- ◆ Sparkling Devon Cream Tea at The Bedford in Tavistock
- ◆ Guided tour & light lunch at Trerice House
- ◆ Guided tour of Pencarrow House
- ◆ Guided tour of Hardy's Cottage
- ◆ Afternoon tea at the Burgh Island Hotel
- ◆ Immersive Horticulture Experience at the Eden Project
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker



**NEW**



Muncaster Castle

# Literary Legends of the Lake District

May 2 to 13 & August 9 to 20, 2026 ♦ From \$7,300 per person

On this inspiring tour, we explore the breathtaking UNESCO-listed Lake District while discovering how it influenced the life and work of famous writers. Discover remarkable collections with an expert curator at William Wordsworth's Dove Cottage, see Beatrix Potter's charming Hill Top, follow in Arthur Ransome's footsteps across Coniston Water, the delightful inspiration for his popular *Swallows and Amazons* adventure novel, and discover a range of other impressive estates, ancient castles and grand houses, where centuries of stories are woven into the fabric of these special places. Crossing over into glorious Yorkshire, a fascinating visit to the Brontë Parsonage Museum completes this imagination-igniting journey into the world of literary legends.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/Departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 3 nights at the Cottons Hotel & Spa, Knutsford
- ♦ 1 night at the Losehill House Hotel, Hope Valley
- ♦ 1 night at the Coniston Hotel, Country Estate & Spa, near Skipton
- ♦ 5 nights at the Macdonald Old England Hotel & Spa, Lake Windermere
- ♦ Welcome drink & canapés
- ♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 7 nights at the hotels\*\* (with after-dinner tea & coffee)
- ♦ Services of a tour director
- ♦ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**Day one:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

### Day two: Arrival

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

*Meals: Dinner*

### Day three: Lyme Park & Tatton Park

For our first visit we experience the beauty of Lyme Park, nestled on the edge of the stunning Peak District. We take a private guided tour of the property, a treasure chest of precious objects and family keepsakes, followed by the formal gardens, which demonstrate a masterful appreciation of geometry.

We continue to one of Britain's most well-known estates, Tatton Park, designed by Samuel Wyatt. Inside, explore the collections of silver, china,

glass and fine furniture made by Gillows, while outside, we take a *History of the Gardens* tour with a Senior Craftsmen Gardener.

This evening, we stay at the Losehill House Hotel in Hope Valley.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### Day four: Chatsworth House

Today is spent at Chatsworth House, where we're treated to a house and gardens tour followed by a light lunch. This magnificent estate is home to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and has witnessed 16 generations of the powerful Cavendish family, featuring grandiose interiors, a superlative art collection and an 1,000-acre park, chiefly designed by Capability Brown.

This evening, we stay at the Coniston Hotel, Country Estate & Spa near Skipton.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day five: Brontë Parsonage Museum & Emsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway

We head to the Brontë Parsonage Museum, which contains the largest Brontë collection in the world. It's fascinating to wander round the historic rooms, looking at the very spot where classics were created, including *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.

Next, we take a trip on the preserved Emsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway. Most trains are hauled by restored steam engines, the oldest one dating back to 1908. Imagine you are travelling in the Golden Age of steam while admiring the Yorkshire Dales landscapes and enjoying a delicious afternoon tea!

Later, we check into the Macdonald Old England Hotel & Spa on the shores of Lake Windermere, where we stay for the next five nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

### Day six: Blackwell House

Enjoy a morning at leisure before taking a guided tour of the Grade I listed Blackwell, one of Britain's finest Arts and Crafts houses with breathtaking views of Windermere and Coniston Fells. Designed by MH Baillie Scott, Blackwell retains many of its original decorative features, including spectacular plasterwork, stained glass and more.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Lyme Park

©NTP/Nadia Mackenzie





## Day seven: Hutton in the Forest & Dalemain Mansion

Today begins with a guided tour of Hutton in the Forest, a spectacular historic house on the northern edge of the Lake District with a charming Walled Garden. Occupied by the same family since 1605, each generation of has made their mark, resulting in a remarkable journey through time.

Afterward, we head to Dalemain Mansion, with its a helter-skelter of secret passages, spiral staircases, priest's hiding hole, Chippendale furniture and priceless oil portraits. Our guided tour includes access to unseen areas of the house, continuing outside with the Tudor knot garden and splendid rose walk. We conclude with a cream tea.

*Meals: Breakfast, Cream Tea*

## Day eight: The World of Beatrix Potter, Lake Windermere Cruise & Holker Hall

A delightful day awaits, beginning with the enchanting World of Beatrix Potter. Here, an endearing short film presentation, exhibition and garden bring Beatrix Potter's celebrated characters to life, complete with the Peter Rabbit Garden and all the sights and sounds of the glorious countryside.

Next is a leisurely cruise on Lake Windermere, England's largest lake. Journeying from pretty Bowness-on-Windermere to Ambleside, admire the breathtaking scenery of towering mountains, secluded bays and wooded islands.

Lastly, we visit Holker Hall, the family home of Lord and Lady Cavendish. On our private guided tour, we discover fine displays of antique furniture and art, including portraits of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza, and even visit the bedroom where Queen Mary stayed in 1937.

*Meals: Breakfast*

## Day nine: Steam Yacht Gondola, Brantwood & Muncaster Castle

We discover another beautiful lake today with a memorable trip aboard the *Steam Yacht Gondola* across Coniston Water, a Victorian steam-powered yacht which has been completely rebuilt by the National Trust. With its backdrop of spectacular scenery, Coniston Water was the inspiration for Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* enchanting childhood adventure book.

Our second stop of the day is Brantwood House, former home of John Ruskin. Uncover many fine paintings, beautiful furniture and Ruskin's personal treasures, offering a fascinating insight into the world of the famous Victorian writer, artist and social reformer.

We continue on to Muncaster Castle for a private after-hours tour. Home to the Pennington family since 1208, the castle has a colorful history and an extensive collection of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-century furniture, paintings and family portraits across rooms such as the renowned library and atmospheric Tapestry Room. Our time here is rounded off by a special dinner in the castle.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Dove Cottage

## Day ten: Hill Top (Beatrix Potter's House), Dove Cottage & the Wordsworth Museum

After checking out of our hotel, we head to Hill Top, Beatrix Potter's beloved farmhouse, purchased with the earnings from *Peter Rabbit* in 1905. With a lovely cottage garden, this charming house was the inspiration for many of her children's books and is a veritable time capsule of her life.

We then visit another home of a British literary icon, William Wordsworth, little changed since Wordsworth's tenure. We enjoy a special *Stories of Wordsworth* tour with an expert curator, where we have the opportunity to see items from the collection which are not ordinarily viewed by the public, including first edition books, Dorothy's Grasmere journal and letters written by the family.

Later, we check back into the Cottons Hotel & Spa in Knutsford, where we stay for the remainder of our tour.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## Day eleven: Speke Hall

Our last visit is to Speke Hall, a lovely timber-framed Tudor National Trust property, built by devout Catholics living under Elizabeth I's Protestant rule who incorporated a series of protective hideaways. We find out more about its fascinating history during our introductory talk before exploring the peaceful grounds, with highlights including the restored Secret Garden and the Moat Garden.

This evening, we enjoy a farewell dinner together at the hotel.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## Day twelve: 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 Lyme Park House & Gardens
- ◆ *History of the Gardens* tour with a Senior Craftsmen Gardener at Tatton Park
- ◆ Private guided house & garden tour & light lunch at Chatsworth House
- ◆ Heritage journey on the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway with afternoon tea
- ◆ Guided house tour at Blackwell House
- ◆ Guided tour at Hutton in the Forest
- ◆ Guided behind-the-scenes tour & cream tea at Dalemain Mansion
- ◆ Cruise on Lake Windermere
- ◆ Private guided tour of Holker Hall
- ◆ *Steam Yacht Gondola* cruise on Coniston Water
- ◆ Private after-hours tour & dinner at Muncaster Castle
- ◆ *Stories of Wordsworth* tour at Dove Cottage & the Wordsworth Museum
- ◆ Introductory talk at Speke Hall



**NEW**

©National Trust Images/David Sellman



Chartwell

# Kent & Sussex - Historic Castles & Beautiful Gardens

May 2 to 12, 2026 ♦ From \$6,300 per person

Immerse yourself in the beauty of the Garden of England's remarkable fortresses, manor houses and gardens. We explore West Dean Garden's variety of diverse plant collections and Sissinghurst Castle Garden, blooming with meticulously curated plantings. The aura of these gardens evokes a sense of peace, while vibrant colors and fragrant blooms provide a wonderful sensory experience. We combine magnificent greenery with exploration of architectural grandeur and storied homes – from a private guided tour and special overnight stay at Haver Castle to Bateman's Jacobean House, where rooms remain much as Rudyard Kipling and his wife left them.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/Departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 1 night at the Castle Hotel, Windsor
- ♦ 3 nights at the Spa Hotel, Tunbridge Wells
- ♦ 1 night at Haver Castle, Edenbridge
- ♦ 3 nights at the Harbour Hotel, Chichester
- ♦ 1 night at the MacDonald Hotel, Windsor
- ♦ 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
- ♦ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

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

**May 3: Arrival**

Upon arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to your hotel for the night, the Castle Hotel in Windsor. In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink and canapés, followed by dinner.

*Meals: Dinner*

**May 4: Ightham Mote, Knole House & the Royal Oak Foundation Conservation Studio**

This morning we visit 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, this National Trust Property's name is derived from the Saxon name, Ehta. We discover more on our guided tour here, before heading to our second National Trust property of the day, Knole House. One of Britain's most important and complete

historic homes, the property is now cared for by the National Trust, and here we can discover more about its colorful past. Knole House was home to the Sackville family for 400 years, including novelist Vita Sackville-West, who used the house as inspiration for her novel, *The Edwardians*.

Next, we explore the Royal Oak Foundation Conservation Studio – the first of its kind in the National Trust, allowing visitors the unique opportunity to watch conservators at work, working on objects from collections across the Trust. Find out what there is to see and do at this distinctive property, plus a bit more about the centuries-old building itself.

Later, we check into the Spa Hotel, where we stay for the next three nights of our tour.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**May 5: Sissinghurst Castle Garden & Great Dixter House**

We head out early morning 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', including a fragrant Herb Garden and Rose Garden. Here we are treated to an exclusive out-of-hours tour and then stop for a light lunch at the café.

This afternoon, we visit Great Dixter, home of gardener and gardening writer Christopher Lloyd. A Garden Curator here treats us to a guided tour of the famous gardens and we also take a peek around the house. Just one highlight is the Great Hall, one of the largest surviving timber-framed halls in the country.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

**May 6: Bateman's & Pashley Manor**

We visit 17<sup>th</sup>-century Bateman's, which so enchanted *Jungle Book* author 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 romantic retreat that has been left virtually untouched since Kipling's tenure here. The tranquil gardens include an orchard, a formal garden and a colorful wildflower meadow, through which a river flows.

Our afternoon is spent at Pashley Manor, where we enjoy a guided tour as well as tea and cake. Set against the beautiful backdrop of Pashley Manor House, home to the Sellick family, admire the elegant rose and historic walled gardens and explore the productive kitchen garden here.

*Meals: Breakfast*



Sissinghurst Castle Garden





## May 7: Chartwell & Hever Castle

Today, we first visit Chartwell, Sir Winston Churchill's beloved home from 1924 until his death. It still houses many of the great statesmen's personal and political mementoes. One of Churchill's passions was painting; we see more of his work on our *Churchill the Artist* tour here.

We then visit the magnificent Hever Castle, the childhood home of Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn. 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. We enjoy a private tour of the castle's magnificent interior and of its grand exterior, comprising 125 acres of award-winning gardens, including a formal Italian Garden, the Tudor Garden and the English Rose Garden. There are also secret grottoes to discover along with the famous water maze.

We stay overnight at Hever Castle and enjoy our evening meal here.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



## May 8: Nymans & Arundel Castle

This morning we explore Nymans. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Messel family bought the Nymans Estate and created one of the country's great gardens, with experimental designs and new plants from around the world. Partially destroyed by fire in 1947, the romantic ruins of the fairytale Gothic mansion remain.

In the afternoon, 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 restored and remodelled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many original features remain, such as the Norman keep and gatehouse, while the preserved interiors are home to priceless works of art.

This evening, we check into the Harbour Hotel, our base for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## May 9: Chichester

The cathedral city of Chichester is renowned for its stunning 200-year-old market that offers a glimpse into the rich history and vibrant culture of the area. This charming city is home to some of the country's oldest buildings and streets, creating a picturesque setting. Our behind-the-scenes walking tour takes us on a discovery of the cathedral church of the Holy Trinity, an architectural masterpiece that stands as a testament to the city's historical significance. We enjoy time at leisure here this afternoon.

*Meals: Breakfast*

## May 10: West Dean Garden & Tinwood Vineyard

This morning, we visit West Dean Garden, a beautifully rejuvenated estate with diverse plant collections and a variety of themed gardens, including a Walled Garden, a Sunken Garden and a Pergola. We enjoy a leisurely walk along the paths and explore the Victorian glasshouses, while our guided tour by one of the gardeners here reveals more about the history behind these exquisite displays.

Later, we head to Tinwood Vineyard, located at the foot of the South Downs National Park. We tour the vineyard and learn about the winemaking process from grape to glass, along with a tasting session where we can sample a selection of their finest sparkling wines, accompanied by a platter of local cheeses.

*Meals: Breakfast*



## May 11: Jane Austen House Museum & The Savill Garden

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

We enjoy an afternoon tea at The Savill Garden, Britain's finest ornamental garden, in the heart of Windsor Great Park. Tranquil strolls are the order of the day as we explore the oasis of designed gardens and woodland. Created in the 1930s, acres upon acres of interconnected areas include the Hidden Gardens, Spring Wood, the Summer Gardens, the New Zealand Garden, Summer Wood and The Glades. The Rose Garden is an extra special addition, opened by Elizabeth II in 2010.

Later, we enjoy a farewell dinner at the hotel.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

## May 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

- ◆ Guided tour at Ightham Mote
- ◆ Exclusive out-of-hours tour at Sissinghurst Castle Garden
- ◆ Guided garden tour at Great Dixter with a Garden Curator
- ◆ Guided tour, tea/coffee & cake at Pashley Manor
- ◆ *Churchill the Artist* tour at Chartwell
- ◆ Private guided tour of Hever Castle & Gardens
- ◆ Private guided tour at Arundel Castle
- ◆ Walking tour of Chichester (includes behind-the-scenes tour of Chichester Cathedral)
- ◆ Guided tour at West Dean Garden with a Gardener
- ◆ Tinwood Vineyard tour & wine tasting
- ◆ Afternoon tea at The Savill Garden





RHS Chelsea Flower Show

# The RHS Chelsea Flower Show & Kent - the Beautiful Garden of England

May 13 to 21, 2026 ♦ From \$5,550 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 or Macdonald Hotel, Windsor
- ♦ 3 nights at the Ashdown Park Hotel & Country Club, Wych Cross
- ♦ 3 nights at the Hyatt Regency London - The Churchill, London
- ♦ 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
- ♦ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**May 13:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

### May 14: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, either the Castle Hotel or Macdonald Hotel in Windsor. In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink and canapés, followed by dinner.

*Meals: Dinner*

### May 15: RHS Garden Wisley & Great Comp Garden

We head to RHS Garden Wisley, the Royal Horticultural Society's flagship garden, gifted to the Society in 1903. Extending over 240 peaceful acres, from beautiful rose and demonstration gardens to tranquil tracts of woodland, 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,

*Admire stunning displays, vibrant colors and innovative designs.*

tropical and temperate climates. Afterward, we enjoy lunch in the Terrace Restaurant.

Next, a private guided tour awaits 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*

### May 16: Great Dixter House and Gardens & Hole Park

We start the day at Great Dixter, home of gardener and gardening 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. Just one highlight is the Great Hall, one of the largest surviving timber-framed halls in the country.

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. 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, bursting with fragrance and set against the far-reaching views over the hills and woodland.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Sissinghurst Castle Garden





## May 17: 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', including a fragrant Herb Garden and Rose Garden, and are a delight to explore.



RHS Chelsea Flower Show

We then make our way to Lullingstone Castle, one of the oldest family estates in England and even recorded in the Domesday Book. The present manor house was built in 1497 and boasts beautiful grounds, including a stunning 15-acre lake and the World Garden, home to thousands of rare plants collected from around the world by Tom Hart Dyke, the current heir, planted in their respective continents of origin. Incredibly, the ideas and plans 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. There are plenty of unique species, including the world's most dangerous plant, the hottest chilli and the rarest gum tree, and we find out more during our captivating tour with a Blue Badge guide.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## May 18: Eltham Palace & Kew Gardens

Our first stop today is the unique Eltham Palace. 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. This mesh of architectural movements served as a playground for a young Henry VIII who spent much of his childhood here in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. 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 the series of garden rooms, bursting with delightful fragrances.

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.

Later, we check into the Hyatt Regency London – The Churchill, where we stay for the last three nights of our tour.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## May 19: Secret Garden Tour of London

We join our enchanting Secret Garden Tour of London, taking in a host of hidden gems and picturesque green spaces tucked away in the bustling metropolis. 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*



Kew Gardens



## May 20: 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, containing a wide-ranging mix of vibrant displays, 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 21: 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 at the Terrace Restaurant, RHS Garden Wisley
- ◆ Private guided tour of Great Comp Garden
- ◆ Guided tour of Great Dixter with the Head Gardener\*
- ◆ Garden tour & refreshments at Hole Park
- ◆ Blue Badge-guided tour of The World Garden at Lullingstone Castle
- ◆ Guided tour of Eltham Palace with the Head Gardener\*
- ◆ Guided tour of Kew Gardens
- ◆ Secret Garden tour of London
- ◆ Entry to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show on Member's Day with afternoon tea

*\*Subject to availability*





Belton House

# A Tour around the Treasure Houses of England

May 30 to June 11, 2026  From \$8,500 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. On this captivating tour, we explore several of these impressive places, 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, Basingstoke
- ◆ 2 nights at Haycock Manor Hotel, Cambridgeshire
- ◆ 2 nights at Eastwood Hall, Nottinghamshire
- ◆ 3 nights at Middlethorpe Hall & Spa, near York
- ◆ 2 nights at Hartwell House & Spa, near Aylesbury
- ◆ 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)\*\*
- ◆ Services of a tour director
- ◆ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**May 30:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

**May 31: Arrival**

On 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, followed by dinner.

*Meals: Dinner*

**June 1: Highclere Castle**

After breakfast, we visit the magnificent Highclere Castle, famously known as the setting of *Downton Abbey*, set in stunning parkland designed by Capability Brown and home to the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon. We explore the opulent interiors featured in the series, including the grand staircase, library and drawing room, along with the Egyptian Exhibition in the cellars, telling the story of the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon's role in Tutankhamun's tomb discovery.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

“Explore unique charm, stunning architecture and beautiful gardens.”

**June 2: Lampport Hall & Kelmarsh Hall & Gardens**

Our first visit of the day is Lampport Hall and Gardens, where we are treated to a guided tour of this stunning 17<sup>th</sup>-century country house, home to the Isham family for over four centuries. Admire the exquisite collection of art and antiques plus the carefully curated gardens here.

After lunch at Lampport Hall, we make our way to Georgian Kelmarsh Hall. Inside, we find elegant rooms filled with historical treasures that provide insight into the lives of the former residents.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**June 3: Burghley House & Stamford**

This morning, we visit Burghley House, widely regarded as England's greatest Elizabethan stately home. On arrival, we enjoy a welcome talk and learn about its fascinating history. Home to William Cecil, Lord High Treasurer to Queen Elizabeth I, the stunning State Rooms are filled with one of the country's finest collections of paintings, ceramics and decorative arts, many of which remain in their original 17<sup>th</sup>-century positions.

Following our visit, we continue to nearby Stamford, a picturesque town renowned for its honey-stone Georgian architecture.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**June 4: Belton House & Belvoir Castle**

We check out of our hotel and begin the day at the elegant Belton House, one of England's finest surviving examples of Restoration architecture. With its perfect symmetry, classical proportions and warm, lived-in charm, Belton offers a fascinating glimpse into aristocratic life in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Our second visit of the day is to the dramatic Belvoir Castle. Originally founded in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it has been home to the Dukes of Rutland for over a thousand years and was largely rebuilt in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A guided tour reveals lavish interiors, fine art and historic treasures, followed by an indulgent afternoon tea.



Highclere Castle



Chatsworth House



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

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

## June 5: Chatsworth House & Hardwick Hall

Today we travel to Derbyshire, where we enjoy a visit to Chatsworth House before a light lunch or afternoon tea. This magnificent treasure is home to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and has witnessed 16 generations of the powerful Cavendish family, who acquired the estate in 1549. Expect grandiose interiors and a superlative art collection, along with a 1,000-acre park chiefly designed by Capability Brown.

In the afternoon, we visit Hardwick Hall, a splendid example of Elizabethan architecture. Built in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century for Bess of Hardwick, one of the wealthiest women of her time, the hall is renowned for its unique design and impressive collection of tapestries and furnishings.

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



Castle Howard

## June 6: Harewood House & Harrogate

We check out of our hotel and begin the day with a guided tour of Harewood House. Built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century for Edwin Lascelles to designs by architect John Carr, it is one of the greatest Treasure Houses in England with interiors designed by Robert Adam, superb Thomas Chippendale furniture, an outstanding art collection ranging from Renaissance masterpieces to 20<sup>th</sup>-century art plus landscapes by Capability Brown.

After lunch at Harewood, we spend the afternoon in the elegant spa town of Harrogate, where highlights include the Royal Pump Room, the Grade II-listed Royal Hall and traditional tea rooms.

Later, we check into Middlethorpe Hall and Spa and in the evening, we enjoy a themed after-dinner talk from a guest speaker.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## June 7: Treasurer's House, York & Castle Howard

Our first stop of the day is at Treasurer's House in the heart of York. 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, thanks to wealthy industrialist Frank Green.

After our visit, there is time to explore York. The city is steeped in history and there is plenty of evidence of this fascinating past left to admire, including the Roman city walls and the surviving medieval streets known as the Shambles. A visit to the magnificent York Minster is a must too.

In the afternoon, we enjoy a private tour of Castle Howard, home to the Howard family for over 300 years and filming location for *Brideshead Revisited* and *Bridgerton*. This magnificent 18<sup>th</sup>-century residence, surmounted with its iconic gilded dome, offers world-renowned collections and stunning architecture, all set within 1,000 acres of breathtaking scenery.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## June 8: Nostell Priory & York

This morning, we visit Nostell Priory, a grand 18<sup>th</sup>-century Palladian house and home to the Winn family for over 300 years. The interiors also showcase one of the country's finest collections of Chippendale furniture along with fine art and intricate decorative details, offering a fascinating glimpse into Georgian life. In the evening, we return to York for a historical pub walking tour.

*Meals: Breakfast*

## June 9: Blenheim Palace

Leaving York, we travel south through scenic countryside to the UNESCO-listed Blenheim Palace, designed on an awe-inspiring scale by Vanbrugh and set in beautiful parkland landscaped by Capability Brown. The birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill, a permanent exhibition commemorates the life of this famous wartime Prime Minister here, whilst the magnificent State Rooms reveal a superb collection of tapestries, paintings, porcelain and furniture.



Afterward, we check into Hartwell House & Spa, one of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels, our base for the last two nights. Tonight we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## June 10: Waddesdon Manor

For our last full day, we travel to the French-inspired château of Waddesdon Manor, built by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in the 1870s to showcase his enthusiastic interest in art. We enjoy a guided house tour, lunch and time in the fine late Victorian gardens, which features a Rococo-style aviary, a Parterre, sculptures and more. This evening, we enjoy a farewell dinner together at the hotel.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## June 11: 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 & lunch at Lamport Hall
- ◆ Welcome talk at 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 guided tour of Castle Howard
- ◆ Historical pub walking tour in York
- ◆ Guided tour & lunch at Waddesdon Manor
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker





NEW

# Discovering Wales - Heritage, Houses & Gardens

Bodnant Garden

June 13 to 26, 2026  From \$8,500 per person

Wales offers a treasure trove of historic wonders, where imposing castles, glorious gardens and stately homes scatter sweeping landscapes, woodlands and valleys. From hidden gems to world-renowned horticultural excellence, we explore estates such as Penrhyn Castle, Bodnant Garden, Aberglasney Gardens and Tredegar House, uncovering fascinating stories along the way. Highlights include a luxurious stay at the National Trust's Bodysgallen Hall Hotel & Spa, a Welsh food tasting tour in Cardiff, a cocktail masterclass at Hensol Castle, a wildlife cruise to Puffin Island and a gold-service journey on the Welsh Highland Railway. From South to North, this is an exciting tour through Welsh heritage.

## What's Included

- ◆ Arrival/Departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ◆ 2 nights at the Castle Hotel, Windsor (or similar)
- ◆ 2 nights at the Parkgate Hotel, Cardiff
- ◆ 2 nights at the Vale Resort, Pontyclun
- ◆ 1 night at the Angel Hotel, Abergavenny
- ◆ 4 nights at the Bodysgallen Hall Hotel & Spa, near Llandudno
- ◆ 1 night at the Diglis House Hotel, Worcester
- ◆ 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
- ◆ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**June 13:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

**June 14:** Arrival

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

*Meals: Dinner*

**June 15:** Avebury Manor Gardens & Caerleon Roman Baths

Our first stop is the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Avebury Manor, known for its recreated rooms in styles ranging from Tudor to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Outside, themed gardens include the Kitchen Garden with organic produce and the Monk's Garden with herbaceous perennials. Other highlights include the Lavender Walk and the tranquil Orchard – a registered Silent Space.

Next, we visit Caerleon Roman Baths, featuring an open-air swimming pool brought to life with film projection. The site also includes Europe's only surviving Roman legionary barracks and Britain's most complete Roman amphitheatre.

Later, we check into the Parkgate Hotel in Cardiff, where we stay for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast*

**June 16:** Tredegar House & Cardiff Food Tasting Tour

This morning we head to Tredegar House, a late 17<sup>th</sup>-century restoration house surrounded by 90 acres of gardens and parkland. For more than 500 years it was home to one of the greatest Welsh families, the Morgans, later Lords Tredegar and their intriguing narrative is told throughout the house.

We then head back to Cardiff, with its fascinating history that stretches through the centuries, for a delicious Welsh food tasting tour.

*Meals: Breakfast, Food Tasting*

**June 17:** Cardiff Castle & Hensol Castle Gin Experience

After checking out, we visit Cardiff Castle for a Connoisseurs tour. Though over 2,000 years old, the Gothic Victorian fantasy castle was crafted for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess of Bute, one of the world's richest men, featuring opulent interiors with murals, stained glass, marble, gilding and intricate wood carvings. Discover craft gin at the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Hensol Castle. Enjoy a signature cocktail on arrival, learn from mixologists, make your own cocktails, sample gin, tour the distillery and end the day with a gin and tonic at the bar. Cheers!

Afterward, we make our way to the Vale Resort in Pontyclun, our base for two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**June 18:** National Botanic Garden of Wales & Aberglasney Gardens

We begin our day with the National Botanic Garden of Wales, created over 150 years. This spectacular re-interpretation of the historical garden blends the careful restoration of the double-walled garden with Norman Foster's Great Greenhouse, the largest single span glasshouse in the world, where mere panes of glass separate the familiar green hills of Wales from a panoramic sweep of warm, Mediterranean scenery.

By contrast, Aberglasney is a superb 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>-century garden, which was discovered after 50 years of neglect. Now restored, a visit here is a delight for the senses with over 20 different garden styles, including a unique Elizabethan Cloister Garden, the only surviving example in the UK today. We learn more during our guided tour with a Head Gardener.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**June 19:** Brecon Mountain Railway & Afternoon Tea

Leaving Pontyclun, we head to Pant, a small village near the Welsh border, where we board our vintage train and take a trip on the Brecon Mountain Railway, which follows part of the original route of the 1859-built Brecon & Merthyr Railway. Sit back and relax as we meander through beautiful Brecon scenery and along the full length of the sparkling Taf Fechan Reservoir before climbing to Torpantau, the summit of the original line.

Later, we enjoy afternoon tea at the Angel Hotel in Abergavenny, where we also stay overnight.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea*





## June 20: Llandudno & Bodnant Garden

We enjoy leisure time in Llandudno, the 'Queen of the Welsh Resorts,' known for its golden beach, Great and Little Ormes headlands and Victorian charm. Next, we explore Bodnant Garden in the Snowdonian foothills. Created 150 years ago by Henry Pochin, it features plants collected by renowned explorers and houses National Collections and Champion Trees across its lawns, terraces and woodland.

Afterward, we check into the National Trust's Bodysgallen Hall Hotel & Spa, where we're treated to a memorable four-night stay.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## June 21: Plas Newydd, Puffin Island & Penrhyn Castle

Today, we cross the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Menai Bridge to the Isle of Anglesey to visit Plas Newydd, a country house tied to the 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess of Anglesey and artist Rex Whistler. The garden hosts extraordinary plants, including tender exotics and Mediterranean varieties. Next, we take a wildlife cruise around Puffin Island, spotting seals, birds, puffins and possibly porpoises or dolphins.

Our final stop is Penrhyn Castle, a neo-Norman 19<sup>th</sup>-century masterpiece with Snowdonia views, opulent interiors, a painting collection, Victorian kitchens and a railway museum. We explore its history of sugar and slate fortunes, social unrest and Britain's longest industrial dispute.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Powis Castle

## June 22: Bodrhyddan Hall & Conwy Castle

We start the day at Bodrhyddan Hall, a Grade I listed house owned by Lord Langford's family for 500 years, surrounded by formal gardens and woodland. Redesigned in 1875 by architect William Eden Nesfield, it remains privately owned. On our guided tour, we explore its historical collection, including fine portraits and a 3,000-year-old Egyptian mummy. The visit concludes with drinks and light bites.

Next, we visit Conwy Castle in the medieval walled town of Conwy. Built by Edward I in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is one of Britain's finest medieval fortifications, featuring curtain walls, round towers and fortified gateways.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## June 23: Snowdonia Star (Welsh Highland Railway)

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. Stunning coastlines, ancient woodlands, sparkling rivers and historic castles create an enchanting and memorable journey aboard the *Snowdonia Star*. We are also treated to the gold service, the perfect chance to experience Orient Express-style splendour.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## June 24: Brynkinalt Estate & Powis Castle

Our journey back to England begins at the Brynkinalt Estate, a Grade II listed hall from 1612 surrounded by vast grounds. Home to the Trevor family, their lineage traces back to Severa, daughter of Emperor Maximus and Gwrtheyrn Gwrtheneu, the 82nd King of Britain. A guided tour reveals their fascinating history, followed by tea, coffee and Welsh cakes.

Next, we visit Powis Castle, hailed as 'the most magnificent castle in Wales.' Built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it boasts inspiring treasures and stunning 25-acre gardens, terraces and an orangery linked to architect William Winde.

This evening, we stay overnight at the Diglis Hotel in Worcester.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



## June 25: Broughton Castle & Nuffield Place

Broughton Castle, built in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, is a moated manor house in scenic parkland. Home to Martin Fiennes, it has been in the family since 1377, with portraits from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries adorning its gallery. Historically, it hosted political meetings against Charles I and royal stays, including James I and King Charles. A guided tour reveals its fascinating history.

Next, we visit Nuffield Place, the preserved home of Lord Nuffield, founder of Morris Motor Company. Despite their wealth, Lord and Lady Nuffield embraced simplicity, reflected in the house's early 20<sup>th</sup>-century style.

Later, we check back into the Castle Hotel (or similar), where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## June 26: 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

- ◆ Head Gardener tour at Avebury Manor Gardens
- ◆ Food tasting tour in Cardiff
- ◆ Connoisseurs tour at Cardiff Castle
- ◆ Gin experience at Hensol Castle
- ◆ Head Gardener tour at Aberglasney
- ◆ Heritage journeys on the Brecon Mountain Railway & Welsh Highland Railway (*Snowdonia Star*)
- ◆ Afternoon tea at the Angel Hotel
- ◆ Puffin Island Wildlife Cruise
- ◆ Drinks reception, light bites & guided tour at Bodrhyddan Hall
- ◆ Guided tour, tea/coffee & Welsh cakes at Brynkinalt Estate
- ◆ Guided tour at Broughton Castle





Highgrove Gardens

# Aristocrats, Manor Houses & a Grand Tour to the North

July 11 to 21, 2026 ♦ From \$6,950 per person

Our unforgettable tour delves into the architectural grandeur and superb collections of some of Britain's finest estates and atmospheric time capsules, some still family homes to this day. From the world-famous Highclere Castle, the 'real *Downton Abbey*', and the exquisite Chatsworth House to Winston Churchill's birthplace of Blenheim Palace and beyond, we discover several aristocratic treasures and their society stories, complemented by stays in two of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels. We juxtapose these fine manor houses with the dramatic landscapes of the north of England, providing us with the perfect opportunity to explore Britain's rich heritage and diverse countryside.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/Departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 1 night at Hartwell House & Spa, near Aylesbury
- ♦ 1 night at Eastwood Hall, near Nottingham
- ♦ 2 nights at Jesmond Dene House, Newcastle upon Tyne
- ♦ 2 nights at Middlethorpe Hall & Spa, York
- ♦ 2 nights at The Barnsdale, Rutland
- ♦ 1 night at the Macdonald Hotel, Windsor
- ♦ Welcome drink & canapés
- ♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 8 nights at the hotels\*\* (with after-dinner tea & coffee)
- ♦ 1 dinner at a local restaurant
- ♦ Services of a tour director
- ♦ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**July 11:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

**July 12:** Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, Hartwell House & Spa, one of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels. In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

*Meals: Dinner*

**July 13:** Blenheim Palace

We head to Blenheim Palace, designed on an awe-inspiring scale by Vanbrugh and set in 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 reveal a superb collection of tapestries, paintings, porcelain and furniture. We learn more on our guided tour, followed by lunch.

From here we travel to Eastwood Hall, where we stay overnight.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**July 14:** Castle Howard

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*. This magnificent 18<sup>th</sup>-century residence, surmounted with its iconic gilded dome, offers world-renowned collections and stunning architecture, all set within 1,000 acres of breathtaking scenery.

Later, we check into Jesmond Dene House, our base for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**July 15:** Alnwick Castle & Cragside

Still home to the Duke of Northumberland and his family, Alnwick Castle is the second largest inhabited castle in England and has featured in *Downton Abbey* and *Harry Potter*. Inside the medieval walls are lavish State Rooms filled with an eclectic array of furniture, ceramics and art collected by the Percy family over hundreds of years, which we discover on our guided State Rooms tour. There's also time to take a peek at the stunning gardens, bursting with different colors and scents.

We then enjoy a scenic drive to Cragside, built into the rock high above the clear waters of Debdon Burn. Once the home of Victorian inventor Lord Armstrong, this imposing house boasts fascinating gadgets from the era. It was also the world's first house to be lit by hydro-electricity and in 2014, a fully-working Archimedes Screw was installed, once again producing enough energy to light the property.

After dinner at the hotel this evening, we enjoy a fascinating talk by our guest speaker, Tom Keating.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**July 16:** Treasurer's House & Fairfax House

During our orientation tour of York today, we take in two of its historic gems, beginning with 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. This is thanks to Frank Green, a wealthy industrialist who not only restored this magnificent house but also used it to stage his remarkable collection of antique furniture, art and textiles.



©National Trust Images/John Millar

Cragside





Next, we head to Fairfax House, a stunning 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.

There is then some time at leisure in York before we enjoy an early three-course dinner at The Ivy. Later, we check in to Middlethorpe Hall, another of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels and our base for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### July 17: Fountains Abbey & Harrogate

This morning we visit the largest monastic ruin in Britain, Fountains Abbey, for a fascinating guided tour. Nestling in the Skell Valley, the ruin is surrounded by some 800 acres of gorgeous countryside, including the Georgian Studley Royal Water Garden with its wonderful views, cascades, follies and statues, plus a medieval deer park.

Our next stop is the elegant Victorian spa town of Harrogate, located in the heart of scenic Yorkshire. Notable sights include the Royal Pump Room and the Grade II listed Royal Hall, and don't miss the historic Betty's Tea Rooms too!

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Chatsworth House

### July 18: Chatsworth House

We start the day at Chatsworth House with a house tour followed by lunch. This magnificent estate is home to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and has witnessed 16 generations of the powerful Cavendish family, boasting 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*.

## Discover aristocratic treasures and their society stories.

Later, we check into the The Barnsdale, Rutland, where we spend the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### July 19: Burghley House & Peckover House & Garden

Today begins with 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. After a welcome talk, we have time to explore the breathtaking State Rooms and the collection of paintings, ceramics and works of art.

We head to the Fenland town of Wisbech to visit Peckover House, home of the Peckovers for 150 years, a family of Quaker bankers, collectors and philanthropists. Facets from all aspects of their fascinating life can be seen throughout this elegant Georgian merchant's town house, with many interesting artifacts and objects. Outside is a wonderful Victorian walled garden, created by the Peckovers and known for its varieties of roses and beautiful orangery.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### July 20: 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. There is plenty to explore, including the Drawing and Dining Rooms plus the Egyptian Exhibition in the cellars of the castle, celebrating the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon's discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922. Take the chance to walk in the footsteps of your favourite *Downton Abbey* characters and look closer at the rooms and opulent interiors that formed the backdrop to this hugely popular series, such as the grand staircase and library. Outside, you can explore the gardens and 1,000 acres of spectacular parkland, designed for the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Carnarvon by Capability Brown.



From here, we travel to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### July 21: 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 Home Counties to the north of England and back, some days will involve fairly long journeys.

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



Highclere Castle

### Tour Highlights

- ◆ Guided tour & lunch at Blenheim Palace
- ◆ Private guided tour & refreshments at Castle Howard
- ◆ Guided State Rooms tour at Alnwick Castle
- ◆ Orientation tour of York
- ◆ Guided tour at Fountains Abbey
- ◆ Guided tour & lunch at Chatsworth House
- ◆ Welcome talk at Burghley House
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker





# An Exclusive Tour of Royal Palaces & Regal Places

August 1 to 12, 2026 ♦ From \$9,650 per person

You are cordially invited on an exclusive tour of England's magnificent palaces, following in the footsteps of royals past and present. Our journey begins in London with Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London's ancient Ceremony of the Keys, before continuing to the Althorp Estate, childhood home and resting place of Diana, Princess of Wales. We also visit world-famous Sandringham in Norfolk and Highgrove in the Cotswolds, where the gardens of King Charles III and Queen Camilla await. Along the way, private tours illuminate the history of these exquisite castles, idyllic estates, country retreats and glorious gardens.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/Departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 4 nights at the May Fair Hotel, London
- ♦ 3 nights at the Graduate Hotel, Cambridge
- ♦ 2 nights at the Ellenborough Park Hotel, Cheltenham
- ♦ 1 night at the Castle Hotel or similar, Windsor
- ♦ 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
- ♦ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

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

### August 2: Arrival

On 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

Start your morning with a private guided tour of Kensington Palace, home to TRH The Prince and Princess of Wales. Highlights include the stunning Sunken Garden, loved by Diana, Princess of Wales and featuring her commemorative statue. We explore Victoria's childhood rooms and the grand King's State Apartments.

Later, we visit Kew's Royal Botanic Gardens, renowned for plant research and home to 50,000 plants. Discover the Arboretum, Japanese garden and Palm House rainforest. We end our day at Kew Palace, a charming royal retreat with an

*“An exclusive tour of England's magnificent palaces and exquisite castles.”*

18<sup>th</sup>-century Great Pagoda and Georgian kitchens, once home to Queen Charlotte and George III.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### August 4: The Savill Garden & Windsor Castle

We visit The Savill Garden, Britain's finest ornamental garden in Windsor Great Park. Created in the 1930s, it features interconnected areas like the Hidden Gardens, Spring Wood, Summer Gardens, New Zealand Garden, Summer Wood and The Glades. The Rose Garden, opened by Elizabeth II in 2010, adds a fragrant touch. A guided tour and lunch in the Garden Kitchen complete the experience.

Next, we enjoy a private evening tour of Windsor Castle, the world's oldest and largest inhabited castle and Elizabeth II's final resting place. Founded in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by William the Conqueror, it has been transformed by successive monarchs and hosts ceremonial and State events.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

### August 5: Buckingham Palace, Afternoon Tea at the Ritz, the Tower of London & the Ceremony of the Keys

No London trip is complete without visiting Buckingham Palace, the official residence of UK sovereigns since 1837 and backdrop to the Changing of the Guard. Explore the stunning State Rooms, where the Royal Family hosts ceremonial and official events.

Our Royal Day Out ticket includes The King's Gallery, featuring historic paintings, rare furniture and unique photographs. After the private chapel was destroyed in 1940, Elizabeth II and The Duke of Edinburgh suggested its redevelopment into a gallery. We also visit the Royal Mews, home to state vehicles and horse-drawn carriages. Next, enjoy afternoon tea at the Ritz Hotel, a symbol of elegance in Mayfair.

To end the day, we tour the Tower of London, the city's oldest building, offering a glimpse into centuries of history. Once a royal residence and prison, it housed figures like Elizabeth I before her coronation and associates of Henry VIII. Highlights include the Crown Jewels, still used in ceremonies, and the Ceremony of the Keys, a 700-year-old tradition marking the Tower's nightly locking-up.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea*

### August 6: Cambridge

We travel from London to the historic city of Cambridge, where we check into the Graduate Hotel, our base for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast*





### August 7: Holkham Hall & Sandringham

Our day starts with a private tour of Holkham Hall, a Neo-Palladian masterpiece set in parkland. Founded by jurist Edward Coke, it is home to the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Leicester. Highlights include the Marble Hall with its 50ft domed ceiling inspired by Roman architecture and state rooms featuring ancient statuary, original furniture, tapestries and art by Rubens, Van Dyck and Gainsborough.

Next, we visit Sandringham Estate, a favorite of Elizabeth II and a royal residence since the 1860s. On our guided tour, we explore its royal history, view the car collection in the Transport Museum and enjoy the walled and water gardens. After afternoon tea, we visit St Mary Magdalene Church, where the Royal Family attends services during their stay.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea*

### August 8: Blue Badge Guided Tour of Norwich & Blickling Hall

This morning we enjoy a Blue Badge guided tour, beginning at the stunning Norwich Cathedral, a magnificent structure that befitted Norwich's 12<sup>th</sup>-century status as England's second city and one of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture in Europe. The tour continues with Norwich itself, one of the most complete medieval cities in the country and home to some beautiful period buildings.

Set at the heart of a magnificent garden and historic park, our next stop is Blickling Hall, one of the country's finest Jacobean houses and once home to the Boleyn family. In decorative terms, it's a wonderful house to explore because of its plasterwork, superb 18<sup>th</sup>-century Long Gallery and impressive Great Hall. It is also home to one of the country's most significant libraries; with over 12,500 volumes, it's the National Trust's largest book collection.

*Meals: Breakfast*



Windsor Castle

### August 9: Althorp Estate

Leaving Cambridge, we head to Althorp Estate, set in 550 acres of attractive parkland. Built at the beginning of 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 her final resting place. In addition to exploring the beautiful interiors, we have time to wander around the magnificent park, remodeled gardens, arboretum and peaceful Round Oval Lake.

Later, we check into the delightful Ellenborough Park Hotel, where we stay for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Berkeley Castle

### August 10: Highgrove Gardens & Berkeley Castle

Today, we enjoy an exclusive guided tour of Highgrove Gardens, the organic gardens of Their Majesties. Over 30 years in the making, Highgrove showcases The King's philosophy of working with nature. Highlights include the Kitchen Garden, Wildflower Meadow and a National Collection of Beech trees, with Highgrove House visible in the distance.

Our second tour is at Berkeley Castle, built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Robert Fitzharding under Henry II's orders to defend the Severn estuary and Welsh border. This medieval gem offers a glimpse into life in the era. Edward II was imprisoned here after losing power to Isabella and Roger Mortimer and the room where he was allegedly murdered in 1327 can be seen. Berkeley is the oldest building continuously inhabited by the same family who built it, with the Berkeley lineage tracing back to Saxon times. Lunch follows our tour.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### August 11: Hampton Court Palace

After checking out of our Cotswolds hotel, we make our way to Hampton Court Palace for a dive into the fascinating world of the Tudor court during our guided tour. We experience the private life (and very 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, with time for a stroll around the enchanting riverside gardens – blossoming with flowers and grand Yew tree avenues. Imagine walking in the footsteps of his famous six wives, who were all brought to this opulent property.

Later, we check into our 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
- ◆ Guided tour & lunch at The Savill Garden
- ◆ Private guided tour of Windsor Castle
- ◆ Royal Day Out (Buckingham Palace State Rooms, The King's Gallery & the Royal Mews)
- ◆ Afternoon tea at the Ritz Hotel
- ◆ Ceremony of the Keys at the Tower of London
- ◆ Private guided tour of Holkham House
- ◆ Exclusive-access guided tour & afternoon tea at Sandringham Estate
- ◆ Guided tour of Norwich Cathedral, Norwich & Blickling Estate with a local Blue Badge guide
- ◆ Exclusive private tour of Highgrove Gardens
- ◆ Guided tour & lunch at Berkeley Castle



**NEW**



Rock of Cashel

# A Luxury Discovery of Southern Ireland

September 5 to 19, 2026 ♦ From \$9,300 per person

Delve into the spectacular beauty and cultural heritage of Southern Ireland, from the vibrant city of Dublin to the tranquil allure of Killarney. We experience the charm and elegance of Ireland's finest manors, such as Russborough House, Doneraile Court and the Dromana Estate and explore historic landmarks with guided tours that bring the past to life. We also step into Ireland's divine natural world, with a guided tour at Lafcadio Japanese Gardens, and an immersive scenic drive through the Ring of Kerry, along with a cruise to admire the majestic Cliffs of Moher. Illuminating visits, complemented by memorable experiences, deliver a real taste of Ireland's southern region.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/Departure airport transfers from Dublin\*
- ♦ 3 nights at the Dylan Hotel, Dublin
- ♦ 2 nights at the Killashee Hotel, Killashee
- ♦ 1 night at Marlfield House, Gorey
- ♦ 2 nights at the Cliff House Hotel, Ardmore
- ♦ 1 night at Hayfield Manor Hotel, Cork
- ♦ 2 nights at Europe Hotel, Killarney
- ♦ 2 nights at The Savoy Limerick, Limerick
- ♦ Welcome drink & canapés
- ♦ Full Irish/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 10 nights at the hotels\*\* (with after-dinner tea & coffee)
- ♦ 1 lunch at a local restaurant
- ♦ Services of a tour director
- ♦ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**September 5:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in Dublin

### September 6: Arrival

Upon arrival at Dublin Airport, a private transfer will take you to our hotel, the Dylan Hotel in Dublin. We then join the group for a welcome drink and canapés in the evening, followed by dinner.

*Meals: Dinner*



Dublin

*“Delve into the spectacular beauty and cultural heritage of Southern Ireland.”*

### September 7: Dublin City Tour, Trinity College Tour & Dublin Castle

We start the day with a tour of Dublin and discover several landmarks such as the old city wall, Temple Bar and the River Liffey, before visiting Chester Beatty's library, described as the finest collection of manuscripts and books made by a private collector in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The museum includes representative samples of the world's heritage (artistic, religious and secular) from about 2700 BC to the present century.

Next, we enjoy a 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. Written around 800 AD and celebrated for its lavish decoration, the manuscript contains the four Gospels in Latin based on a Vulgate text, written on vellum (prepared calfskin).

This afternoon, discover Dublin Castle, a historic fortress and government complex that has played a central role in the city's history for centuries. It was originally built in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century and served as a residence for the British monarchy, a military fortress and the seat of the English administration in Ireland. We take the opportunity to explore its impressive State Apartments, medieval undercroft and the Chapel Royal, where beautiful Gothic architecture can be seen. There's time for dinner at leisure before we head back to our hotel.

*Meals: Breakfast*





Mount Congreve

## September 8: Russborough House & Walled Gardens

We spend today at glorious Russborough House. This magnificent Palladian mansion was built in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and has been home to many notable families of the aristocracy, evidenced by its remarkable collection of art and antiques. We explore lavish interiors, featuring ornate plasterwork and fine furnishings, and learn more about the history behind magnificent artwork on our tour. There's time to wander the beautifully landscaped gardens, which include a charming walled garden and also enjoy a light lunch.

Later, we check into the Killashee Hotel, where we stay for the next two nights of our tour.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## September 9: Hunting Brook Gardens & June Blake's Garden

Hunting Brook Gardens is a captivating display of imaginative plant combinations and borders of vibrant color, along with an enchanting woodland. Created by the renowned horticulturist Jimi Blake, the gardens are thoughtfully designed to enable a diverse mix of exotic plants to thrive, making them a delight to wander, surrounded by peaceful countryside. We enjoy a guided tour here before heading to June Blake's.

A place of intrigue and restoration, this garden is a testament to the artistic flair and horticultural expertise of June Blake. Her garden features an eclectic mix of plant species, each chosen for its unique beauty and contribution to the overall tapestry of colors and textures. We enjoy a guided tour here and explore the meticulously curated landscapes of native and exotic plants before stopping for some refreshing tea and cake.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## September 10: Rock of Cashel & Kilkenny Castle

This morning, we visit 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, a 13<sup>th</sup>-century Gothic cathedral and a 15<sup>th</sup>-century castle.

We then stop at a traditional Irish pub in Kilkenny, where we're treated to a hearty Irish lunch - perhaps choose to enjoy the Irish Stew and a Guinness. After lunch, we make our way to Kilkenny Castle, a majestic fortress that has stood since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, surrounded by beautiful countryside. We explore the the period rooms on our guided tour and learn more about the significant events witnessed here.

This evening we head to Marlfield House for our overnight stay.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Kilkenny Castle

## September 11: New Ross, Mount Congreve & Lafcadio Japanese Gardens

Ireland's history is brought to life at the Dunbrody Famine Ship at New Ross, our next stop. 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. After weeks spent dangerously crossing the Atlantic, the emigrants arrived in North America and made up a quarter of the population in Boston, New York City, Philadelphia and Baltimore by 1850.

Next, we visit Mount Congreve Gardens, a horticultural masterpiece of rare and exotic plants that thrive thanks to the passion and dedication of Ambrose Congreve, who developed them over several decades. The gardens span over seventy acres, abundant with a diverse range of flora, including magnolias, camellias and rhododendrons. We take a stroll through the meticulously maintained landscapes, taking in the vibrant colors and tranquil ambiance, before enjoying a light lunch. Afterward, the Estate Director takes us on a fascinating tour of the estate.



Russborough House





Blarney Castle

This afternoon, we explore Lafcadio Japanese Gardens, a serene and beautifully designed landscape inspired by traditional Japanese aesthetics. The gardens feature a variety of elements such as koi ponds, stone lanterns and pruned trees that create a tranquil atmosphere. Our guided tour provides an insight into the design philosophy behind these gardens, and we also visit the tea house.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### September 12: Doneraile Court & Estate & Tourin House & Gardens

We discover the beautifully landscaped gardens and architectural grandeur of Doneraile Court & Estate. The grounds include walking trails, ornamental gardens and a picturesque lake, while the court itself is a magnificent Georgian structure. We enjoy a guided tour and uncover more about Doneraile's connection to notable figures.

Later, we explore Tourin House and Gardens, a serene escape into horticultural artistry. On our guided tour, we wander the meticulously well-kept gardens of vibrant flowers and plants and the house, wonderfully dressed in period furnishings.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 13: Dromana Estate & Titanic Exhibition Cobh

This morning, we visit Dromana Estate, a unique Hindu-Gothic style structure surrounded by gardens of flora and fauna. A member of the Fitzgerald family takes us on a guided tour, and we discover more about the family's significant influence on the region.

We then make our way to the maritime town of Cobh for our *Titanic* Experience. As the last port of call for the *Titanic*, the *Titanic* Experience here offers a unique insight into the lives of the passengers who boarded the ship from this location. Our guided tour takes us through the original departure point, and we learn, through interactive exhibits, about the ship's journey and the stories of those who traveled on it.

*Meals: Breakfast*

### September 14: Cork & Blarney Castle

In the morning, we spend some free time in Cork. Enjoy the lively atmosphere here and wander the bustling streets lined with shops and cafés, or take a leisurely walk along the scenic River Lee. Explore the English Market, a historic indoor market where you can sample local delicacies and fresh produce. There's also the Crawford Art Gallery - an impressive collection of both contemporary and classical works.

This afternoon, the medieval Blarney Castle awaits, built nearly 600 years ago by a powerful Irish magnate and now one of the country's most famous visitor attractions. Millions have flocked here to kiss the legendary Stone of Eloquence and never again be lost for words, but there is so much more to see, including the atmospheric dungeons, a poison garden and the lovely countryside views from the battlements.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 15: Ring of Kerry scenic drive

Our tour manager takes us on a scenic guided tour of the Ring of Kerry, journeying through an untouched landscape of tranquil lakes and rolling hills, passing through charming towns such as Killorglin, Waterville and Kenmare.

*Meals: Breakfast*

### September 16: Glin Castle & Bunratty Castle & Folk Park

This morning, we visit Glin Castle. Nestled on the banks of the River Shannon, the castle is surrounded by beautiful scenery and dates back over 700 years. We enjoy a guided tour of the landscaped gardens and find out more about rare plant species, the castle's storied past and its architectural significance. We enjoy lunch here before heading to Bunratty Castle this afternoon.



Irish National Stud

Bunratty Castle and Folk Park is set in 26 acres of unspoilt County Clare countryside. The most complete castle in Ireland and meticulously restored to reflect the grandeur of its past inhabitants, it's fascinating to imagine how lords and ladies once lived in this 15<sup>th</sup>-century gem. We enjoy a wander through the castle and take a Jaunting Car Ride over the grounds.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Aran Islands





Ring of Kerry

### September 17: Aran Islands

After breakfast, we make our way to the smallest of the Aran Islands, Inisheer. Known as Inis Oírr in Irish (pronounced Inish-Ear), this charming island is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, pristine beaches and beautiful landscapes, peppered with ancient stone forts and traditional cottages, where the Irish language is still widely spoken. We are treated to a pony and trap tour to take in the highlights of this delightful isle, the old-fashioned way.

We continue to our second location of the day for a leisurely cruise along the magnificent Cliffs of Moher, enjoying the geological wonders from below, admiring the views of the Aran Islands and listening to the onboard commentary. Stretching for eight miles along County Clare's Atlantic Coast and 214m at their highest, the cliffs offer stunning scenery and are home to one of the major colonies of cliff-nesting seabirds in Ireland.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 18: Limerick & Irish National Stud

We spend some free time in Limerick. As Ireland's third largest city, there is plenty to discover, including a variety of cathedrals, traditional pubs, museums and art galleries such as the Hunt Museum, which houses an impressive collection of artefacts and remarkable artworks, ranging from pre-historic archaeological material to masterpieces by the likes of Picasso, Renoir and Yeats.

This afternoon, we combine the world of horses with serene Japanese gardens, with a visit to the Irish National Stud, en route to Dublin. We learn more about the breeding and training of thoroughbred horses on our guided tour and enjoy a tranquil stroll through the gardens, which offer a peaceful retreat with their meticulously maintained landscapes and beautiful water features.

This evening, we enjoy a farewell dinner together at the hotel.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 19: 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.



Cork

### Tour Highlights

- ◆ Guided city tour of Dublin
- ◆ Book of Kells Experience
- ◆ Guided tour & lunch at Russborough House
- ◆ Guided tour at Hunting Brook Gardens
- ◆ Guided tour, tea & cake at June Blake's Garden
- ◆ Guided tour of the Rock of Cashel
- ◆ Guided tour of the period rooms at Kilkenny Castle
- ◆ Estate Director tour & lunch at Mount Congreve Gardens
- ◆ Guided tour & entry to the tea house at Lafcadio Japanese Gardens
- ◆ Exclusive tour of Dromana Estate with a member of the Villiers-Stuart family
- ◆ Kiss the Stone entrance at Blarney Castle
- ◆ Guided scenic drive of the Ring of Kerry
- ◆ Guided tour & lunch at Glin Castle Gardens
- ◆ Jaunting Car Ride at Bunratty Castle & Folk Park
- ◆ Cliffs of Moher cruise
- ◆ Guided tour at Irish National Stud



Bunratty Castle



**NEW**



Blair Castle

# Scotland - Art, Architecture, Royals & Romantic Castles

September 19 to October 1, 2026  From **\$8,800** per person

Celebrate the spirit of Scotland – a land of proud traditions, bold creativity, royal legacies and breathtaking beauty. From vibrant Glasgow to historic Edinburgh, this journey reveals Scotland's many faces. In Glasgow, we explore the legacy of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, visit the acclaimed Burrell Collection and travel to Mount Stuart, a neo-Gothic masterpiece on the Isle of Bute. We then immerse ourselves in majestic landscapes, cruising Loch Lomond and raising a glass at a Highland distillery. With handpicked hotels, fine cuisine and warm hospitality, discover Scotland through its art, architecture, legend and enduring traditions.

## What's Included

- ◆ Arrival/Departure airport transfers from Glasgow Airport and to Edinburgh Airport\*
- ◆ 3 nights at the Voco Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow
- ◆ 2 nights at the Cameron House Hotel, Loch Lomond
- ◆ 2 nights at the Dunkeld House Hotel, Dunkeld
- ◆ 1 night at the Fingal Hotel, Leith
- ◆ 3 nights at the Intercontinental Edinburgh the George, Edinburgh
- ◆ 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
- ◆ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**September 19:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in Glasgow

### September 20: Arrival

Upon arrival at Glasgow Airport, a private transfer will take you to our hotel for the next three nights, the Voco Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow. In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink and canapés, followed by dinner.

*Meals: Dinner*

### September 21: Kelvingrove Museum & Glasgow

This morning, we explore Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, a cherished Scottish landmark in a stunning Spanish Baroque-style building. Highlights include Renaissance masterpieces, Salvador Dalí's *Christ of Saint John of the Cross* and artifacts telling Scotland's story. A curator-led talk enriches our understanding of its history and role in celebrating Scottish heritage.

In the afternoon, we embark on a panoramic tour of Glasgow, famed for its bold spirit, architecture and creativity. Passing Georgian squares, the River Clyde, Glasgow Cathedral, the University and Glasgow School of Art, we uncover the city's

*“Taste the true flavour of bonnie Scotland.”*

vibrant history and dynamic energy through tales of shipbuilding, industry, music and revolution.

*Meals: Breakfast*

### September 22: Pollock House & Burrell Collection Museum

The day starts with a visit to Pollock House, a Georgian mansion in Pollock Country Park. Formerly home to the Maxwell family, it showcases Scottish aristocratic life with ornate interiors, fine furniture and Spanish art by El Greco and Goya. Guests can explore the gardens or woodland paths before returning to the hotel for free time.

In the afternoon, we visit the Burrell Collection, a renowned museum in the same park. It features Sir William Burrell's diverse private collection, including Chinese ceramics, Islamic art, medieval stained glass, Impressionist paintings and ancient artifacts. The day concludes with dinner at the museum's restaurant after exploring the exhibits.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### September 23: Hill House Helensburgh & Loch Lomond

We visit Hill House in Helensburgh, a renowned 1902 Scottish domestic building by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, blending Art Nouveau and Scottish tradition with stencilling, stained glass and elegant furniture. Lunch at Loch Lomond Arms Hotel in Luss offers scenic views. In the afternoon, we cruise Loch Lomond, Britain's largest inland water stretch, passing islands and peaks in a classic Highland scene that has inspired for centuries. This evening, we check into the Cameron House Hotel, our base in Loch Lomond for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### September 24: Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute

This morning, we head to Wemyss Bay to take the ferry to Rothesay, crossing the Firth of Clyde to the tranquil Isle of Bute. Our destination is Mount Stuart, a neo-Gothic mansion surrounded by 300 acres of landscaped grounds. With a guide, we explore this stunning late 19<sup>th</sup>-century house, showcasing vaulted ceilings, stained glass, marble and astrological symbolism. After the tour, we enjoy afternoon tea and have time to explore the gardens or relax amidst the beauty. Later, we return via ferry to Loch Lomond and our hotel, ending a day filled with architectural splendor and island charm.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*



Mount Stuart





Inveraray Castle



## September 25: Inveraray Castle & Trossachs National Park Scenic Drive

After breakfast, we check out and head west to Loch Fyne for a private tour of Inveraray Castle, the ancestral seat of the Dukes of Argyll. With fairytale turrets and façades, this Scottish baronial castle is set against wooded hills and glistening water. Inside, its rooms feature tapestries, fine furniture, family portraits and a striking armoury hall.

In the afternoon, we take a scenic drive through Trossachs National Park, a region of lochs, hills and forests that has long inspired artists. We stop at Queen's View Viewpoint, offering a panorama across Loch Tummel, reportedly loved by Queen Victoria.

We arrive later in the charming town of Dunkeld, where we settle into our hotel for the next chapter of our Scottish journey.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## September 26: Blair Castle & Blair Athol Distillery

Our first stop is Blair Castle in Highland Perthshire, home to the Dukes and Earls of Atholl for over 750 years. The private tour showcases Scottish history, aristocratic heritage, and personal stories. Highlights include 18<sup>th</sup>-century interiors, a Victorian ballroom, portraits, weapons and heirlooms. Outside, landscaped gardens and wooded grounds offer tranquility, with red deer and Highland cattle often nearby.

In the afternoon, we visit Blair Athol Distillery in Pitlochry, one of Scotland's oldest distilleries. The Signature Tour reveals how its rich, smooth single malt is crafted using copper stills and Highland water, ending with a tasting of its warm, mellow whisky.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## September 27: Scone Palace, Dunfermline Abbey & Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum

Leaving Dunkeld, we head south to Scone Palace near Perth, where Scottish kings like Macbeth and Robert the Bruce were crowned. Now home to the Earls of Mansfield, it boasts rich interiors, fine furniture and portraits. In the afternoon, we visit Dunfermline, Scotland's former capital. Dunfermline Abbey, resting place of King Robert the Bruce, houses his tomb beneath the tower. Nearby, the Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum showcases the philanthropist's life in his childhood home.

Tonight, we check into our hotel and dine in style aboard the *Fingal*, Edinburgh's luxurious floating hotel, in their elegant 2AA Rosette restaurant.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## September 28: Royal Yacht Britannia, St Giles Cathedral & Spirit of Scotland Dinner Show

This morning, we board the iconic *Royal Yacht Britannia*, the former floating home of Queen Elizabeth II and the Royal Family for over 40 years. Our tour explores the State Apartments, crew quarters and engine room.

Next, we visit St Giles' Cathedral, renowned for its Gothic architecture and the stunning Thistle Chapel, reflecting Scotland's rich spiritual and religious history. Later, we check into our Edinburgh hotel before enjoying the Spirit of Scotland Dinner Show, featuring traditional music, highland dancing and classic Scottish cuisine – a lively end to the day.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Royal Yacht Britannia

## September 29: Holyrood House & Edinburgh Castle

This morning starts with a private tour of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the monarch's Scottish residence at the foot of the Royal Mile. Its grand halls and chambers reveal royal history, from Mary, Queen of Scots to the State Apartments still in use today. In the afternoon, we head up the Royal Mile to Edinburgh Castle, perched on volcanic rock. Guided through its storied past, we learn of sieges and royal births while enjoying stunning city views. Highlights include the Stone of Destiny and the Honours of Scotland, symbols of sovereignty rich in legend.

We finish the day with a touch of indulgence – afternoon tea with Prosecco, a well-earned treat in historic surroundings.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea*

## September 30: Mellerstain House & Floors Castle

Our final day starts at Mellerstain House near Gordon, a masterpiece partly designed by Robert Adam. We explore its elegant classical interiors, featuring plasterwork ceilings, refined color schemes and impressive art and furniture collections. Next, we visit Floors Castle in Kelso, Scotland's largest inhabited castle and home to the Duke of Roxburghe. A guided tour reveals opulent rooms adorned with tapestries, antiques, paintings and personal touches of a lived-in home.

In the evening, we return to Edinburgh for a farewell dinner at Prestonfield House, a baroque mansion with candlelight, rich décor and exquisite cuisine – a perfect end to our Scottish journey.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## October 1: Departure

A private transfer will take you 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.



## Tour Highlights

- ◆ Curator-led talk at Kelvingrove Museum
- ◆ Panoramic guided tour of Glasgow
- ◆ Dinner at the Burrell Collection Museum
- ◆ 1 lunch & 1 dinner at local restaurants
- ◆ Scenic cruise on Loch Lomond
- ◆ Guided tour & afternoon tea at Mount Stuart House
- ◆ Private guided tour at Inveraray Castle
- ◆ Scenic drive through the Trossachs National Park
- ◆ Scenic stop at Queen's View Viewpoint
- ◆ Private guided tour of Blair Castle
- ◆ Signature tour & tasting at Blair Athol Distillery
- ◆ Guided tour at Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum
- ◆ Private guided tour of *Royal Yacht Britannia*
- ◆ Private guided tour at Holyrood House
- ◆ Dinner aboard the *Fingal* 2AA Rosette floating restaurant & hotel
- ◆ Admission to the Spirit of Scotland Dinner Show
- ◆ Guided tour & afternoon tea with Prosecco at Edinburgh Castle
- ◆ Guided tour of Floors Castle



**NEW**



Shakespeare's Birthplace

# Shakespeare, the Cotswolds & the Welsh Marches

September 23 to October 4, 2026 ♦ From \$7,300 per person

**Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast on this exciting tour, where we uncover the intriguing story of one of the world's greatest playwrights. Starting with the iconic Globe Theater along the south bank of the River Thames, we trace William Shakespeare's journey back to his beginnings in pretty Stratford-upon-Avon, exploring significant time capsules such as his fascinating birthplace and Anne Hathaway's idyllic cottage. Continuing to the nearby Cotswolds, we discover how its medieval heritage, ancient woodland, bubbling rivers and fairytale castles provided the perfect inspiration and setting for the mischief, drama and courtship that the Bard's plays are so famous for.**

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/Departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 2 nights at the Hyatt Regency London – The Churchill, London
- ♦ 2 nights at the Hotel du Vin, Stratford-upon-Avon
- ♦ 3 nights at the Diglis House Hotel, Worcester
- ♦ 2 nights at Ellenborough Park, Cheltenham
- ♦ 1 night at Hartwell House & Spa, near Aylesbury
- ♦ 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)
- ♦ 1 lunch at a local pub
- ♦ Services of a tour director
- ♦ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**September 23:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

**September 24: Arrival**

Upon arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to our hotel, Hyatt Regency London – The Churchill, where we stay for two nights. In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink and canapés, followed by dinner.

*Meals: Dinner*

**September 25: Globe Theater & the British Library**

For our first visit, we head to Shakespeare's Globe on the River Thames, where we enjoy a fascinating tour to learn more about this iconic theater and its most famous playwright; from colourful stories of the original 1599 Globe to the faithful reconstruction process of the 1990s.

We then have lunch at a riverside pub before visiting the British Library, one of the world's greatest research libraries representing items from every age of written civilisation. From manuscripts and journals to maps and books, there is plenty to discover, including first editions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Richard III*.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

*“Medieval heritage, ancient woodland, bubbling rivers and fairytale castles.”*

**September 26: Banqueting House**

After checking out of the hotel, we visit Banqueting House, open once again after an extensive renovation programme. A survivor of the lost royal Palace of Whitehall (the residence of English monarchs from 1530 to 1698), the crowning glory here is the magnificent nine ceiling paintings by Peter Paul Rubens, installed in 1636 and commissioned by Charles I.

Later, we travel to Stratford-upon-Avon and check into Hotel du Vin, where we stay for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast*

**September 27: Shakespeare's Birthplace, RSC Swan Theater & Shakespeare's New Place**

An exciting day awaits, beginning with Shakespeare's Birthplace in the heart of Stratford-upon-Avon. We explore the beginning of the Bard's extraordinary story in the half-timbered house where he was born and grew up in, admiring the treasures of the permanent exhibition and exploring the fascinating rooms.

Next, we visit the iconic RSC Swan Theater, housed in a Grade II listed building and where Shakespeare's plays are regularly performed. We are treated to lunch at the rooftop restaurant, with its lovely views and delicious British food.

As part of our Shakespeare's Story ticket, we also visit Shakespeare's New Place, the family home from 1597 until Shakespeare's death in 1616. Although the house was demolished in 1759, a beautiful garden has been designed to commemorate the importance of the site with commissioned artworks plus a sunken Knot Garden and exhibition center.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*



Hidcote Manor Garden





Sudeley Castle

## September 28: Anne Hathaway's Cottage & Coughton Court

In the afternoon, we travel to Anne Hathaway's idyllic thatched cottage, the setting of the young Shakespeare's courtship with his future bride. Here we can see original furniture and rooms, preserved to reflect the 16<sup>th</sup>-century lifestyle, and uncover the stories of 13 generations of the Hathaway family who lived here.

We continue to the stunning Coughton Court, where we enjoy an indulgent afternoon tea. Home to the Throckmorton family for 600 years, Coughton is still very much a family home with an intimate feel and spectacular award-winning gardens.

Later, we check into the Diglis House Hotel, our base for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

## September 29: Croft Castle & Newton Court

After breakfast, we head to Croft Castle, home to the Croft family for almost a thousand years and believed to have been built by a Norman knight (Bernard de Croft). We learn more about the captivating history of the family and the house during our guided tour of the grand Georgian interiors.

Afterward, we head to Newton Court, which sits on a 157-acre Herefordshire farm, for a cider tour to learn about how the Stephens family have been crafting their organic cider here for decades.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

## September 30: Hellens Manor & Eastnor Castle

This morning, we are treated to a private visit to Hellens Manor, a Tudor/Jacobean gem with stunning grounds framed by the Malvern Hills. Discover paintings by the likes of Gainsborough, Van Dyke and Goya, along with the English Renaissance frieze in the panelled Music Room, heirlooms of Anne Boleyn and the supposed haunted bed chamber prepared for Queen Mary Tudor.

We then make our way to Eastnor Castle, surrounded by a beautiful deer park, arboretum and lake. The princely and imposing fortress (as it was described in 1812 when it was being built to pitch the owner, the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Somers, into the aristocracy), continues to be inhabited by the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl's descendants; the Hervey-Bathurst family and is adorned with art, tapestries and medieval armour.

*Meals: Breakfast*

## October 1: Worcester Cathedral & Hidcote Manor Garden

After checking out of the hotel, we take a guided tour of Worcester Cathedral, which rises majestically above the River Severn. Built between 1084 and 1504, it boasts royal tombs, medieval cloisters, a Norman crypt and magnificent Victorian stained glass.

Next, we head to Hidcote Manor Garden, an exquisite Arts and Crafts garden created by American horticulturist, Major Lawrence Johnston. Laid out as a series of colourful 'rooms', it's believed to be the inspiration behind the magical settings of Shakespeare's comedies. We enjoy exclusive entry in the garden with a guided tour and two glasses of Prosecco or refreshing elderflower.

Afterward, we make our way to Ellenborough Park, where we stay for the next two nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Eastnor Castle

## October 2: Sudeley Castle & Snowhill Manor

Today begins with a behind-the-scenes tour of the exquisite Sudeley Castle, focusing on its important role in England's turbulent past. It remains the only private castle in England to have a queen buried within the grounds – Queen Katherine Parr. The castle rooms contain many fascinating treasures from ancient Roman times to the present day while outside are award-winning gardens.

Our next stop is Snowhill Manor, which dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was bought by the eccentric Charles Wade for just one purpose; to

- Croft Castle
- Newton Court
- Worcester Cathedral
- Eastnor Castle
- Hellens Manor
- Coughton Court
- Shakespeare's Birthplace
- Hidcote Manor Garden
- Snowhill Manor
- Sudeley Castle
- Waddesdon Manor

house the extraordinary treasures he collected over his lifetime. Every room is filled with hundreds of objects, from the everyday to the extraordinary, including Japanese samurai armour, bicycles and musical instruments.

*Meals: Breakfast*

## October 3: Waddesdon Manor

We make our way to Waddesdon Manor, built by the wealthy Rothschild family in the style of a Renaissance château. We discover the fine collection of art on a guided tour, followed by a sumptuous afternoon tea amidst these lavish surroundings. Outside, the formal gardens are one of England's finest examples of late Victorian gardens.

This evening, we stay at Hartwell House & Spa, one of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

## October 4: 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 the Globe Theater
- ◆ Shakespeare's Story ticket (includes Shakespeare's Birthplace, lunch at the RSC Swan Theater & Shakespeare's New Place)
- ◆ Afternoon tea at Coughton Court
- ◆ Guided tour of Croft Castle
- ◆ Cider tour at Newton Court
- ◆ Private visit at Hellens Manor
- ◆ Guided tour at Worcester Cathedral
- ◆ Guided tour & Prosecco at Hidcote Manor Garden
- ◆ Behind-the-scenes tour at Sudeley Castle
- ◆ Introductory talk at Snowhill Manor
- ◆ Guided tour & afternoon tea at Waddesdon Manor





Leeds Castle

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

## Yuletide Kent - Country Houses, Festive Feasts & 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 Hotel, Windsor
- ♦ 5 nights at the Ashdown Park Hotel & Country Club, Wych Cross
- ♦ 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
- ♦ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.



Hever Castle

### 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 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 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, 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 a 'delicious house' by the Queen Mother on

her honeymoon there. This countryside retreat is most closely connected to Dame Margaret Greville, who entertained royalty and the celebrities of her time with lavish parties at the manor. During the magical festive period, the house is illuminated by twinkling trees, pretty decorations and immersive scenes while outside, the views out across the rolling Surrey Hills are beautiful.

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 visit Chartwell, Sir Winston Churchill's beloved home from 1924 until his death.

The house is still home to many of the great statesman's personal and political mementos, including gifts he received from other world leaders, with themed trees and gorgeous garlands transforming the historic house into a cozy Christmas spectacle.

Our second National Trust property of the day is Ightham Mote, a medieval moated manor house once described by historian David Starkey as 'the most beautiful and the most interesting of English country houses'. 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 Christmas scene with music, lights and seasonal scents, all inspired by the history of the property.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*



Windsor Castle





## December 9: Canterbury Cathedral & Canterbury Cathedral Lodge

We spend the day in historic Canterbury, beginning with a guided tour of Canterbury Cathedral, the oldest cathedral in England. 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.



Ightham Mote

After some time at leisure to discover beautiful Canterbury itself, 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.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner*

## December 10: Penshurst Place & Hever Castle

We spend the morning at the medieval manor house of Penshurst Place. 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 are treated to a private behind-the-scenes guided tour of the house, with its 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, and is a real delight to visit at this time of year.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

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

This morning, we visit 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.

Afterward we head to 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.

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*



Bateman's

## 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. Dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, this quintessential moated castle has been a Norman stronghold, the royal residence of six medieval queens and was once home to Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. We learn more during our private guided tour while exploring the castle's impressive state rooms, which are lavishly decorated for Christmas. A lovely lunch concludes our time here before we make our way to the Castle Hotel for check in.

Later, it's time for the highlight of our tour, Christmas Carols at the Royal Albert Hall. 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.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

## 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
- ◆ Lunch at Hever Castle
- ◆ Heritage journey on the Kent & East Sussex Railway
- ◆ Private guided tour & lunch at Leeds Castle
- ◆ Ticket to Christmas Carols at the Royal Albert Hall
- ◆ Themed talk by a guest speaker





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Waddesdon Manor

# Christmastime in the Charming Cotswolds & Chilterns

December 5 to 12, 2026 ♦ From \$5,550 per person

With 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 to Bath, the southern tip of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where the delightful Christmas Market awaits. We also weave our way across 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. With more seasonal delights such as the enchanting illuminations trail at Kew Gardens and a Victorian-style carol singing performance, this is a celebration of enduring yuletide traditions.

## What's Included

- ♦ Arrival/Departure airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ♦ 2 nights at the Castle Hotel, Windsor
- ♦ 1 night at the Queens Hotel, Cheltenham
- ♦ 3 nights at Hartwell House & Spa, near Aylesbury
- ♦ Welcome drink & canapés
- ♦ Full English/Continental breakfast each day
- ♦ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 3 nights at the hotels\*\* (with after-dinner tea & coffee)
- ♦ Services of a tour director
- ♦ 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.

\*\*Please note that the availability of the 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner may vary depending on the hotel, as some establishments offer a set menu.

## Itinerary

**December 5:** Depart your home city and arrive the next day in London

### December 6: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow Airport, a private transfer will take you to the Castle Hotel in Windsor, 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*



Blenheim Palace

*“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.”*

### December 7: 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 decorated at this time of year. We find out more of the castle's history on our audio-guided tour.



Bath Christmas Market

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.

*Meals: Breakfast*

### December 8: The Roman Baths & 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 here, 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.





Blenheim Palace



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 in Cheltenham, where we stay overnight.

*Meals: Breakfast*

## December 9: 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 stop in Broadway, where you can expect a lovely mix of honey-hued buildings, cozy traditional pubs and independent boutiques. Coffee and cake awaits at the Lygon Arms, one of the town's most iconic buildings and an atmospheric 13<sup>th</sup>-century hotel with warming fireplaces and original features.

Next, we visit Stow-on-the-Wold, a quintessential Cotswold market town known for its vibrant history and charming atmosphere. The town square, a bustling hub of activity, is surrounded by beautiful historic buildings, each with its unique character. Don't miss the chance to visit St Edward's Church, famous for its enchanting north door flanked by ancient yew trees, often said to be the inspiration for J.R.R. Tolkien's *Doors of Durin* in *The Lord of the Rings*.



Stow-on-the-Wold

We end the day with a festive afternoon tea at Hartwell House, one of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels, where we also stay for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea*



Waddesdon Manor

## December 10: 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 11: Waddesdon Manor & Festive Farewell

We travel to the Five Arrows Hotel, a Grade II listed building located at the gates of Waddesdon Manor. Adorned with beautiful period features and festive decorations, the hotel provides a warm and inviting atmosphere for a sumptuous lunch, featuring seasonal dishes prepared with the finest local ingredients.

Afterward, we visit Waddesdon Manor itself. 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. We have time to explore these beautiful interiors, given an extra sparkle around Christmas with lavish decorations.

This evening, we toast the festive season with a farewell dinner and drink in a private room at Hartwell House. We also enjoy a Victorian-style carol singing performance, highlighting some of the traditions and customs during this special time of year.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## December 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

- ◆ Admission to Christmas at Kew
- ◆ Guided tour of the Roman Baths
- ◆ Scenic drive through the Cotswolds (Broadway & Stow-on-the-Wold) with coffee & cake at the Lygon Arms
- ◆ Afternoon tea at Hartwell House
- ◆ Admission to Christmas at Blenheim
- ◆ Festive lunch\* at the Five Arrows, Waddesdon Estate
- ◆ Private carol singing performance at Hartwell House



# 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](http://www.nationaltrusttours.com)**.

**Please note:** featured prices are inclusive of the National Trust membership discount. If you are not a National Trust Member, please visit **[savingplaces.org/membership-benefits](http://savingplaces.org/membership-benefits)** to sign up. Thank you for your support.

## 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 (including American Express) 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.

National Trust Tours preferred travel insurance partner is USI Travel Insurance Services. For information on a custom travel protection plan for travelers with National Trust Tours, visit **[nationaltrusttours.com/travel-insurance](http://nationaltrusttours.com/travel-insurance)** or call 1-866-322-9975.

## Do I need a passport and visa?

### Important UK Entry requirements

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. Tourist visas are not required for US citizens visiting the UK however a new Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) will now be required.

US and other Non-European citizens now requiring an ETA can apply in advance from 27 November 2024. An ETA will be required for travel from 08 January 2025. European visitors now requiring an ETA can apply from 05 March 2025. An ETA will be required for travel from 02 April 2025.

An ETA costs £10 and permits multiple journeys to the UK for stays of up to 6 months at a time and is valid for 2 years or until the holders passport expires – whichever is sooner. An ETA does not permit entry to the UK – it authorises an individual to travel to the UK. British & Irish citizens do not need an ETA.

### Apply for an ETA

Applications can be done via a smartphone app - UK ETA app or online at Apply for an electronic travel authorisation (ETA) - **GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))**

This is a simple process, and decisions are usually communicated within 3 days.

It remains your responsibility to ensure you have the correct travel documentation for your trip.

## 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 handpicked 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.*





Windsor Castle



Cragside



Castle Howard



Hever Castle



Highgrove Gardens

## 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





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or email [info@nationaltrusttours.com](mailto:info@nationaltrusttours.com)

Call: **888-484-8785**

Front Cover Images: Bodnant Garden, St Michael's Mount, Hardwick Hall & Highclere Castle