





Fitzwilliam Museum

© Damien Vickers

Dear Royal Oak Members and Friends,

I am very pleased to share with you our 2019 heritage tour program produced in partnership with Albion. These group tours offer Royal Oak members the unique opportunity to discover the vast cultural and natural heritage of Britain including many of the impressive places owned by the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

With behind-the-scenes tours, after dinner lectures and insights from the owners of the properties themselves, you can really immerse yourself in the locations that you visit and in 2019, these tours will take you even further too – with a wider variety of locations on offer than ever before.

Both Albion and The Royal Oak Foundation are proud to be partners of the National Trust, helping to support the Trust's vital conservation work. These tours not only provide a financial contribution to the Trust's conservation projects but they also allow you to experience first-hand the important work that is being carried out.

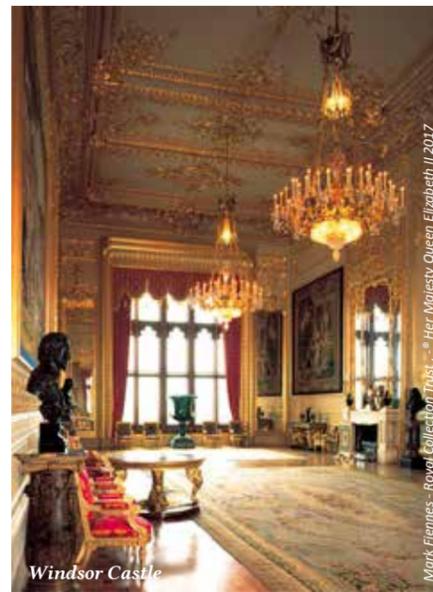
2019 marks the 200th anniversary since the birth of Queen Victoria, Britain's second longest serving monarch. We celebrate her life on the *Queen Victoria 200 Regal Splendor & an Island Getaway* tour which takes in some of the famous palaces, castles and country houses frequented by the Queen throughout her reign, offering a very real insight into her life and the people closest to her. One such property is Hughenden. Previously home to Queen Victoria's 'favourite Prime Minister' Benjamin Disraeli, here you can discover more about this colorful former-parliamentarian.

Ahead of the Mayflower 400 celebrations in 2020, we discover the history of the Pilgrim Fathers in the heart of England on the *Cambridgeshire & the Origins of the Mayflower 400* tour. On this trip we look at the origins of the Mayflower Pilgrims and also visit Harwich where the Mayflower was believed to be built and started her journey. In addition we visit the fascinating working estate of Wimpole, boasting a beautiful hall and unique interiors. If this tour is something that interests you, you may also like to take a look at the preview of our 2020 tour *Mayflower 400*.

I encourage you to join one or more of these tours and experience first-hand the history and beauty of the United Kingdom. Every tour helps raise funds for The Royal Oak Foundation too and we are sure that you will have a truly wonderful time sharing these journeys with other members and friends from across the United States.

David Nathans

David Nathans
Executive Director and CEO, The Royal Oak Foundation



Windsor Castle

Mark Fennes - Royal Collection Trust - © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017



Osborne House

© English Heritage



Mayflower II

Delve Deeper into Britain's Heritage

Fenton House – a hidden gem in London

Fenton House is a 17th-century merchant's house, bequeathed to the National Trust in 1952 by its last owner and resident Lady Binning. The interior houses the Benton Fletcher collection of early keyboard instruments and collections of portraits and paintings, including the collection of Peter Barkworth, and loans of Sir William Nicholson paintings, porcelain, 17th-century needlework pictures and Georgian furniture. This handsome brick mansion also has a walled garden, a working kitchen garden and a 300-year-old orchard, where about 30 types of apple trees flourish.

Fenton House features on the *London's Hidden Houses* tour (page 10).

Bodiam Castle – a stunning medieval castle in East Sussex

This impressive 14th-century moated castle is set within a scenic historic landscape. Although now in ruins, Bodiam Castle is one of Britain's most picturesque and romantic ancient monuments and provides a unique glimpse into castle life of medieval times boasting an original wooden portcullis, spiral staircases, tower rooms and battlements.

Bodiam Castle features on the *Fairytale Castles of Kent* tour (page 14).

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 opportunity for you to ask questions at the end of the talk, these interactive experiences are an opportunity not to be missed.

We also provide reading lists, allowing you to do a little background reading before the start of the tour:

If you want to understand a little more about the themes of your tour, we provide a full reading list that should enable you to fully engage with the subject. We ensure that our reading lists are entertaining as well as informative, and they include a mixture 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!



Fenton House

© NHP/Amel de Serra

Meals

On every tour, breakfast is included at your hotel each day. Certain lunches and dinners are also included (details can be found on each tour page). Some evenings are left free for you to make your own dinner arrangements, giving you the flexibility to choose your own restaurant as well as have time to explore more of the town or city you are staying in.

Extend Your Stay

If you would like to arrive a few days before your tour departs or leave a few days after the end of the tour, we are happy to arrange extra nights' accommodation at any of the hotels that feature on your tour (a small administration charge applies). Please call us to discuss your requirements.



Tour Highlights...

Edinburgh, Northumberland & the Scottish Borders

The area around the Scottish borders is renowned for its rugged nature, but on our tour we also explore many of the beautiful buildings dotted through this landscape that is so rich in cultural heritage. While Rosslyn Chapel stands out for its highly decorated interior, Abbotsford stuns with its grand, castle-like exterior and north of the border we'll explore Traquair House which has all the romance of a fairytale castle.

London's Hidden Houses

Join us to delve deeper into this fascinating capital city, looking beyond the typical touristic sights and discovering the famous faces behind some hidden London houses on this tour. From the US Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin's House, to playwright William Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, to Thomas Coram, the artist William Hogarth and the composer George Frideric Handel, who all had a role in the Foundling Museum, each property has a fascinating story to tell.

Liverpool, Cheshire & Northern Ireland

Taking in two countries, Northern Ireland and the north-west of England, we uncover the great houses to be found in both regions and explore the strong links between Liverpool and Northern Ireland on this tour. From magnificent Tatton Park in Cheshire to noble Glenarm Castle, as well as the stunning natural wonder – Giant's Causeway, there is so much to discover.

Glamour of the South East: Georgian Grandeur to Art Deco Elegance

Not only a must-see for art and design fans, we hear the stories of some of the famous owners of these glamorous houses, from writer Rudyard Kipling's love of his home Bateman's, to Lee Miller, photographer and muse of the surrealists who created an artistic haven at Farleys House & Gallery. We also learn the story of Gilbert White, pioneering ornithologist and naturalist who created a wildlife haven in the 1700s in Selbourne.

The Brontës & Literary Classics of Yorkshire

From the romance of York Minster to the brooding mystery of Kirkstall Abbey, there is so much in Yorkshire to inspire you. On this special tour we retrace the steps of literary greats, the Brontë sisters, in their hometown of Haworth exploring places associated with their lives alongside discovering other stories of literary heroes who were influenced by the beautiful landscapes and stunning scenery to be found in this part of the world.



A Wonderful Opportunity to Explore & Experience...



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Queen Victoria 200: Regal Splendor & an Island Getaway

March 31 to April 9, 2019 from \$4,950 per person

2019 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Queen Victoria, Britain's second longest serving monarch. Victoria's reign marked a period of great cultural, industrial and political change and a great expansion of the British Empire. This tour takes in some of the famous palaces, castles and country houses frequented by the Queen throughout her reign and offers a very real insight into her life and the people closest to her.



The King's Bedchamber, Windsor Castle



Hughenden



Westminster Abbey



Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Guided walking tour of Windsor
- ◆ Guided tour of Dimbola Lodge
- ◆ Guided tour of Nunwell House
- ◆ Guided tour and lunch at Avington Park
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker



Dimbola Lodge



Kensington Palace

Ten Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel where we stay for the next four nights. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: Windsor and Windsor Castle

We begin our day with a guided walking tour of Windsor, a Royal Borough situated on the River Thames. A statue of Queen Victoria was erected here in 1887 to celebrate her Golden Jubilee, with the Queen herself in attendance at the unveiling.

We then visit Windsor Castle, the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world which is still one of the official residences of Queen Elizabeth II today. Established in the 11th century by William the Conqueror, it has been remodelled by successive kings and queens and is regularly used for ceremonial and state occasions. During Queen Victoria's reign, Windsor Castle was the primary palace for the British monarchy, and the Queen spent the larger part of every year residing here. The magnificent State Apartments are furnished with some of the finest works of art for you to admire.

Tonight we enjoy dinner together at a restaurant in Windsor.

Tuesday: Hughenden and Cliveden Gardens

Today we head first to the stunning Hughenden, previously home to an unlikely Victorian Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, from 1848 to 1881. This impressive manor provides a fascinating insight into the world of this colorful former-parliamentarian, who is described as Queen Victoria's 'favourite Prime Minister'.

Next we visit Cliveden Gardens, which have uniquely captured the grandeur of a bygone era. In 1837, Cliveden was purchased by Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland, to be used as a home away from London, near to her friend Queen Victoria. Victoria frequented Cliveden on at least eight occasions and with expansive views, these gardens set elevated above the River Thames have a special charm.

After dinner back at the hotel this evening, we enjoy a fascinating themed talk from a guest speaker.

Wednesday: Kensington Palace, Westminster Abbey and St James' Palace Chapel

Kensington Palace has been a home to the royal family since the 17th century, and today we are able to explore this stunning Jacobean building. Built in 1605, Princess Victoria was later born here on 24 May 1819. The Palace was Queen Victoria's childhood home and is now the

London residence of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Prince Harry and Meghan Markle (now the Duke and Duchess of Sussex) live in Nottingham Cottage on the grounds.

Next we venture to Westminster Abbey, which since the 11th century has been the coronation church of the British monarchy. Queen Victoria's coronation took place here on 28 June 1838 when she was just 19 years of age; the event lasted five hours. There are around 3,300 people buried or commemorated at this iconic Abbey, many of whom are hugely significant figures in history.

We then head to St James' Palace Chapel. Also described as the Chapel Royal and originally constructed by King Henry VIII, this was the venue of the marriage of Queen Victoria to Prince Albert in 1840.

The evening is free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.



Arundel Castle

Thursday: Arundel Castle

Arundel Castle 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 19th century, many of the original features remain such as the Norman keep and gatehouse, while the finely preserved interiors are home to priceless works of art. Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert visited the castle for several days in 1846.

After enjoying lunch together in Arundel, we take the ferry across the Solent to the Isle of Wight, checking in to the Royal Hotel, our base for the next four nights. This evening we enjoy dinner at the hotel.

Friday: Osborne House and Cowes

Today we have the chance to explore Osborne House, purchased by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1845 as a seaside retreat away from London and Windsor. The Italianate palace boasts spectacular views across the Solent. We take an intimate glimpse of royal family life as we wander through the magnificent Royal Apartments as well as the walled gardens and grounds where we find the charming Swiss Cottage, used by the royal children to learn household management.



Osborne House

Afterwards we have some time at leisure in Cowes, home to the world-famous regatta that swells the local population each August. Many of the town's ornate buildings date from Queen Victoria's time, in the style popularised by her consort Prince Albert. As well as some upmarket shops, Cowes also has numerous art galleries.

We dine together back at the hotel this evening.

Saturday: The Needles, Farringford House & Gardens, Dimbola Lodge, Mottistone Gardens and St Lawrence Parish Church

We take a scenic drive via The Needles with some impressive views of Alum Bay, before heading for a brief visit to Farringford House & Gardens, the home of famous poet and friend of Queen Victoria, Alfred Lord Tennyson. Tennyson lived here from 1853 until his death in 1892.

We then continue on to Dimbola Lodge, home of the celebrated Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron where we enjoy a guided tour. The house is now a Museum and Gallery dedicated to her life and work whilst also showcasing contemporary exhibitions from photographers around the globe.

Next we venture to Mottistone Gardens, one of the most peaceful and magical gardens on the island, surrounding an attractive Elizabethan manor house. Established in the early 20th century, the garden is set in a sheltered valley and is rich in colorful herbaceous borders, shrub-filled banks and grassy terraces.

Finally we visit the Victorian parish church, St Lawrence, which was designed by the architect Sir George Gilbert Scott in the 19th century.

This evening we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

Sunday: Nunwell House, North Court Gardens and Godshell

This morning we enjoy a guided tour of Nunwell House, a beautiful family home since 1522, set in five acres of tranquil gardens with stunning views across the Solent. The parlor chamber of this historic house is where the ill-fated Charles I spent his last night of freedom.

We then head on to the North Court Gardens, which boasts 15 acres of beautiful gardens, with a large variety of plants and exotic palms that enjoy the special varying microclimates of the grounds.

We also spend a short while in the pretty inland village of Godshell with its charming thatched-roofed cottages, delightful medieval church, tearooms and gift shops.

Tonight we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 5 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 4 nights at the Royal Hotel, Isle of Wight
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 6 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ 1 dinner at a restaurant in Windsor
- ◆ 1 dinner at a restaurant on the Isle of Wight
- ◆ 2 lunches
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ Return ferry to the Isle of Wight
- ◆ All entrance costs
- ◆ Porterage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

Nights One to Four, and Nine – Macdonald Windsor Hotel

The Macdonald Windsor Hotel is situated in the heart of the historic town of Windsor, opposite the famous Windsor Castle. The classic interiors, with a contemporary edge, fit perfectly with the Georgian elegance of this townhouse hotel. The luxury bedrooms are individually-designed and the hotel also offers a stylish bar and restaurant.

Nights Five to Eight – The Royal Hotel, Isle of Wight

Founded in 1832, the Royal Hotel is one of the oldest hotels on the Isle of Wight. Set in subtropical gardens overlooking Ventnor Bay, the hotel offers a bar, restaurant and outdoor swimming pool.

Single supplement \$750

Monday: Avington Park

After breakfast we leave the Isle of Wight behind as we take the ferry back to the mainland and then journey to Avington Park for a private guided tour and lunch. This stunning Georgian manor was once the property of Winchester Cathedral and sits in an idyllic location beside the River Itchen.

Afterwards, we return to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together at the hotel.

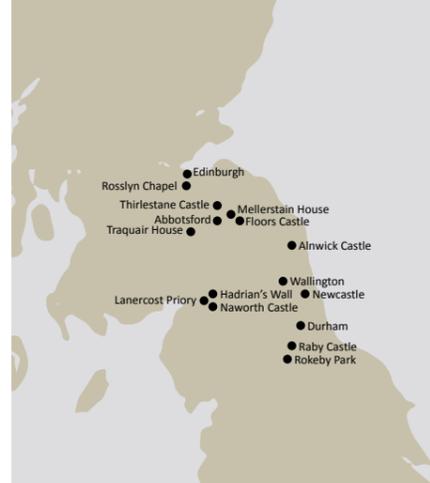
Tuesday: Departure

After breakfast, a private transfer will take you back to Heathrow airport for your return flight home.

Edinburgh, Northumberland & the Scottish Borders

May 5 to 15, 2019 from \$5,490 per person

The compelling and often turbulent history of the border country that separates Scotland and England has resulted in a region that is exceptionally rich in cultural heritage; with a host of defensive forts, ruined abbeys, ancient castles and picturesque stately homes scattered through the scenic and romantic landscape. On this engaging tour, we discover the fascinating stories behind some of these iconic places, from Hadrian's Wall with its tales of Roman Britain to the lives of Christian Monks in the 14th century, with the area immortalised in the work of Sir Walter Scott, whose home we also visit.



Eleven Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Edinburgh airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, the Norton House Hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: Rosslyn Chapel and Abbotsford

This morning we head to Rosslyn Chapel, home to some of the most exquisite carvings and portrait scenes in Europe. Dating back to 1445, the chapel gained worldwide fame thanks to the increasing interest in Freemasonry and the Knights Templar (it was one of the filming locations for Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*).

We continue to Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott, one of the great romanticists and the foremost literary figure of his day. Created by the writer himself in the Scottish Baronial style, the house contains an impressive collection of historic relics and an extensive library and we discover more on our guided tour.

Later we check in to the Macdonald Linden Hall Hotel where we stay for the next five nights. Tonight we enjoy dinner at the hotel.

Tuesday: Newcastle, Newcastle Cathedral and Durham Cathedral

We enjoy a guided tour of Newcastle. In the historical centre of the city stands the Castle Keep, one of the finest Norman stone castle keeps surviving in Britain today. Although founded in 1091, Newcastle Cathedral is mainly 14th century and is notable for its unusual 15th-century lantern spire.

Next is Durham Cathedral, a World Heritage Site, sitting on a rocky promontory high above the River Wear. Originally built in 1093 as a monastic cathedral for a community of Benedictine monks, the cathedral boasts some of the most intact surviving monastic buildings in England.

We dine together at the hotel tonight.

Wednesday: Raby Castle and Rokeby Park

We make our way to Raby Castle. King Cnut owned the estate in the early 11th century but it was the Nevills who built the 14th-century castle we see today, now home to Lord Barnard, a direct descendant of the Nevills. The exterior of medieval towers and turrets contrasts with the sumptuous interiors which provide

Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Guided tour of Abbotsford
- ◆ Guided tour of Newcastle
- ◆ Guided tour of Rokeby Park
- ◆ Private guided tour of Naworth Castle with the owner
- ◆ Guided tour of Alnwick Castle
- ◆ Guided tour of Floors Castle
- ◆ Guided walking tour of Edinburgh
- ◆ Private guided tour of Thirlestane Castle
- ◆ Private guided tour of Traquair House with the owner (subject to availability)
- ◆ Guided tour and afternoon tea aboard the Royal Yacht Britannia
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

a magnificent backdrop for the stunning art collection.

Afterwards, we head to Rokeby Park where we enjoy a guided tour. Completed in 1735 by its owner, Sir Thomas Robinson, this architectural treasure represents the heyday of the Palladian-style country house. Much of the present interior was designed by John Carr and a unique collection of 18th-century needlework pictures by Anne Morrill are on display.

Tonight, we enjoy dinner together back at the hotel.

Thursday: Naworth Castle, Lanercost Priory and Hadrian's Wall

This morning we visit Naworth Castle, the private ancestral home of the Howard family. We enjoy an exclusive private guided tour by the current owner, Philip Howard. A border stronghold dating back to 1335, the castle was almost destroyed by a devastating fire in 1844. Restoration began in 1850 but the interiors were the work of the 9th Earl of Carlisle who counted many of the eminent Pre-Raphaelites among his friends. Naworth is not usually open to the public and we will enjoy a special visit here.



Close by stands the Augustinian Lanercost Priory, founded in 1166. The tranquil setting of the priory belies an often troubled history. Standing close to Hadrian's Wall, it suffered frequent attacks during the long Anglo-Scottish wars. Although the chancel and transepts are in ruins, the cloisters are beautifully preserved and the 13th-century nave lives on as the parish church.

The Romans built Hadrian's Wall as a fortification across Britain some two thousand years ago. We'll explore part of this fascinating archaeological site before visiting Housesteads Roman Fort, Britain's most complete Roman fort.

This evening, we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

Friday: Alnwick Castle and Wallington

Alnwick Castle is still home to the Duke of Northumberland and his family. On our guided tour, we explore the history of the Percy family through the eclectic array of furniture and art they collected in the impressive State Rooms. Alnwick also featured in the popular TV series *Downton Abbey*. We also visit Alnwick Garden, set around a cascading fountain, and surrounding 'Capability' Brown landscape.

We continue on to Wallington, the much-loved home to generations of the unconventional Trevelyan family. Fans of the Pre-Raphaelites will love Wallington's Central Hall. Built towards the close of the 17th century, the rather plain Palladian exterior hides an interior brimming with wonderful collections of ceramics, paintings and needlework.

After dinner back at the hotel, we are treated to a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.

Saturday: Floors Castle and Mellerstain House

We return north, stopping first at Floors Castle, lying on the River Tweed. Scotland's largest inhabited castle has been home to the Dukes of Roxburghe since it was built in 1721 to designs by William Adam. Here we can admire the collections of fine art, furniture, porcelain and tapestries on our guided tour.

Mellerstain House is seen by many as Robert Adam's finest work. Begun in 1725 by William

Adam and completed by his more famous son, Robert, in 1778, the exterior of Mellerstain is a good example of Adam's 'castle style'. It is the interiors however that showcase Adam's work at its best with exquisitely proportioned rooms embellished with classical plasterwork, some fine art as well as period furniture and embroidery collections.

We then return to the Norton House Hotel, our base for the last four nights of our stay. We enjoy dinner together at the hotel tonight.

Sunday: Edinburgh and Edinburgh Castle

This morning we enjoy a guided walking tour of Scotland's capital city of Edinburgh. Most of the city's sights can be found within the medieval Old Town and the elegant Georgian buildings of the New Town, all overlooked by the iconic castle perched high above the city.

As one of the most important strongholds in the Kingdom of Scotland, Edinburgh Castle has witnessed many of the defining events of Scottish history. Highlights include the Crown Jewels of Scotland, the Royal Palace and the 16th-century Great Hall. We then enjoy a little free time to explore the city.

Later, we dine together at a local restaurant.

Monday: Thirlestane Castle and Traquair House

We start the day at Thirlestane Castle where we enjoy a private guided tour. As the seat of the Earls and Duke of Lauderdale and the home of the Maitland family, this defensive fort with rose pink sandstone and fairy tale turrets, dates back to the 13th century. The interiors are a mix of 19th century and early Baroque and highlights include the Duke's bedroom with its exquisite plasterwork ceilings and the extensive family portraits.

Next is Traquair House where the 21st Lady of Traquair* will show us around the house. This 12th-century former hunting lodge, which hosted 27 Scottish monarchs, has a fascinating history spanning nearly a thousand years. Trace the footsteps of the Kings of Scotland as you climb the turnpike staircase and uncover how priests escaped in times of danger.

We dine together back at the hotel this evening.

**subject to availability*

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from Edinburgh*
- ◆ 5 nights at the Norton House Hotel
- ◆ 5 nights at the Macdonald Linden Hall Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 8 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ 2 dinners at local restaurants
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All entrance costs
- ◆ Porterage

**supplement applies for transfers from all other airports*

Your Hotels

Night One and Nights Seven to Ten – Norton House Hotel

Originally a traditional country retreat built in 1840, the Norton House Hotel is a fine country house hotel set in 55 acres of leafy grounds to the west of Edinburgh. This luxury hotel offers boutique rooms and a health club and spa with a swimming pool, sauna, steam room and hydrotherapy pool plus a fully equipped gym.

Nights Two to Six – Macdonald Linden Hall Hotel

Nestling in 450 acres of Northumberland parkland close to Newcastle, the Linden Hall Hotel is a beautiful 18th-century manor house. The hotel boasts classically furnished bedrooms, a luxury spa with indoor pool, sauna and gym plus a tennis court and golf course. A cosy pub, lounge bar and restaurant complete the amenities here.

No single supplement – limited availability

Tuesday: Royal Yacht Britannia

After enjoying a morning at leisure in Edinburgh, this afternoon we step aboard the Royal Yacht Britannia, the Queen's floating Royal residence for over 44 years, used not only for state visits and official receptions but also for family holidays. Our fascinating guided tour includes the Bridge, the State Apartments, Royal Bedrooms, Crew's Quarters and the Engine Room. After our tour, we enjoy afternoon tea on board.

Tonight, we enjoy a farewell dinner together at our hotel.

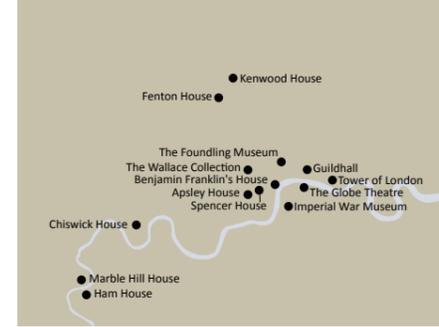
Wednesday: Departure

A private transfer will take you back to Edinburgh airport for your return flight home.

London's Hidden Houses

May 12 to 19, 2019 from \$4,990 per person

Behind the popular tourist hotspots, London has a rich hidden history and a wealth of charming houses to discover. We delve into the fascinating history at the Foundling Museum, tour the outstanding Kenwood House and explore the Roman ruins at Guildhall amongst other hidden gems of this famous city.



Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Private tour of the Churchill War Rooms
- ◆ Backstage tour of the Globe Theatre
- ◆ Private tour of the Wallace Collection
- ◆ Guided tour of Ham House
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

Eight Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to the Grange City Hotel, our hotel for the next six nights. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: Tower of London Ceremony of the Keys, Benjamin Franklin's House and Churchill War Rooms

We begin our day at the Tower of London to witness one of the oldest and most colorful surviving enactments of its kind; the Ceremony of the Keys. Set amidst the mighty battlements of this ancient fortress, this hugely popular ceremony forms part of the traditional 'unlocking' of the Tower of London and dates back some 700 years.



Our next stop takes us to Benjamin Franklin's House. Situated in the heart of London and built in around 1730, this is the only remaining Franklin home in the world. Still boasting many of its original features, the Founding Father of the United States lived at this property between 1757 and 1775 at a time when he was involved in the mediation between Britain and America.

Later we make our way to the heart of Westminster for our visit to the Churchill War Rooms including a private tour. Set underneath the Treasury building, the museum is comprised of the Cabinet War Rooms, used as a base of British Government command during the Second World War, as well as the Churchill Museum, which displays many exhibits that give an insight into the life of Britain's wartime Prime Minister.

Tonight is left free for you to make your own arrangements for dinner.

Tuesday: Foundling Museum, Guildhall and Globe Theatre

Today we visit the Foundling Museum St Pancras which explores the fascinating history of the Foundling Hospital, the UK's first children's charity and first public art gallery. Founded in 1739, the hospital aimed to care for babies at risk of abandonment. The museum was more recently established in 2004, to preserve and display the Foundling Hospital Collection, and gives us the chance to explore the lives of the children who grew up at the hospital from 1741-1954.

Our next point of call today is Guildhall, a powerhouse since the 12th century. Experience the Gothic grandeur of the Great Hall as well as the largest surviving medieval crypts in London. We also explore the impressive ruins of London's Roman Amphitheatre which is situated beneath Guildhall Yard. Rediscovered by archaeologists in 1988, the amphitheatre is over 2,000 years old. Crowds would once have come here to watch gladiatorial combats and public executions.

Crossing the Thames, we then visit Shakespeare's Globe where we enjoy a

fascinating backstage tour to learn more about this iconic theatre and its most famous playwright; from colorful stories of the original 1599 Globe to the faithful reconstruction process of the 1990s.

Back at the hotel this evening, we enjoy dinner together before a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.



Wednesday: Apsley House and Spencer House

Today takes us to Apsley House. Adjacent to Hyde Park, this spectacular former home of the first Duke of Wellington is famously known as 'Number One London'. This beautiful Georgian building has changed very little since the Duke's victory at Waterloo in 1815. As well as taking in the lavish interiors we'll also find a fine art collection with paintings by Rubens and Velazquez.

Our final visit of the day is to Spencer House. Built between 1756-1766 for John, first Earl Spencer (an ancestor of Diana, Princess of Wales), the house is London's most magnificent 18th-century aristocratic palace. Designed by John Vardy and James 'Athenian' Stuart, the State Rooms were amongst the first neo-classical interiors in Europe.

The rest of the day is free for you to explore the local area and find a restaurant for dinner.

Thursday: Chiswick House and Wallace Collection

We head to west London this morning to begin our day at one of the most stunning examples of 18th-century British architecture, Chiswick House. The Roman-style Palladian villa was designed by the third Earl of Burlington and architect and designer William Kent. Make sure to take a look at the stunning ceilings of the upstairs rooms as well as the beautiful velvet wallpaper.



This afternoon we are treated to a private tour of the Wallace Collection, a national museum in a historic London town house. The galleries contain unsurpassed displays of French 18th-century paintings, furniture and porcelain with superb Old Master paintings and a world class armory.

Tonight we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

Friday: Fenton House and Kenwood House

We start the day to the north of the city in the leafy suburb of Hampstead, at Fenton House, a handsome 17th-century merchant's house set in a beautiful walled garden and one of London's hidden gems. The house is filled with highly decorative collections of porcelain, Georgian furniture, early musical instruments and 17th-century needlework. The balcony of the house offers panoramic views of the city on fine days.

Our second visit is Kenwood House, built during the 17th century and originally known as Caen Wood House. Situated in peaceful and impressively landscaped gardens, the property showcases spectacular interiors which we explore alongside a world-class art collection.

Later we enjoy dinner back at our hotel.

Saturday: Ham House and Marble Hill House

We take a scenic drive to Ham House and Gardens, one of Europe's greatest 17th-century houses nestling on the banks of the River Thames. This atmospheric mansion with fine interiors and historic gardens has remained virtually unchanged for 400 years. We find out more about the family who lived at Ham on our guided house tour.

The day finishes just across the Thames at Marble Hill House set in 66 acres of beautiful riverside parkland. Built for the mistress of King George II when he was the Prince of Wales, the property's grand interiors have been recreated and boast a fine collection of early Georgian paintings. Be sure to see the hand painted Chinese wallpaper in the dining parlor.



We then travel to our overnight hotel, the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, where we have a farewell dinner together.

Sunday: Departure

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

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 6 nights at the Grange City Hotel
- ◆ 1 night at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 4 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ 1 dinner at a restaurant in London
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All excursion costs
- ◆ Portage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

Nights One to Six – Grange City Hotel

The Grange City Hotel is a luxury hotel in London near the River Thames, commanding sweeping views over the Tower of London and the iconic Tower Bridge. Popular local attractions include the Tower of London, Petticoat Lane market, the Shard and St Katharine Docks. Rooms feature twin or queen-sized beds, LCD flat-screen TVs with satellite channels, individual climate controls and Bose music systems, hairdryer and an iron. Facilities include four restaurants and bars, state-of-the-art Health and Fitness Club with private gym, virtual golf simulator, 25m swimming pool and Ajala Spa.

Night Seven – Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor

No single supplement – limited availability

Jane Austen & Georgian Treasures of the South

June 2 to 11, 2019 from \$5,250 per person

English novelist Jane Austen is famous the world over for her entertaining novels that gently satirise the dating game in Georgian society. She is forever associated with the south of England, from her home in Chawton, Hampshire to Regency Bath where she lived for a time. We travel to many other places associated with her life and work, and uncover other Georgian gems along the way, such as Bowood and Longleat House and also visit the country's only surviving Rococo Garden.



Wilton House

Ten Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, the Macdonald Windsor Hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: Chawton House Library, Jane Austen House Museum and Hinton Ampner

We travel first to Chawton House, an Elizabethan manor house that once belonged to Jane Austen's brother, Edward Austen Knight. It now accommodates a unique library of titles focusing on women's writing in English from 1600 to 1830.

Continuing our Jane Austen theme, we visit Jane Austen's House Museum, the charming house in Chawton where she spent the last eight years of her life. This is where she did the majority of her mature writing and now tells the story of the author and her family.

Our last stop of the day is Hinton Ampner, an elegant country house with particularly impressive gardens. The property was rebuilt in 1960 by the then owner, Ralph Dutton, after a devastating fire. Today we can wander through the house and take in the fine collection of ceramics and art. Make sure to admire the meticulous garden too.

This evening we check into our hotel for the next seven nights, the Bailbrook House Hotel. Tonight we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Tuesday: Painswick Rococo Garden and Berkeley Castle

Rococo describes a period of art that was fashionable in the 1700s in Europe and today we begin by visiting the Painswick Rococo Garden. Initially designed in the 1740s as an English country gentleman's venue for hosting intimate garden parties, this is now the only complete Rococo garden in England.

Next we visit Berkeley Castle where we enjoy a guided tour. Still home to the Berkeley family today, construction began in the early part of the 12th century. It is best known as the scene of the brutal murder of Edward II in 1327. The castle has also been used for filming including for popular TV drama *Poldark*. The state apartments showcase beautiful collections of furniture and rare paintings.

Tonight is left free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.

Wednesday: Salisbury, Salisbury Cathedral, Mompesson House and Wilton House

Today we head to Salisbury where we take a guided tour of the city's fine medieval cathedral which boasts the tallest spire in Britain. Discover



Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Guided tour of Berkeley Castle
- ◆ Guided tour of Salisbury Cathedral
- ◆ Guided tour and lunch at Wilton House
- ◆ Talk at No.1 Royal Crescent
- ◆ Jane Austen guided walking tour of Bath
- ◆ Early bird private guided tour and lunch at Longleat House
- ◆ Guided tour and lunch at Bowood House
- ◆ Literary-themed guided tour of Winchester Cathedral
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

over 750 years of history here including the best preserved original 1215 Magna Carta document.

Located within Cathedral Close is Mompesson House, a perfect example of a Queen Anne style town house. Its most notable features include magnificent plaster work, an elegant carved oak staircase and fine period furniture. Outside, the charming walled garden has traditionally planted herbaceous borders. The house also featured in the award-winning film *Sense and Sensibility* based on Jane Austen's novel.

We then visit Wilton House, an excellent example of Palladian architecture. Here we enjoy lunch and a guided tour. This impressive property has foremost been a family home for over 450 years and is set in 21 acres of landscaped parkland. The house has regularly been used as a filming location too including for the 2005 film adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* starring Kiera Knightly.

Later we enjoy dinner together at our hotel.

Thursday: Bath – No.1 Royal Crescent, Jane Austen Walking Tour and Fashion Museum

Once home to Jane Austen, Bath has remained faithful to its Regency roots. We begin at No.1 Royal Crescent, a Georgian town house that creates a wonderful picture of life for both the wealthy and their servants in Georgian Bath.



Bowood House



Longleat House

Here we enjoy a fascinating talk upon arrival.

We continue to explore with our guided Jane Austen themed walking tour to view the highlights of the city that features so much in her writing as well as her former homes.

Afterwards, we head to the Assembly Rooms – once the hub of the Georgian social calendar and an important location for Jane Austen's novels set here; *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*. Within the Assembly Rooms we visit the Fashion Museum Bath. Founded in 1963, it houses a world-class collection of contemporary and historic dress, from the 18th century through to modern day.

After dinner back at the hotel, we are treated to a fascinating themed talk by a guest speaker.

Friday: Longleat House and Stourhead

We begin the day with a visit to Longleat House which is widely regarded as one of the best examples of high Elizabethan architecture in Britain. Substantially completed by 1580 and now home to the 7th Marquess of Bath, Longleat House is set within 900 acres of stunning 'Capability' Brown landscaped parkland. We take a private guided tour around the house, visiting some of the most exquisite rooms before the property opens to the public for the day, and later enjoy an included lunch.

Afterwards we head to Stourhead. The estate is renowned for its 18th-century landscaped garden, featured in the 2005 film *Pride and Prejudice*, and a delight of classical temples, exotic trees, hidden grottos and a magnificent lake. The grand Palladian house is no less of a draw, with its Chippendale furniture and one of the finest Regency libraries left in existence.

This evening we enjoy dinner together at our hotel.

Saturday: Bowood House and Lacock Abbey

Family home of the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne, Bowood houses a unique collection of historical artifacts and family heirlooms built up over 250 years; from Queen Victoria's wedding chair to Napoleon's death



Stourhead



The Vyne

mask. Outside are 100 acres of beautiful parkland, designed by 'Capability' Brown. Bowood was also used as a filming location for the 2007 TV film, *Northanger Abbey*. Here we enjoy a guided tour followed by an included lunch.

We then head to the village of Lacock with its picturesque streets of timber-framed cottages. Lacock Abbey sits at the heart of the village with golden stone cloisters and a Great Hall. Once a medieval nunnery, the abbey was turned into a family home by William Henry Fox Talbot who invented the first photographic negative.

Tonight you have some free time to make your own arrangements for dinner.

Sunday: Montacute House and Wells

This morning we visit Elizabethan Montacute House. This splendid mansion of golden stone with its oak-panelled rooms and the longest gallery in England is crammed with treasures including the Tudor and Elizabethan portraits on loan from the National Portrait Gallery. Several scenes of the 1995 film version of *Sense and Sensibility* were filmed at Montacute, including the scene where Marianne was rejected by Willoughby.

Afterwards we continue on for a short stop in Wells, located at the foot of the Mendip Hills. England's smallest city boasts a magnificent cathedral and unique moated Bishop's Palace while the eclectic mix of buildings and narrow streets adds to the atmosphere here.

Later we have dinner at the hotel.

Monday: Winchester Cathedral and The Vyne

Today we explore the medieval city of Winchester with a literary-themed guided tour of the cathedral. The awe-inspiring cathedral is just one of the historic highlights here; its hidden treasures include the tomb of Jane Austen and the Winchester Bible, one of the finest 12th-century bibles to have survived.

We continue on to The Vyne, a splendid Tudor red-brick mansion set in 13 acres of attractive gardens. It was built for King Henry VIII's Lord Chamberlain before becoming the Chute family home for over 300 years.

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 7 nights at the Bailbrook House Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 7 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All excursion costs
- ◆ Portage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

Nights One and Nine

– Macdonald Windsor Hotel

The Macdonald Windsor Hotel is situated in the heart of the historic town of Windsor, opposite the famous Windsor Castle. The classic interiors, with a contemporary edge, fit perfectly with the Georgian elegance of this townhouse hotel. The luxury bedrooms are individually-designed and the hotel also offers a stylish bar and restaurant.

Nights Two to Eight

– Bailbrook House Hotel

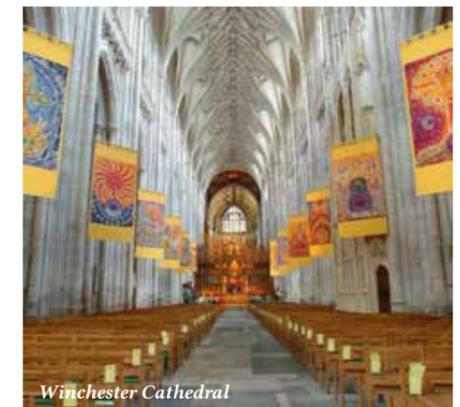
Dating back to the early 1790s, Bailbrook House Hotel is a country house hotel situated just a few minutes from Bath. Set within 20 acres of private grounds, the hotel offers classically-decorated bedrooms located in a new wing as well as the original house, two restaurants, three elegant lounges and a conservatory bar.

No single supplement – limited availability

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

Tuesday: Departure

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



Winchester Cathedral

Fairytale Castles of Kent

June 9 to 17, 2019 from \$5,250 per person

We explore the romantic county of Kent on this fascinating tour as we learn about its role shaping English history, and discover some of its famous residents such as Ann Boleyn, Charles Dickens and Winston Churchill, in his former home of Chartwell. In a county famed for its castles, we also explore historic Hever Castle, impressive Leeds Castle and the treasure house of Chiddingstone Castle.



Nine Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, the Macdonald Windsor Hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: Windsor Castle, Windsor and Chartwell

We enjoy an audio guided tour of Windsor Castle, the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world and one of the Queen's official residences. Established in the 11th century by William the Conqueror, it has been remodelled 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 from the Royal Collection while St George's Chapel is one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in England and was the recent venue for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's marriage.

Afterwards, we enjoy a guided walking tour of Windsor. Lying on the south bank of the River Thames, this ancient royal town, which grew up around the castle, has a rich mix of culture and history. The Old Town retains its picturesque medieval appearance with cobbled streets, winding alleyways and lovely half-timbered houses.

Later, we travel south east to Kent where we pay a visit to Chartwell, Sir Winston Churchill's beloved home from 1924 to the time of his death. The house is set in a stunning location and is still home to many of the great statesman's personal and political mementos, including an amazing collection of gifts he received from other world leaders and his personal painting studio hidden away in the colorful grounds.

After our visit, we travel on to the Chilston Park Hotel where we stay for the next four nights. Tonight we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Tuesday: Sissinghurst Castle Garden and Bodiam Castle

This morning we head to Sissinghurst Castle Garden where we enjoy an exclusive 'early bird' garden tour. Created in the 1930s by novelist Vita Sackville-West and her husband Harold Nicolson around the picturesque ruins of an Elizabethan manor house, these world-famous gardens are laid out as a series of enchanting, individually-planted 'rooms' including a fragrant Herb Garden and Rose Garden.

We then discover Bodiam Castle, one of Britain's most picturesque and romantic ancient monuments. This archetypal 14th-century moated castle with a ruined interior gives us a glimpse of medieval splendor and boasts an original wooden portcullis, spiral staircases, tower rooms and battlements.

In the evening, we head to a traditional local pub where we enjoy dinner together.

Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Audio guided tour of Windsor Castle
- ◆ Guided walking tour of Windsor
- ◆ Exclusive 'early bird' garden tour of Sissinghurst Castle Garden
- ◆ Guided tour of Hever Castle
- ◆ Guided tour of Chiddingstone Castle
- ◆ Guided walking tour of Canterbury
- ◆ Guided tour of Canterbury Cathedral
- ◆ Guided tour of Godinton House
- ◆ Audio guided tour of Leeds Castle
- ◆ Audio guided tour at Blenheim Palace
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

Wednesday: Hever Castle and Chiddingstone Castle

We head to Hever Castle, the childhood home of Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn, where we enjoy a guided tour. Dating back to the late 13th century, this double-moated castle is home to various historic artifacts including Tudor portraits and fine furniture, as well as two prayer books inscribed by Anne Boleyn. The castle was lavishly restored and extended by American millionaire, William Waldorf Astor, in the early 20th century. The spectacular gardens feature peaceful walks, two mazes and are renowned for having their own Hever Castle Rose.

Next is Chiddingstone Castle where we enjoy a guided tour. Set in 35 acres of beautiful grounds, the castle has undergone a number of architectural changes; from its beginnings as an early timber-framed Tudor dwelling to a rebuild to resemble a medieval castle in the early 19th century. Today it houses the collections of the late antiquarian Denys Eyre Bower including Japanese lacquer, Ancient Egyptian treasures, Stuart paintings and Jacobite manuscripts. The Victorian kitchen and servants' hall give a taste of the former 'upstairs downstairs' life of the house.

After dinner back at the hotel, we are treated to a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.



Thursday: Canterbury, Canterbury Cathedral and Godinton House

We start the day in Canterbury. The city has a fascinating history which we learn about on our guided walking tour. We also enjoy a guided tour of Canterbury Cathedral, the oldest cathedral in England, dating back to Norman times. 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 while its awe-inspiring architecture includes a sweeping Gothic nave and cavernous crypt.

Our next stop is Godinton House, a delightful Jacobean house incorporating a medieval hall and ornate carvings. Godinton is a comfortable, much-loved home where each room reflects the tastes of those who have lived here over the centuries with an excellent collection of furniture, art, porcelain and curios which we discover on our guided tour. We also have time to explore the 12 acres of tranquil gardens, surrounded by ancient parkland.

We enjoy dinner together back at the hotel tonight.

Friday: Down House and Leeds Castle

Our first stop today is Down House, home of scientist Charles Darwin and his family for 40 years. Several rooms have been recreated as they appeared when he lived here including the study where he wrote 'On the Origin of Species'. The house is surrounded by extensive gardens; Darwin's 'outdoor laboratory'.

Before leaving Kent we visit Leeds Castle, a quintessential moated castle set in 500 acres of glorious parkland, where we enjoy an audio guided tour. Dating back to the 12th century, it was once home to Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. The castle's last private owner was Lady Baillie, an Anglo-American heiress who lovingly

restored the castle to its former glory. We discover more of the castle's fascinating history as well as its wealth of furnishings, paintings, tapestries and antiques on display.

We then return to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, our base for the last three nights of our stay. Later, we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Saturday: Blenheim Palace

We spend the day at Blenheim Palace, set in beautiful parkland landscaped by 'Capability' Brown, where we enjoy an audio guided tour. 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.

The evening is left free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.

Sunday: Hampton Court Palace

Our destination today is Hampton Court Palace, former royal residence of Henry VIII. Here we discover the State Rooms, the Great Hall (England's last and greatest medieval hall), the vast Tudor kitchens and the Chapel Royal with its sumptuous ceiling decoration. Outside, the formal gardens cover over 60 acres and highlights include the Great Vine planted by 'Capability' Brown, and the Hampton Court Palace Maze which consists of half a mile of winding paths surrounded by towering yew tree walls.

Tonight, we enjoy a farewell dinner together at our hotel.

Monday: Departure

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

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 4 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 4 nights at the Chilston Park Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 6 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ 1 dinner at a traditional local pub
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All entrance costs
- ◆ Portage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

Night One and Nights Six to Eight – Macdonald Windsor Hotel

The Macdonald Windsor Hotel is situated in the heart of the historic town of Windsor, opposite the famous Windsor Castle. The classic interiors, with a contemporary edge, fit perfectly with the Georgian elegance of this townhouse hotel. The luxury bedrooms are individually-designed and the hotel also offers a stylish bar and restaurant.

Nights Two to Five – Chilston Park Hotel

Set in 22 acres of parkland in the heart of Kent, the Chilston Park Hotel is an elegant 17th-century manor house. Once home to eminent politicians, writers, Lords and Viscounts, the hotel is filled with antiques dating from as far back as the 17th century and offers the classic comforts of a British country house hotel.

No single supplement – limited availability



Chartwell

© NTPU/Devin Sellman

Cambridgeshire & the Origins of the Mayflower 400

June 11 to 20, 2019 from \$5,250 per person

Ahead of 2020's Mayflower 400 celebrations, we discover the origins of the Pilgrim Fathers in the heart of England. From a congregation of disgruntled English Protestants from the village of Scrooby, Nottinghamshire through to a voyage into the unknown in the New World, we look at the origins of the Mayflower Pilgrims as we travel north to Boston and Gainsborough, taking in landmarks around Scrooby itself before we head to Cambridge and Essex to explore their role in the story. We also visit Harwich where the Mayflower was believed to be built and started her journey.



Woburn Abbey

Ten Day Itinerary

Tuesday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, the Macdonald Windsor Hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Wednesday: Woburn Abbey

We head northwards, where we step back to the time of the Pilgrim Fathers, stopping to visit Woburn Abbey, family home of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford. Originally a monastery, Woburn Abbey was given by Edward VI to the Russell family in 1547. Since then, several leading architects of their day have helped create the stunning historic house we see today. We explore nearly 500 years of one family's history on our guided tour as well as discover a unique art collection, a treasury of silver, porcelain and fine English and French furniture.

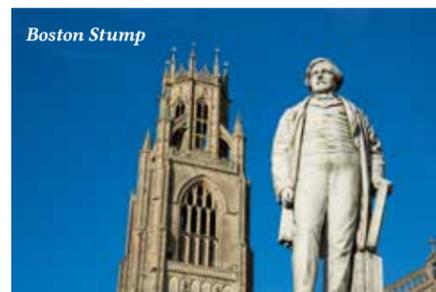
Afterwards, we make our way to the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel where we stay for the next three nights. Dinner is included on every evening of our stay here.

Thursday: Scrooby, Austerfield and Gainsborough Old Hall

Today we enjoy a drive through the scenic countryside, taking us first to the village of Scrooby. There are few rural villages with which the early history of the colonisation of the United States is entwined. It was here that a group of Puritan Separatists initiated the emigration of the Pilgrim Fathers to America in 1620 aboard the Mayflower. Scrooby is also the birthplace of William Brewster, one of the founder Pilgrim Fathers.

We then make the short journey to the village of Austerfield, home of William Bradford who joined the Separatist cause and rose to become one of the principal figures in 17th-century New England. Both William Bradford and William Brewster led the foundation of Plymouth Colony, the first settlement of New England.

Our final visit is to Gainsborough Old Hall. Built by the noble Burgh family around 1460, it is one of the best-preserved, timber-framed medieval manor houses in the country. The house boasts an impressive Great Hall, an original medieval kitchen and original brick built tower. Famous visitors include Richard III, Henry VIII and the Mayflower Pilgrims.



Boston Stump

Friday: Boston Guildhall, Boston Stump* and Nottingham

The market town and historic port of Boston has many links to the Pilgrim Fathers. Our first visit is to the magnificent 14th-century medieval Guildhall. Part of the building's fascinating history includes the famous trial and imprisonment of the Pilgrim Fathers in 1607, when they were thwarted in their first attempt to leave England and find religious freedom in Holland. Today the Guildhall houses the town's museum where displays and exhibitions bring many of these stories to life.



Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Guided tour of Woburn Abbey
- ◆ Guided walking tour of Nottingham
- ◆ Guided walking tour of Cambridge
- ◆ Talk at Lavenham Guildhall
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

Next, we visit St Botolph's Church, otherwise known as Boston Stump. The church is most notable for its magnificent tower which, at 272ft high, is one of the tallest medieval towers in England. The church is particularly well known for its close ties to the Pilgrim Fathers. The Rev. John Cotton urged members of his local congregation to join the Massachusetts Bay Company in an attempt to establish an English settlement for religious Puritans in New England. In the 1630's he helped to found the city of Boston, Massachusetts.

We end the day in Nottingham where we enjoy a guided walking tour to explore the city's rich history. One-time lace capital of the world, Nottingham is renowned for its landmark buildings, each which tells of its own chapter in Nottingham's history, including the Lace Market with its stunning architecture.

Saturday: Stamford and Cambridge

Our first stop today is the picturesque market town of Stamford, described as the finest stone town in England. The town prospered from the wool trade and boasts a variety of 17th and 18th-century stone buildings, older timber-framed buildings and no fewer than five medieval parish churches.

We then make our way to the historic city of Cambridge. Renowned for its world-famous university, its prestigious list of alumni includes William Brewster. The city is home to many architectural wonders and landmarks that we have the chance to discover as part of our guided walking tour. From punters on the River Cam to the majestic college buildings such as King's College Chapel, we explore the many sights of this fascinating city.



Fitzwilliam Museum



We travel on to the stunning Ickworth Hotel on the Ickworth Estate – a magnificent National Trust property and our base for the next four nights. Later, we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Sunday: Fitzwilliam Museum and Peterhouse College

We head back into Cambridge where we visit the Fitzwilliam Museum. The art and antiquities museum of the University of Cambridge contains a vast collection of treasures from paintings and armour to ceramics, furniture, textiles, sculptures and manuscripts.

In the afternoon we visit Peterhouse, the oldest college of the University of Cambridge, founded in 1284 by Hugo de Balsham, Bishop of Ely. Highlights include the Chapel, the Libraries and the Hall, where the communal life of the student is centred.

This evening, we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Monday: Lavenham, Harwich and Saffron Walden

We pay a visit to picturesque Lavenham, a remarkably well-preserved Tudor village in Suffolk. The woollen-cloth industry turned the town into one of the richest in the country during the 15th century, with the church of St Peter and Paul built from the proceeds of local industry. We enjoy a talk at the National Trust's Guildhall of Corpus Christi – a potent reminder of Lavenham's former prosperity.

We continue on to the port of Harwich on the North Sea coast. Harwich has a long and fascinating seafaring history – it is believed that the Pilgrim Fathers built and launched the Mayflower here and it is also the birthplace of its captain, Christopher Jones. The Mayflower Project is underway at the yard with the building of a replica of the famous ship with the plan to sail to America in 2020 for the 400th anniversary.

En-route back to the hotel, we make a short stop in Saffron Walden, a charming medieval market town with many historic buildings including the half-timbered Guildhall.

The evening is free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.



Lavenham



Peterhouse College

Tuesday: Ely Cathedral and Anglesey Abbey

We visit magnificent Ely Cathedral. Founded as a monastery in 673, work on the present building dates from the early 1080s. A remarkable example of both Romanesque and Norman architecture, its most famous feature is the central Octagon Tower which, along with the West Tower, gives a unique exterior landmark that dominates the surrounding landscape.

We then make our way to Anglesey Abbey, Gardens and Lode Mill. Don't be fooled by the name; the house's interior is a vestige of 1930s luxury, complete with rich furnishings, silver, paintings, books and rare clocks. Outside, discover an exceptional array of sculptures in the landscape gardens.

After dinner back at the hotel, we are treated to a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.

Wednesday: Wimpole Estate and Windsor

This morning we head to the unique working estate of Wimpole, still a hive of activity with a beautiful hall at its heart. The largest house in Cambridgeshire boasts some unique interior flourishes, including the graceful Yellow Drawing Room and Bath House. The wonderful library was specially built to house an enormous collection of books that went on to form the core of the early British Library. Outside there is a landscape park, colourful parterre garden, a walled kitchen garden and herbaceous borders to enjoy.

Later, we return to Windsor where we have some time at leisure. Lying on the south bank of the River Thames, this ancient royal town, which grew up around the castle, has a rich mix of culture and history. The Old Town retains its picturesque medieval appearance with cobbled streets, winding alleyways and lovely half-timbered houses.

Afterwards, we check back in to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Thursday: Departure

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

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 3 nights at the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel
- ◆ 4 nights at the Ickworth Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 8 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All entrance costs
- ◆ Porterage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

Nights One and Nine – Macdonald Windsor Hotel

The Macdonald Windsor Hotel is situated in the heart of the historic town of Windsor, opposite the famous Windsor Castle. The classic interiors, with a contemporary edge, fit perfectly with the Georgian elegance of this townhouse hotel. The luxury bedrooms are individually-designed and the hotel also offers a stylish bar and restaurant.

Nights Two to Four – Stapleford Park Country House Hotel

Stapleford Park Country House Hotel is a beautiful country house hotel and golf course surrounded by 500 acres of Capability Brown grounds. The mansion bears the imprint of architectural styles, from Tudor to Victorian with all of the 21st-century amenities you would expect in a luxury hotel. Each room is individually decorated and many have been designed by famous names.

Nights Five to Eight – Ickworth Hotel

Set in the East Wing of the National Trust's historic Ickworth House, the Ickworth Hotel is a luxury country house hotel that enjoys some spectacular views across the grounds of the estate. Each room is uniquely decorated, while the hotel features a spa with an indoor swimming pool to relax in. During our stay, we also enjoy exclusive after-hours access to the Italianate Gardens until dusk.

No single supplement – limited availability



Wimpole Estate

* Boston Stump will be undergoing restoration in 2019 so may be closed at short notice.

Glorious Gardens & Grandeur of North Wales

June 23 to July 2, 2019 from \$5,290 per person

North Wales, a land blessed with rugged mountains, beautiful beaches and picturesque villages also has some of the most striking gardens in the UK, many attached to magnificent houses with centuries of history to uncover. From world-renowned gardens to hidden gems, we encounter a remarkable array of sweeping landscapes, woodlands, valleys, walled gardens and displays of abundant flowers and shrubs which thrive in the unique climate of this region. We round off our tour with a visit to Tatton Park, one of Britain's most complete estates, and the historic and inspirational Waterperry Gardens in Oxfordshire.



Conwy Castle

Ten Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, the Macdonald Windsor Hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.



Bodnant Garden

Monday: Stratford-upon-Avon

We head to Stratford-upon-Avon, situated on the banks of the River Avon and forever associated with England's greatest poet and playwright, William Shakespeare. Fans of Shakespeare can visit the house in which he was born, and there's a chance to wander the riverside gardens or discover the town's theatres including the Swan Theatre, home of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Later, we continue our journey to Wales, checking in to Bodysgallen Hall & Spa close to the Victorian seaside resort of Llandudno, where we spend the next six nights. Tonight we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Tuesday: Penrhyn Castle and Bodnant Garden

Built in the 19th century in a neo-Norman style, the magnificent Penrhyn Castle was built on a massive scale over a period of 13 years and offers superb views of Snowdonia. There is so much to see here, from the outstanding collection of paintings, restored Victorian kitchens and a railway museum.

Next stop is Bodnant Garden, nestled in the Snowdonian foothills. Created over 150 years, this world-famous garden is home to National Collections and Champion Trees and boasts sweeping lawns, grand terraces and verdant woodland.

The evening is free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.

Wednesday: Isle of Anglesey, Plas Newydd House & Gardens and Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens

Today we cross the 19th-century Menai Bridge to spend the day on the Isle of Anglesey. Our first visit is to Plas Newydd, a fine country house built on the banks of the Menai Strait with stunning views towards the mountains of Snowdonia. Its most famous past resident is the 1st Marquess of Anglesey, who commanded the cavalry at Waterloo in 1815. The elegant interior owes more to the 1930s, thanks to its associations with the artist, socialite and fallen WWII soldier Rex Whistler. The garden's climate allows extraordinary plants to flourish including



Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Guided tour of Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens
- ◆ Guided tour and refreshments at Plas Tan y Bwlch
- ◆ Private guided tour of Erddig Hall and Gardens
- ◆ Lunch at Tatton Park
- ◆ Lunch and guided tour at Waterperry Gardens
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

tender exotics and Mediterranean plants. There is also an atmospheric Australasian arboretum.

We continue on to Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens. Described as one of North Wales' best kept secrets, these historic gardens are gradually being restored to their former glory. Three different gardens have been discovered, including an unusual walled garden with curving walls, a secret valley garden with three waterfalls and a river, and an upper woodland garden with the remains of a 19th-century folly. We discover more about the gardens and their restoration on our guided tour.

After dinner back at the hotel, we are treated to a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.

Thursday: Plas Tan y Bwlch, Betws-y-Coed and Conwy Castle

Home to the Snowdonia National Park Environmental Studies Centre, Plas Tan y Bwlch is a 17th-century country house which was once home to wealthy slate quarry owners the Oakeley family. The house occupies a superb position overlooking the valley of the River Dwyryd in the heart of the Snowdonia National Park and the 100 acre estate boasts a spectacular Victorian garden, native and exotic plants, rare trees and shrubs. We enjoy a guided tour with the Head Gardener followed by refreshments (please note there is no access to the house itself).

We then make a short stop in the picturesque village of Betws-y-Coed in the Snowdonia



Plas Newydd



Tatton Park

National Park. The backdrop of coniferous forests has earned this area the name 'Little Switzerland'.

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

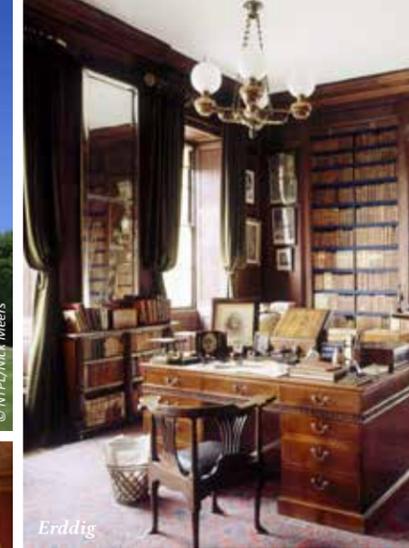
Tonight, we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

Friday: Erddig and Brynbella Garden

Erddig is an atmospheric early 18th-century house that reflects the 'upstairs, downstairs' life of a gentry family and we're provided with a fascinating insight into the lives of the family and their servants on our private guided tour. The downstairs rooms are home to a unique collection of servants' portraits, whilst upstairs there is a wealth of important furniture, textiles and wallpaper. Our tour extends to the superb walled garden, now restored to its former 18th-century formal design with rare fruit trees and a national collection of ivies.

We then travel to Brynbella Garden, nine acres of beautiful garden and woodland set below a Palladian villa. The current owners have created a modern garden while retaining as many of the original 18th-century features as possible. The garden is laid out as a series of rooms including a woodland garden, walled garden, three water gardens, a gravel garden plus formal and informal garden areas with focal points such as statuary and sculptures.

Tonight we are treated to a traditional fish and chip supper.



Erddig



Portmeirion

Saturday: Portmeirion and Plas Brondanw Gardens

We start the day in Portmeirion, an Italianate village created by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, inspired by his visits to the Mediterranean. Its unique atmosphere has been featured on camera many times, most famously in the iconic 1960s British TV series *The Prisoner*.

We then visit Plas Brondanw Gardens, situated in the heart of Snowdonia. The house and gardens were given to Sir Clough Williams-Ellis by his father in 1902 and the gardens, although not as famous as Portmeirion, are regarded by some as his finest creation. Inspired by the gardens of renaissance Italy, he created a unique and characteristic garden landscape with stone walls, topiary and avenues of trees leading the eye to the dramatic backdrop of mountains beyond.

This evening, we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Sunday: Tatton Park

Leaving Wales we journey east to Tatton Park. Built by Samuel Wyatt, Tatton Park is one of Britain's most complete estates, with a landscaped deer park and exquisite formal gardens. The opulent interior is crammed with collections of silver, china, glass and fine furniture made by Gillows. This grandeur also extends outside to the garden, where year-round colour is provided by the Rose, Italian and Japanese gardens. We enjoy lunch here after our visit.

From here we travel south to the Mercure Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Hotel, where we stay overnight with dinner included.

Monday: Waterperry Gardens

We start the morning with some time at leisure in Stratford-upon-Avon, before travelling to Waterperry Gardens where we enjoy lunch

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 6 nights at Bodysgallen Hall & Spa
- ◆ 1 night at the Mercure Shakespeare Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 6 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ 2 dinners at local restaurants (including one traditional English fish and chip supper)
- ◆ 2 lunches
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All entrance costs
- ◆ Porterage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

Nights One and Nine – Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor

Nights Two to Seven – Bodysgallen Hall & Spa

One of the three Historic House Hotels of the National Trust, Bodysgallen Hall & Spa is a luxury hotel just two miles from the seaside resort of Llandudno in North Wales. This sympathetically restored, 17th century country house stands in over 200 acres of wooded parkland and beautiful formal walled gardens affording lovely views of the Snowdonia mountain range and Conwy Castle. The individually-decorated bedrooms are divided between the main hall and several cottages in the grounds and leisure facilities include a swimming pool, steam room, sauna, solarium and gym.

Night Eight – Mercure Shakespeare Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon

No single supplement – limited availability

followed by a guided tour. Made famous by Beatrix Havergal who established her School of Horticulture for Ladies here from 1932 to 1971, the 8 acres of beautifully landscaped ornamental gardens now include a rose and formal knot garden, water-lily canal, riverside walk, and one of the finest purely herbaceous borders in the country.

Afterwards, we return to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Tuesday: Departure

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

Liverpool, Cheshire & Northern Ireland

July 7 to 18, 2019 from \$6,490 per person

The port of Liverpool has strong links to Northern Ireland, from the flood of immigrants who came to Liverpool in the 19th century, they also share an industrial heritage in shipping, with the Titanic being built in Belfast but registered in Liverpool. We explore further links as we travel to the north of England, taking in grand houses such as Tatton Park and Arley Hall, before flying into Northern Ireland to discover equally stunning Mount Stewart House alongside the natural wonder the Giant's Causeway and the industrial giant of Titanic Belfast.

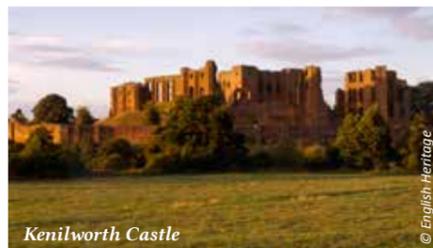


Giant's Causeway

Twelve Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel the Macdonald Windsor Hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.



Kenilworth Castle

© English Heritage

Monday: Warwick and Kenilworth Castle

We begin our day in the historic town of Warwick, famous for its castle. Situated on the River Avon, we'll have some free time here to explore this picturesque town.

We then continue on to Kenilworth Castle, one of England's largest medieval fortresses and most impressive castle ruins. It was here that Robert Dudley, the great love of Elizabeth I, created an ornate palace in 1575. Walk in the footsteps of royalty and enjoy panoramas over the surrounding countryside. We also have an included lunch at the castle.

Later we check in to our hotel for the night, the New Hall Hotel & Spa, and enjoy dinner together.



Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Lunch at Kenilworth Castle
- ◆ Guided tour of Arley Hall
- ◆ Guided tour of Liverpool
- ◆ Guided tour of Belfast
- ◆ Lunch at Benvarnden House
- ◆ Guided tour of Castle Ward
- ◆ Guided walking tour of Oxford
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

Tuesday: Weston Park and Arley Hall

Today we venture to Weston Park, a magnificent 17th-century stately home set amidst 1,000 acres of Capability Brown parkland and beautiful gardens. The dining room houses one of the country's most impressive collections of paintings including works by renowned artists such as Sir Anthony van Dyck.

Next we head to Arley Hall, the much-loved home of Viscount Ashbrook and his forbears for over 500 years. We enjoy a guided tour of the Hall which provides an intimate atmosphere with elaborate ceilings, oak-panelling and beautiful furniture.

We then check in to our hotel in the Liverpool area where we stay for the next three nights. After dinner, we are treated to a fascinating themed talk by a guest speaker.

Wednesday: Tatton Park and Liverpool

Built by Samuel Wyatt, Tatton Park is one of Britain's most complete estates, with a landscaped deer park and exquisite formal gardens. The opulent interior is crammed with collections of silver, china and fine furniture made by Gillows. This grandeur also extends outside to the garden, where year-round colour is provided by the Rose, Italian and Japanese gardens.

Later we enjoy a guided tour of Liverpool learning all there is to know about its history as an industrial force and, of course, its most famous sons. From the Liver Building to the renovated Albert Dock we'll discover some

of the city's impressive landmarks. We'll also go inside one of Liverpool's iconic cathedrals, the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, a place of worship which is affectionately known as 'Paddy's Wigwam'.

This evening we enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Thursday: Knowsley Hall and Speke Hall

Today we begin by visiting splendid Knowsley Hall, home to the Earl of Derby. Set in a 2,500 acre estate, the Hall dates back over 500 years and is a fascinating structure boasting a Georgian facade and some extremely fine Jacobean, Baroque and Victorian interiors.

This afternoon we visit Speke Hall, a little piece of Tudor tranquillity with later Victorian additions to boot as well as some fine Jacobean plasterwork and a spectacular Great Hall. Outside, admire the eye-catching black and white timber exterior and the beautiful restored gardens.

Tonight is at leisure for you to make your own arrangements for dinner.



Speke Hall

© NTPU/Andrew Butler



Friday: Fly to Belfast

Today we fly to Belfast, where upon arrival we transfer to the Merchant Hotel to check in for our four night stay. We enjoy dinner together at the hotel tonight.

Saturday: Titanic Experience, Belfast and The Crown Bar

Belfast is still home to Harland & Wolff, the shipbuilders that built the Titanic, so it's fitting that we visit the fantastic Titanic Experience that opened in 2012 to mark the centenary of the liner's doomed maiden voyage.

We then take a guided tour of Northern Ireland's capital. Belfast is now a thriving, modern city with a fascinating and sometimes turbulent history. It was also a key player in the Industrial Revolution, being the center for the Irish linen and tobacco industries.

Afterwards there is the chance to enjoy a drink at the National Trust pub, The Crown Bar, arguably the most famous pub in Belfast. This iconic bar was originally the Railway Tavern, but was renamed in 1885 and still features period gas lighting and cosy snugs today. The rest of the afternoon is free to explore Belfast at leisure before we later enjoy dinner together at a restaurant in Belfast.

Sunday: Benvarnden House, Giant's Causeway and Glenarm Castle

Our day begins at Benvarnden House, a historic estate set in beautiful grounds. The House has been home to the Montgomery family since 1798. We enjoy lunch together at the House.

Afterwards we join our coach for a glorious scenic coastal drive, enjoying the passing views of the lush green countryside, unspoilt beaches and rolling Atlantic waves as we head to the Giant's Causeway. These world-famous,



Castle Ward

© Peter Marily

enormous basalt columns were produced by volcanic eruptions some sixty million years ago, and are now a designated World Heritage Site.

Our final stop for the day is at Glenarm Castle. Currently home to Viscount and Viscountess Dunluce and their family, the present castle has been in the McDonnell family since it was built in 1636.

This evening is left free for you to explore the city and make dinner arrangements.

Monday: Castle Ward and Mount Stewart

Castle Ward, our first point of call today, is an eccentric 18th-century house that features a curious mixture of architectural styles and here we enjoy a guided tour. Set in 820 picturesque acres of demesne with superb views over Strangford Lough, the estate also has a stable yard that houses a tea room and second-hand bookshop.

The magnificent Mount Stewart House and Garden is our next stop. The recently restored family home offers a wealth of treasures while the wonderfully atmospheric garden has a distinct Mediterranean feel thanks to the exceptionally mild climate of nearby Strangford Lough.

Tonight we again enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Tuesday: Fly to Liverpool and Shugborough Estate

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our flight back to Liverpool. Upon arrival we meet our coach and head to the Shugborough Estate, a rare survival of a complete estate that was returned to the care of the National Trust in 2017. With an operational Victorian servants' quarter, dairy and Georgian Park Farm complete

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ Roundtrip flights between Liverpool to Belfast with airport transfers
- ◆ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 2 nights at the New Hall Hotel
- ◆ 3 nights at a selected hotel in the Liverpool area
- ◆ 4 nights at the Merchant Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 6 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ 1 dinner at a restaurant in Liverpool
- ◆ 2 dinners at restaurants in Belfast
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All excursion costs
- ◆ Porterage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

with watermill, this imposing 17th-century house is also a sensory treat, while the parkland is scattered with mysterious monuments.

Later we check back in to the New Hall Hotel & Spa ready for dinner.

Wednesday: Oxford

Historic Oxford is known as the city of dreaming spires and is famed for its world-renowned university colleges. We enjoy a guided walking tour here to learn more about its history, university and famous people.

We then return to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Thursday: Departure

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

Please note: the itinerary order is subject to change.

Your Hotels

Nights One and Eleven – Macdonald Windsor Hotel

The Macdonald Windsor Hotel is situated in the heart of the historic town of Windsor, opposite the famous Windsor Castle. The classic interiors, with a contemporary edge, fit perfectly with the Georgian elegance of this townhouse hotel. The luxury bedrooms are individually-designed and the hotel also offers a stylish bar and restaurant.

Nights Two and Ten – New Hall Hotel & Spa

A beautiful example of late medieval architecture, the New Hall Hotel & Spa is set in 26 acres of picturesque private grounds near Sutton Coldfield in the Midlands area. Facilities include a Health Club open to residents, a spa, a quality restaurant and a Terrace Lounge and Bar.

Nights Three to Five – A selected hotel, Liverpool area

Nights Six to Nine – The Merchant Hotel

The Merchant Hotel is located in the heart of Belfast's city center historic Cathedral Quarter. This grand, original, Grade A listed building is complemented by the Art Deco inspired wing within. The hotel offers a range of facilities including a luxury spa, rooftop gymnasium with panoramic views and a fabulous jazz bar.

No single supplement – limited availability

Aristocrats & Manor Houses & a Grand Tour to the North

July 21 to 30, 2019 & August 11 to 20, 2019
from \$5,250 per person

Our unforgettable tour explores the architectural grandeur and superb collections of some of Britain's finest estates, some still family homes to this day. We also discover how these dramatic properties and their society stories have inspired literature through the centuries as we travel from the Home Counties up to the rugged landscapes of the north.



Alnwick Castle



Highclere Castle



Beningbrough Hall

Ten Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: Highclere Castle

After breakfast, we journey to the world-famous Highclere Castle, residence of the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon and filming location for the much loved *Downton Abbey* television series. Entrance includes access to the Egyptian Exhibition in the cellars of the castle, which explores the achievements of the 5th Earl of Carnarvon who discovered the tomb of Tutankhamen in 1922.

From here, we travel to Leicestershire and the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel where we stay for the next two nights. We enjoy dinner tonight at our hotel.



Highclere Castle



Chatsworth House Library

Tuesday: Chatsworth House and Nottingham

We start the day at Chatsworth House where we enjoy an introductory house tour. This magnificent pile is home to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and has witnessed sixteen generations of the powerful Cavendish family and boasts grandiose interiors, wonderful grounds and a superlative art collection. Chatsworth also appeared as Pemberley in the film *Pride and Prejudice*. We finish our visit with a Devonshire Cream Tea.

En-route back to our hotel, we make a short stop in Nottingham. One-time lace capital of the world, Nottingham is renowned for its landmark buildings, each which tells of its own chapter in Nottingham's history, including the Lace Market with its stunning architecture.

The evening is left free to make your own dinner arrangements.



Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Introductory house tour and Devonshire Cream Tea at Chatsworth House
- ◆ Refreshments at Fairfax House
- ◆ Guided tour of Fountains Abbey
- ◆ Private house tour with morning coffee and biscuits at Castle Howard
- ◆ Guided State Rooms tour at Alnwick Castle
- ◆ Audio guided tour and afternoon tea at Blenheim Palace
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

Wednesday: Hardwick Hall, York and Fairfax House

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

We then travel north to the historic city of York. Here we visit Fairfax House, a stunning Georgian town house that has been returned 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 18th-century furniture. We enjoy refreshments here after our visit.

Afterwards, we make our way to our hotel for the next two nights, the Wood Hall Hotel. We enjoy dinner together at the hotel this evening.

Thursday: Fountains Abbey and Beningbrough Hall

This morning we go to the largest monastic ruin in Britain, Fountains Abbey, where we enjoy a 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, and a medieval deer park.

Our next stop is Beningbrough Hall. This imposing Georgian pile contains a famous



Castle Howard

art collection; an imaginative collaboration between the National Trust and the National Portrait Gallery in London. Outside are magnificent grounds including a wonderful Victorian Walled Garden and labyrinth.

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

Friday: Castle Howard and Shandy Hall

Designed by Sir John Vanbrugh, Castle Howard has twice appeared as *Brideshead* in film and television adaptations of Evelyn Waugh's classic novel. Home to the Howard family for over 300 years, this magnificent 18th-century residence offers world-renowned collections and stunning architecture, all set within 1,000 acres of breathtaking scenery. We enjoy a private guided tour followed by coffee.

We then make a stop at Shandy Hall, former home of the 18th-century novelist Laurence Sterne. Now a museum, the rooms are filled with books, paintings, manuscripts, prints and ephemera relating to the history of the house and its famous inhabitant.

Later, we check in to the Ramside Hall Hotel, our base for the next two nights where dinner is included on both nights of our stay.

Saturday: Alnwick Castle and Cragside

Still home to the Duke of Northumberland and his family, Alnwick Castle is the second largest inhabited castle in England. 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. Alnwick Castle has also been featured in *Downton Abbey* and *Harry Potter*.

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

Sunday: Nostell Priory

Today we visit Nostell Priory, an 18th-century architectural masterpiece which has been the home of the Winn family for 300 years. Set in landscaped parkland, Nostell is also home to England's best documented collection of Chippendale furniture, designed especially for the estate.

Later, we check back in to the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel, where we stay overnight with dinner included.



Alnwick Castle

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 1 night at the Woodlands Park Hotel or the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 3 nights at the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel
- ◆ 2 nights at the Wood Hall Hotel
- ◆ 2 nights at the Ramside Hall Hotel
- ◆ 1 night at the Hartwell House Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 8 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All excursion costs
- ◆ Porterage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Monday: Blenheim Palace

We travel south and visit Blenheim Palace, undoubtedly one of Britain's greatest houses. Seat of the Dukes of Marlborough and the birthplace of Winston Churchill, Blenheim was designed on an awe-inspiring scale by Vanbrugh and is set in over 2,000 acres of beautiful parkland landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. We enjoy an audio guided tour followed by afternoon tea.

From here we travel to Hartwell House Hotel, one of the National Trust's Historic Hotels, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Tuesday: Departure

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

Please note: As this tour travels from the Home Counties to the north of England and back, some days will involve fairly long journeys.

Your Hotels

Night One (July 21 tour) – Woodlands Park Hotel, near Cobham

Night One (August 11 tour) – Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor

Nights Two, Three and Eight – Stapleford Park Country House Hotel

Stapleford Park Country House Hotel is a beautiful country house hotel and golf course surrounded by 500 acres of Capability Brown grounds. The mansion bears the imprint of architectural styles, from Tudor to Victorian with all of the 21st-century amenities you would expect in a luxury hotel. Each room is individually decorated and many have been designed by famous names.

No single supplement – limited availability

Nights Four and Five – Wood Hall Hotel

Originally built as a country escape in 1790, the Wood Hall Hotel is a tranquil country house hotel perched high on a hill amidst 100 acres of rolling Yorkshire countryside. The hotel offers an elegant drawing room, Georgian restaurant and a small health club and spa with swimming pool, spa pool, steam room and gym while the bedrooms blend contemporary comforts with traditional country house charms.

Nights Six and Seven – Ramside Hall Hotel

Located close to the city of Durham, the Ramside Hall Hotel is set within a 350 acre estate and features two Championship golf courses. The hotel offers spacious bedrooms, each with stunning views over the beautiful grounds, four restaurants and lounge bars plus extensive leisure facilities including indoor and outdoor swimming pools, hydrotherapy pool, fitness suite and spa.

Night Nine – Hartwell House Hotel, near Aylesbury

Glamour of the South East: Georgian Grandeur to Art Deco Elegance

July 28 to August 4, 2019 from \$5,490 per person

Glamour has taken many forms through the centuries, from ornate gilding and prestigious portraits in Georgian interiors through to the sleek and angular decorations of 20th century Art Deco, and on this tour we explore it all. We indulge in some 1930s charm at Eltham Palace and coastal De La Warr Pavilion, take in some Victorian Arts and Crafts at Standen and are treated to some lavish luxury at historic Petworth and sumptuous Firle Place.



Eltham Palace

Eight Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our hotel for the night, the Macdonald Windsor Hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: London, The Dorchester and Eltham Palace

This morning we head into London for some free time to explore England's vibrant capital city. You may like to spend your time discovering one of London's many museums and art galleries, or perhaps take a trip on the iconic London Eye, followed by a stroll through Hyde Park.

We then enjoy a luxurious early afternoon tea at The Dorchester, an elegant hotel situated in the upscale Mayfair area near to Hyde Park. An occasion to remember, an afternoon tea here features an exquisite range of tea and cakes in the picturesque setting of this stunning hotel steeped in history.



The Dorchester

Afterwards we travel to Eltham Palace. This stunning 1930s Art Deco mansion was built by the wealthy Courtauld family next to the remains of Eltham Palace, childhood home of Henry VIII. The result is a fascinating blend of glamorous 20th-century interiors in ancient surroundings, including the magnificent medieval Great Hall, plus 19 acres of beautiful gardens.

We continue on to check in to our hotel for the next five nights, the South Lodge Hotel, where we also enjoy dinner together tonight.

Tuesday: Glynde Place and Firle Place

Our day begins at Glynde Place, situated at the tip of the village of Glynde boasting impressive views over the Weald and Sussex Downs. Built in 1569 by William and Anne Morley, the house is still a family home today and boasts a mix of stunning portraits, lavish ornaments and fine furniture which we can take in on our guided tour.

From here, we continue on to Firle Place, seat of the Gage family for over 500 years and nestled in the heart of the Sussex Downs. Firle Place was originally built in Tudor times but transformed into the house we see today in the 18th century, styled to resemble a French château. A number of interesting architectural features of the original Tudor house are exposed to view. We'll also enjoy lunch here in this picturesque setting.

After dinner back at the hotel, we are treated to a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.



Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Afternoon tea at The Dorchester
- ◆ Guided tour at Glynde Place
- ◆ Lunch at Firle Place
- ◆ Guided tour at Charleston
- ◆ Private guided tour of Standen
- ◆ Guided tour at Farleys House & Gallery
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

Wednesday: Charleston and Nymans Estate

This morning takes us to Charleston, home of artists Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell (sister of Virginia Woolf), and country meeting place for the writers, painters and intellectuals known as the Bloomsbury Group. The house was transformed by artists who painted the walls and furniture, and filled rooms with textiles, ceramics and works of art from their collection. Here we will enjoy a guided tour.



Charleston

In the late 19th 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.

Tonight we venture to a local pub for dinner together.



Nymans Estate



Standen



Petworth

Thursday: Standen and Farleys House & Gallery

After breakfast we journey to Standen, the finest Arts and Crafts property in the care of the National Trust, which combines the skills of architect Philip Webb and his friend William Morris. Here we take a private guided tour of the house which was built in 1892-4. The light, airy rooms are decorated with Morris' wallpapers and textiles with William de Morgan pottery.

We continue on to Farleys House & Gallery, home to the photographer Lee Miller and artist Roland Penrose. The house became a meeting place for leading figures in the world of Modern Art including Pablo Picasso and Joan Miro. We take a guided tour here and see works by many of the Surrealist artists that are on display in the house, which still looks as it did during the Penrose family's occupation.

This evening is left free for you to make your own arrangements for dinner.

Friday: Bateman's and De La Warr Pavilion

17th-century Bateman's 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, formal garden and a colourful wildflower meadow, through which a river flows.

Our next stop is Bexhill-on-Sea, home to the De La Warr Pavilion. A grade I listed building located on the seafront, this Art Deco style building was built in 1935 and now houses a variety of exhibitions.

Later we have dinner in a local restaurant together.



De La Warr Pavilion

Saturday: Petworth and Gilbert White's House

Immortalised in Turner's paintings, Petworth House is an impressive estate that combines a deer park landscaped by 'Capability' Brown with a vast 17th-century mansion, which houses the National Trust's finest collection of art and sculptures. Masterpieces by the likes of Van Dyck, Reynolds, Blake and Turner himself are displayed in the opulent state rooms and North Gallery.



Petworth

Afterwards we visit the property that was once home to the 18th-century pioneering naturalist, Gilbert White. White was only a child when his family moved to the house and the rooms have since been restored following descriptions in White's own correspondence and decorated with family portraits and bed hangings embroidered for him by his aunts. You will also see on display the original manuscript of his book *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*.

We then return to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel where we enjoy a final farewell dinner together.

Sunday: Departure

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

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 5 nights at the South Lodge Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 4 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ 1 dinner at a local pub
- ◆ 1 dinner at a local restaurant
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All excursion costs
- ◆ Portage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

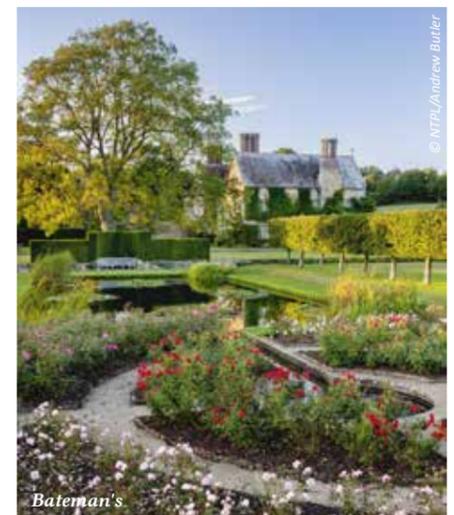
Nights One and Seven – Macdonald Windsor Hotel

The Macdonald Windsor Hotel is situated in the heart of the historic town of Windsor, opposite the famous Windsor Castle. The classic interiors, with a contemporary edge, fit perfectly with the Georgian elegance of this townhouse hotel. The luxury bedrooms are individually-designed and the hotel also offers a stylish bar and restaurant.

Nights Two to Six – South Lodge Hotel

The South Lodge Hotel is a magnificent Victorian country house hotel close to Horsham in West Sussex. Set amongst acres of woodland and parkland overlooking the South Downs, the hotel offers individually designed bedrooms and a newly-refurbished gym, while the original subterranean Victorian cellar has been beautifully restored, creating a unique space for guests to enjoy.

No single supplement – limited availability

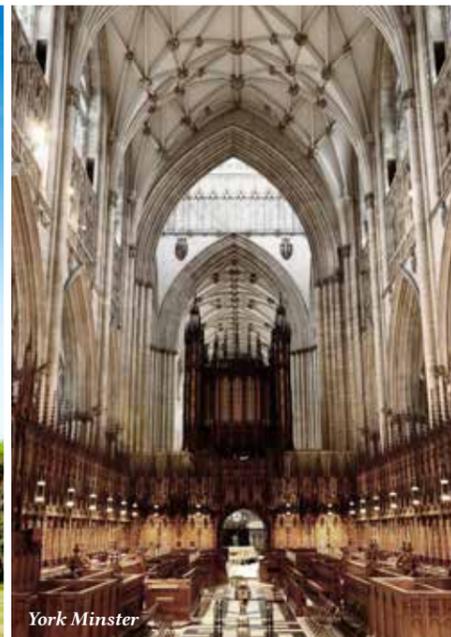


Bateman's

The Brontës & Literary Classics of Yorkshire

September 1 to 9, 2019 from \$4,990 per person

The Brontës are well known as poets and novelists and their home, now the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Yorkshire, has become a place of pilgrimage for thousands of visitors each year. We make the journey north to York to discover places associated with their lives, alongside other historic houses with literary associations such as Knebworth House, once the residence of dramatist Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and East Riddlesden Hall, believed to be the inspiration for Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore*.



Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Guided walking tour of York
- ◆ Guided tour of York Minster
- ◆ Guided walking tour of Haworth
- ◆ Guided tour of Norton Conyers
- ◆ Guided tour of Nostell Priory
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker



Nine Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, the Macdonald Windsor Hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: Wreath Park and Stamford

We travel northwards, stopping first at Wreath Park. Here we can explore the evolution of the English garden with a stroll through three centuries of landscape design, from dazzling parterres and fragrant borders, to sweeping views and woodland walks.

Next stop is the picturesque market town of Stamford, described as the finest stone town in England. The town prospered from the wool trade and boasts a variety of 17th and 18th-century stone buildings, older timber-framed buildings and no fewer than five medieval parish churches.

Later, we check in to the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel where we stay overnight with dinner included.

Tuesday: Kirkstall Abbey, York and York Minster

This morning we head to Kirkstall Abbey, a ruined Cistercian monastery founded in 1152. Set in wonderful parkland along the banks of the River Aire, the abbey is one of the most complete examples of a medieval Cistercian abbey in Britain. The abbey is known to have been visited by Patrick Brontë (father of the Brontë sisters), and it is believed that this is where he proposed to Maria Branwell.

We continue on to York, where we enjoy a guided walking tour. The city is steeped in history, from its founding by the Romans in 71AD to its wealth as a medieval wool trading center and there is plenty of evidence of this fascinating past left to admire, from the Roman city walls to the surviving medieval streets known as the Shambles.

We also take a guided tour of York Minster, the largest Gothic cathedral in northern Europe and home to some of the most stunning stained glass windows that have led to the Minster being described as 'the Sistine Chapel of England'.

Later we check in to the Grand Hotel & Spa, our base for the next four nights. Tonight, we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Wednesday: Temple Newsam House, Haworth and Brontë Parsonage Museum

Our first visit is to Temple Newsam House, a magnificent Tudor-Jacobean country mansion set in 1,500 acres of beautiful parkland. The house is famous as the birthplace of Lord Darnley, notorious husband of Mary Queen of Scots, and has been beautifully restored to its former glory. Temple Newsam is celebrated for its wonderful collections of fine and decorative arts, one of the finest publicly owned collections of English decorative art outside London.

Afterwards we head to Haworth, where we enjoy a guided walking tour of this picturesque hilltop village with its cobbled main street, discovering the context of the famous Brontë sisters' lives and work. The Brontë sisters spent much of their lives in the village and their former home is now the Brontë Parsonage Museum, which has been lovingly preserved and contains the largest and most important Brontë collections in the world, which we discover after our tour.

The evening is left free to make your own dinner arrangements in York.



Thursday: Norton Conyers and East Riddlesden Hall

We start the day with a guided tour of Norton Conyers, a late medieval manor house with Stuart and Georgian additions which has been in the Graham family since 1624. The house's exterior has distinctive Dutch-style gables while the interior contains some fine 18th-century plaster ceilings. In 1839 Charlotte Brontë visited Norton Conyers and heard the legend of a mad woman confined in the attics, which is said to have given her the idea for the mad Mrs Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. It is also believed that the house's interior gave her ideas for 'Thornfield Hall' in the novel.

We then pay a visit to East Riddlesden Hall, a 17th-century manor house, which has been used as a filming location for many Brontë adaptations. The hall was built in 1642 by wealthy cloth merchant, James Murgatroyd and is home to a wonderful array of 17th-century needlework, rich panelling and original exquisite plasterwork ceilings. The Murgatroyd family are reputed to be the inspiration for the Murgatroyd Baronets in the comic opera *Ruddigore* by Gilbert and Sullivan, and WS Gilbert is reported to have often stayed at the hall.

After dinner back at the hotel, we are treated to a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.

Friday: Saltaire and Harrogate

The Victorian model village and textile mill of Saltaire was built in 1851 by Sir Titus Salt, a leading industrialist in the Yorkshire woollen industry. Thanks to its preservation, Saltaire is now a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site and we spend some time exploring the village and the impressive mill itself which is now home to an inspiring David Hockney gallery, a selection of shops, restaurants and cafés.

The afternoon is spent in the elegant spa town of Harrogate, where notable sights include the Royal Pump Room and the Grade II listed Royal Hall. Don't miss the attractive Montpellier

Quarter with its pedestrianised streets lined with 19th-century buildings.

The evening is left free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.

Saturday: Nostell Priory

After a morning at leisure in York we head south, stopping to visit Nostell Priory where we enjoy a guided tour. Set in landscaped parkland, this 18th-century architectural masterpiece has been the home of the Winn family for 300 years and is also home to England's best documented collection of Chippendale furniture, designed especially for the estate.

We then head to our overnight hotel, the Waterton Park Hotel. Later, we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Sunday: Grantham and Knebworth House

Continuing our journey south, we make a short stop in the market town of Grantham. Sir Isaac Newton was a pupil at Grantham's Kings School and the town is the birthplace of the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Our final visit is to Knebworth House. Set in 250 acres of rolling countryside, Knebworth has been home to the Lytton family since 1490, with its most famous resident being the Victorian novelist Edward Bulwer-Lytton. The romantic exterior with its turrets, domes and gargoyles, conceals a red brick house dating back to Tudor times. Every generation of the Lytton family has left its mark, making Knebworth an extraordinary walk through 500 years of British history. Stories and heirlooms reflect the family's contribution to literature, politics and Foreign Service, plus visits from the likes of Charles Dickens and Winston Churchill.

Afterwards, we return to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 1 night at the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel
- ◆ 4 nights at the Grand Hotel & Spa York
- ◆ 1 night at the Waterton Park Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 6 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All entrance costs
- ◆ Portage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

Nights One and Eight – Macdonald Windsor Hotel

The Macdonald Windsor Hotel is situated in the heart of the historic town of Windsor, opposite the famous Windsor Castle. The classic interiors, with a contemporary edge, fit perfectly with the Georgian elegance of this townhouse hotel. The luxury bedrooms are individually-designed and the hotel also offers a stylish bar and restaurant.

Night Two – Stapleford Park Country House Hotel, near Melton Mowbray

Nights Three to Six – The Grand Hotel & Spa

The Grand Hotel & Spa is situated in the heart of the historic city of York. Housed in the iconic former headquarters of the North Eastern Railway Company, the stunning Edwardian building retains many of its original features with views of York Minster and the city's ancient walls. The hotel offers elegant guestrooms with free Wi-Fi and flat-screen TVs, while the luxury spa is located in the atmospheric vaults of the building.

Night Seven – Waterton Park Hotel, Wakefield

No single supplement – limited availability

Monday: Departure

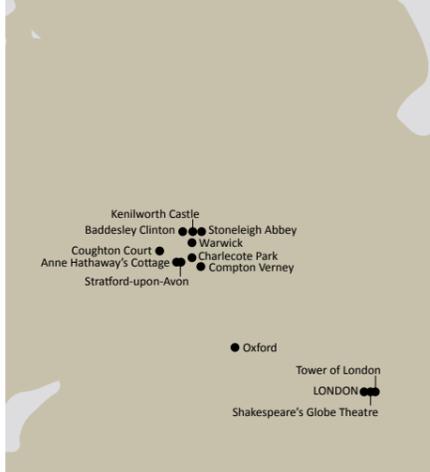
A private transfer will take you back to Heathrow airport for your return flight home.

Please note: As this tour travels from Windsor to Yorkshire and back, some days will involve fairly long journeys.

In the Footsteps of Shakespeare

September 15 to 25, 2019 from \$5,490 per person

A poet, playwright and actor, William Shakespeare is widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. This tour will provide a very real insight into Shakespeare's life and times, visiting Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was born and grew up, and exploring other historic houses in the area associated with his story, as we discover pretty market towns and picturesque country villages. On our return south, we recreate the fabled journeys Shakespeare is believed to have taken to Oxford, the iconic city and world-famous seat of learning. A highlight of the tour will be the chance to attend performances at the iconic Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre in Stratford and at the Globe Theatre in London.



Baddesley Clinton



Compton Verney



Shakespeare's Birthplace

Eleven Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, the Macdonald Windsor Hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: Baddesley Clinton and Compton Verney

Leaving Windsor we travel to Baddesley Clinton, an atmospheric, medieval manor house dating back to the 13th century. This moated house and its extensive formal gardens are steeped in history, including its use as a place of hiding and refuge for Catholic priests in Shakespeare's time.



Baddesley Clinton

We then head to Compton Verney for a guided tour of this award-winning independent art gallery. Housed in a restored Georgian mansion and surrounded by 120 acres of stunning

'Capability' Brown parkland, the world-class art exhibitions include several portraits relevant to Shakespeare's age.

Afterwards we check in to the Mercure Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Hotel, our base for the next five nights. Tonight we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Tuesday: Shakespeare's Family Homes

Today we delve into the world of William Shakespeare on a guided walking tour as we discover some of his family homes. At Shakespeare's Birthplace we explore the extraordinary story of Shakespeare in the house where he was born and grew up in. Next is Holy Trinity Church, where Shakespeare was baptised, worshipped, and where he is buried. We end our tour at Anne Hathaway's Cottage and Gardens, the setting of the young Shakespeare's courtship with his future bride. Here we uncover the stories of 13 generations of the Hathaway family who lived here.

The evening is free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.

Wednesday: Kenilworth Castle and Stoneleigh Abbey

This morning we visit Kenilworth Castle, one of England's largest medieval fortresses and most impressive castle ruins. Robert Dudley, Elizabeth I's 'favourite', created an ornate palace

Special extras included in your itinerary

- Guided tour at Compton Verney
- Guided walking tour of Stratford-upon-Avon
- Performance at the Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre
- Guided walking tour of Oxford
- Audio guided tour at the British Museum
- Guided walking tour of London
- Guided tour, exhibition, live demonstration and performance at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre
- Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

in readiness for her visit in 1575, resulting in a show of pageantry that was believed to be the inspiration behind *Twelfth Night*. The beautifully recreated Elizabethan Garden, lost to the world for over 400 years, is now open to visitors once more.

Next is Stoneleigh Abbey that grew from humble beginnings as a Cistercian monastery in 1154 into a comfortable family home following the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th century. This magnificent stately home is comprised of two halves; the first is a fine example of a Jacobean house in red sandstone built from the ruins of the monastery, while the second was designed by famous architect Francis Smith of Warwick in Baroque style. The house has played host to many famous guests including King Charles I, Queen Victoria and novelist Jane Austen.

After dinner back at the hotel, we are treated to a fascinating Shakespeare-themed talk by a guest speaker.

Thursday: Charlecote Park and Coughton Court

While Stratford is synonymous with Shakespeare's theatrical success, there lurks in nearby Charlecote Park's history a far less respectable connection; the famous playwright is rumoured to have been caught poaching deer here. Home to the Lucy family for 900 years, this lovely Tudor manor is a real treasure.



Coughton Court



Tower of London

We continue on to stunning Coughton Court. Home to the Throckmorton family for 600 years, Coughton is still very much a family home with an intimate feel. While the interior gives us a unique insight into the history of the Catholic faith in this country, the spectacular gardens feature colorful rose displays.

We dine together back at the hotel this evening.

Friday: Lord Leycester Hospital and the Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre

We head to the historic town of Warwick to visit the Lord Leycester Hospital, a collection of medieval timber-framed buildings that was, for nearly 200 years, home to Warwick's medieval Guilds. It became a place of retirement for aged soldiers known as the Brethren in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I; a legacy that continues to this day.

We then head back to Stratford to attend a performance at the iconic Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre**.

The evening is free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.

Saturday: Scenic Cotswolds and Oxford

We check out of our hotel and make our way towards Oxford. It is believed that Shakespeare travelled to London via Oxford, and walkers have attempted to reconstruct 'the Shakespeare Way', tracking the route that he would have taken. Our route takes us via the picturesque Cotswold stone villages of Stow-on-the-Wold and Bourton-on-the-Water.

Historic Oxford is known as the city of dreaming spires and is famed for its world-renowned university colleges. We enjoy a guided walking tour to learn more about this unique city.

We continue into London and check in to the Grange Tower Bridge Hotel, where we stay for the last four nights of our tour. The evening is left free to make your own dinner arrangements.

Sunday: British Library and the British Museum

We start the day with a visit to the British Library, the national library of the United Kingdom. The library's collections include more than 150 million items, in over 400 languages.

We then pay a visit to the British Museum, the first national public museum in the world, founded in 1753. The museum's collection

comprises over 8 million objects spanning the history of the world's cultures, and we discover just a small selection with our audio guided tour.

The rest of the day is left free for you to explore at your leisure and make your own dinner arrangements.

Monday: Tower of London Ceremony of the Keys, London and Southwark Cathedral

We begin our day at the Tower of London to witness one of the oldest surviving enactments of its kind; the Ceremony of the Keys. Set amidst the battlements of this ancient fortress, this hugely popular ceremony forms part of the traditional 'unlocking' of the Tower of London and dates back some 700 years.

We then enjoy a guided walking tour of the oldest area of London exploring the city's beautiful architectural heritage along the way. We walk past the 'Roman' baths, past Middle and Inner Temple Gardens, Middle Temple Hall, then on to the Strand, St Clement Danes, before finishing on Fleet Street and ye Old Cock Tavern.

We then head to Southwark Cathedral, a place of Christian worship for more than 1,000 years and the oldest Gothic church in London. The cathedral has been witness to the changing events of London's history and also has connections with Shakespeare's theatrical contemporaries.

The evening is left free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.

Tuesday: The Golden Hinde and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

Heading south across the Thames, we visit the Golden Hinde, a full-scale reconstruction of Sir Francis Drake's world-famous sailing galleon which departed from Plymouth in 1577 in pursuit of treasures and riches in the south Atlantic and Pacific.

We then walk the short distance to Shakespeare's Globe where we enjoy a fascinating backstage tour to learn more about this iconic theatre and its most famous playwright; from colorful stories of the original 1599 Globe to the faithful reconstruction process of the 1990s. We also visit the Globe Exhibition under the Theatre which further explores the life of Shakespeare, followed by a live demonstration and theatre performance**.

Tonight, we enjoy a farewell dinner together back at the hotel.

What's Included

- Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- 1 night at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- 5 nights at the Mercure Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Hotel
- 4 nights at the Grange Tower Bridge Hotel
- Welcome drink and canapés
- Full English breakfast each day
- 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 5 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- Travel to and from all excursions
- All entrance costs
- Porterage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

Night One – Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor

Nights Two to Six – Mercure Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Hotel

The Mercure Shakespeare Hotel is a picturesque 17th-century inn situated in Stratford-upon-Avon. The hotel retains many of its original features including oak beams, antique furnishings and open fires and offers individually named, contemporary guest rooms, a restaurant, bar and terrace.

Nights Seven to Ten – Grange Tower Bridge Hotel

The Grange Tower Bridge Hotel is situated close to the Tower of London and Tower Bridge in London's historic center. The luxurious guest bedrooms offer all modern conveniences while other hotel facilities include a contemporary grill restaurant, a lounge and bar plus a health and fitness club with swimming pool, Jacuzzi, sauna and spa.

No single supplement – limited availability



Wednesday: Departure

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

** Please note that the itinerary is subject to change to accommodate performance schedules.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I make a booking?

You can book via our website, www.albionjourneys.com/royaloak or over the telephone on our toll-free number **1-866-834-8358**. Our offices in the UK are open 9:00am – 5:30pm GMT Monday to Friday. If you have any questions or queries you can also email us at info@albionjourneys.com. If you are not a Royal Oak Member, the cost of the tour increases by \$150.

When are payments due?

When you confirm your booking with us, a non-refundable deposit of \$750 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 (except 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. 90 days prior to the tour, we will prepare and send you our Travel Pack with your finalised information, reading list 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 declaration form indemnifying us from any responsibility or cost in the event of medical emergency or repatriation.

Do I need a passport and Visa?

It is your responsibility to ensure you have a full passport and we recommend that it is valid for 6 months after the return date of your trip. Tourist visas are not required for US citizens visiting the UK for under 90 days solely for the purpose of tourism. If you are not a US citizen or you are combining your visit with business, it is your responsibility to check the requirements for visiting the UK, you can do this by visiting the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) website to determine whether you need a visa to enter the United Kingdom.

Are there single traveler room supplements?

We have a small number of rooms on each tour that are sold with no single supplement; once these are sold out we charge a supplement for any additional single rooms which varies for each tour. You can contact us to enquire about single supplement prices. Please book early as single rooms sell fast.

Are room upgrades available?

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

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 travelling 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 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 organisation 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. Any specific tour in this brochure with more than an average amount of walking will be clearly noted in the itinerary. 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, 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. Whilst 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?

Gratuities are not included in the tour cost; therefore this is entirely at your own discretion.

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

Terms & Conditions

It is important that you read the following booking conditions. These Booking Conditions form the basis of your contract with us. Please read these sections carefully as they apply to all bookings you make with us unless otherwise specified. All holidays are operated by Albion.

1. HOLIDAY 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
\$750	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 cancelled 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. HOLIDAY 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:

365 to 182 days prior to departure	\$500
181 to 91 days prior to departure	\$750
90 days or less before departure	100% of the program cost is non-refundable

If any member of your party is prevented from travelling, 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: www.albionjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions.

Call toll free: **1-866-834-8358**

Mayflower 400

2020 marks the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower from Plymouth, UK to Plymouth, Massachusetts. Join us to commemorate the legacy of the passengers and crew who undertook the journey and to highlight their stories and heritage, which is embedded in communities across the UK and the USA. On our tour we take in many landmarks associated with the Mayflower Pilgrims' journey alongside other special places that will give you a feel for life in the time of the Pilgrims.

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 3 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 1 night at a selected hotel in the Southampton area
- ◆ 5 nights at the Bovey Castle Hotel, Newton Abbot
- ◆ 1 night at the Queens Hotel, Cheltenham
- ◆ Welcome drink
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 7 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ 1 lunch at the Mayflower pub
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All excursion costs
- ◆ Porterage



1620-2020
*Discover, unearth
& explore*

BOOK EARLY
Limited availability
on this special
anniversary tour



*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

OPERATED BY

ALBION

Journeys Inspired By Heritage

Front Cover Image: The Fitzwilliam Museum
© Damien Vickers

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