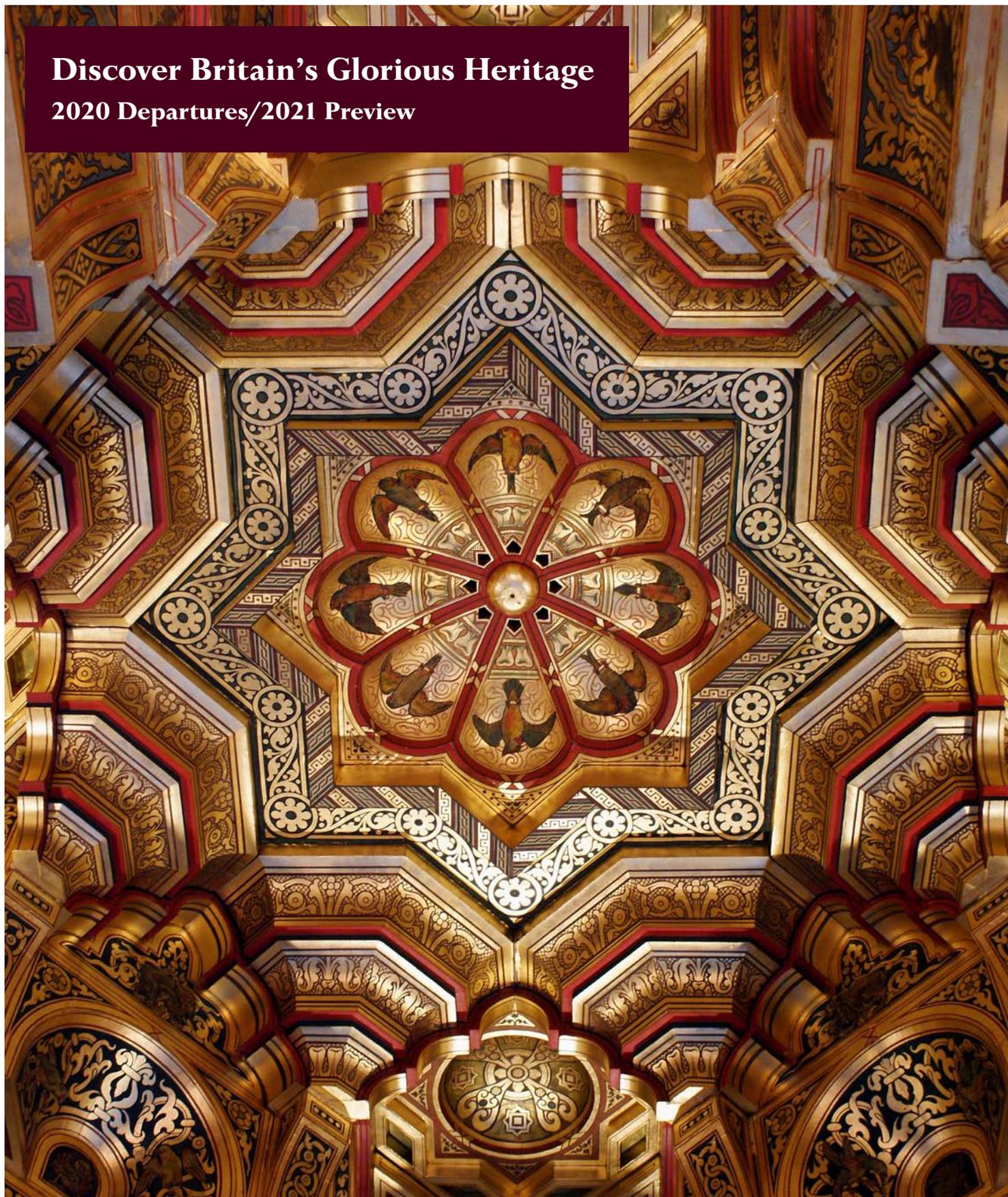




THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

Americans in Alliance with National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland

**Discover Britain's Glorious Heritage**  
2020 Departures/2021 Preview



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

### Dear Royal Oak Members and Friends,

I am pleased to share with you our 2020 heritage tour program produced in partnership with Albion, one of the leading heritage travel providers in Great Britain. These exclusive group tours offer Royal Oak members the unique opportunity to discover the vast cultural and natural heritage of Britain and Ireland including many of the impressive places owned by the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Immerse yourself in these nations' fascinating history and hidden gems on our custom itineraries with behind-the-scenes tours, after-dinner lectures and insights from the owners of the properties themselves.

In 2020 there's the chance to visit impressive stately homes and atmospheric manors combined with a special event at Highclere Castle, home of the much-loved *Downton Abbey* on our *South West Classic English Manor Houses & the Downton Experience* tour (page 15). Or how about celebrating the spirit of Christmas past on our wonderful festive tour; *'Step Back in Time', Traditional Country House Christmas in England* (page 24) with enchanting visits to many lovely National Trust properties which are specially decorated for the festive season.

Along with our 2020 program, we have included a selection of captivating tours departing in 2021, to give you a taste of what's to come. Discover Ireland's long and rich history through its magnificent buildings on our *Monasteries, Castles & Manors of Ireland* tour (page 26) or stay at two of the Historic House Hotels of the National Trust on our *Turrets, Towers & Spires of Yorkshire* tour (page 27).

The Royal Oak Foundation is proud to be partners of the National Trust, helping to support the Trust's vital conservation work. As previously mentioned, we launched our National Trust appeal to support a major effort to protect Blickling Hall's remarkable library and make its collection better known to the public. Don't forget that you can see Blickling's wonderful library for yourself on the *Cambridge & East Anglia Mansions & Villages* tour featured on page 16.

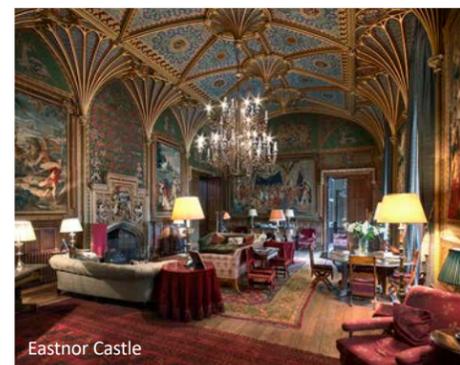
I encourage you to join one or more of these tours and experience first-hand the history and beauty of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Every tour helps raise funds for The Royal Oak Foundation too and we are sure that you will have a truly wonderful time sharing these journeys with other members and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



**Ian Murray**  
Executive Director, The Royal Oak Foundation



Castle Howard



Eastnor Castle



Nostell Priory

## Delve Deeper into Britain's Heritage

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

### Carefully chosen itineraries

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

### Caring staff

If you have booked an Albion tour before you will already be on first name terms with our customer service team! They will look after you from your first enquiry through to your arrival in the UK, and work hard to ensure that any special requests or arrangements you may need are carried out. Our team work tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure your tour runs smoothly.

### Tailored reading lists

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

### Special guided tours

On an Albion journey we arrange tours by the house owners themselves wherever possible, to really bring historic houses alive. We also offer behind-the-scenes tours or private tours with special access, and even talks by curators at historic houses, to make sure you get the full story and the most out of your visit.

### Exclusive themed talks by experts

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



Hartwell House

## Hand-picked hotels

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

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



© NPA/Andreas von Einsiedel

## Your Tour, Your Way

We are happy to book any room upgrades or extras you might require to make your stay more special. For everything from extra nights at your hotel to additional transfers or theater trips, contact the Albion office to discuss prices and availability.

## Travel with your favorite Tour Directors

Here at Albion we are aware that as well as an excellent itinerary and quality hotels, exceptional Tour Directors help make your tour special, so we'd like to introduce you to some of our team members...

### David Robertson



David left the world of commerce nine years ago to become a tour manager so that he could share his love for travel and flex his organizing skills. David is very welcoming and simply loves sharing his passion for the UK with his clients. David is originally from the Midlands but now bases himself in the North of England.

**"Extraordinary, professional, caring and informative."**

*David will be joining these tours:*

- Bonnie Prince Charlie & the Jacobite Rebellion
- Glorious Gardens & Grandeur of North Wales
- Aristocrats & Manor Houses & A Grand Tour to the North

### Carolyn Russell



Carolyn has travelled extensively all over the world with tour groups, previously spending a lot of time in Cuba and North America. She now prefers to travel with groups in the UK, sharing her love of the country's history with her clients. Carolyn is also our resident expert on the Royal Family; we challenge you to find something that she doesn't know about them. When not managing tours Carolyn lives in central London.

**"Carolyn was spectacular – so well organized, knowledgeable, and professional. She made this tour work perfectly and flawlessly."**

*Carolyn will be joining these tours:*

- South East England & the Bloomsbury Group
- South West Classic English Manor Houses & the Downton Experience
- Oxford & the Home Counties' Picturesque Houses & Gardens

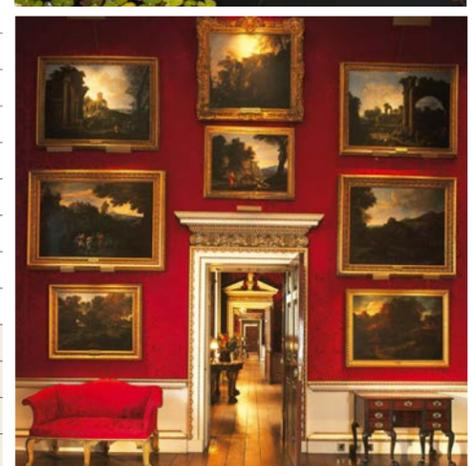
## Tour Map



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

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Create your perfect tour room upgrades, extra nights, excursions, theater trips...

We can book weekend theater or sightseeing breaks in central London as an add-on to your main tour. Contact us for more details!





Hever Castle



Windsor Castle

### Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Private guided tour and lunch at Hever Castle
- ❖ Exclusive out-of-hours garden tour of Sissinghurst Castle Garden
- ❖ Guided walking tour of Canterbury
- ❖ Guided tour of Canterbury Cathedral
- ❖ Guided tour and lunch at The Salutation Gardens
- ❖ Private guided tour of Leeds Castle
- ❖ Guided tour and lunch at Godinton House
- ❖ Audio guided tour of Windsor Castle
- ❖ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker



Ightham Mote



Sissinghurst Castle Garden

# Kent Castles & Coasts

May 5 to 13, 2020

from \$4,990 per person

The romantic county of Kent offers a multitude of historic treasures, from enchanting castles and stately homes to imaginative gardens and delightful coastal towns. On this captivating break we learn about Kent's role in shaping English history, and discover some of its famous residents such as Ann Boleyn, Charles Dickens and Winston Churchill. In a county famed for its castles, we also explore historic Hever and impressive Leeds Castle. We combine these fascinating architectural wonders with the peacefulness of the Kentish coast, as we experience the classic seaside charm of Margate and Whitstable.

## Nine Day Itinerary

### Tuesday: Arrival

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

Meals: Dinner

### Wednesday: Chartwell and Ightham Mote

Today we first visit Chartwell, Sir Winston Churchill's beloved home from 1924 to the time of his death. The house is still home to many of the great statesman's personal and political mementos, including an amazing collection of gifts he received from other world leaders and his personal painting studio hidden in the grounds.

Next, we explore the moated manor house of Ightham Mote, once described by historian David Starkey as "the most beautiful and the most interesting of English country houses". Built nearly 700 years ago, atmospheric Ightham has been home to medieval knights, courtiers to Henry VIII and Victorian High Society.

From here, we travel to the Chilton Park Hotel where we stay for the next six nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Thursday: Hever Castle and Riverhill Himalayan Gardens

We head to Hever Castle, the childhood home of Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn, where we enjoy a private guided tour and lunch. Dating back to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, this double-moated castle is home to various historic artifacts including Tudor portraits and furniture, as well as two prayer books inscribed by Anne Boleyn. The castle



was lavishly restored by American millionaire, William Waldorf Astor, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

We continue to Riverhill Himalayan Gardens, a fine example of horticultural excellence, created by contemporary of Charles Darwin and patron of Victorian plant hunter, John Rogers. We discover its interesting history as we enjoy the combination of world-class British sculpture, secret pathways and stunning floral displays.

This evening we enjoy dinner together in a local pub.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Friday: Sissinghurst Castle Garden, Tenterden and Doddington Place Gardens

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

After lunch (not included) in the picturesque town of Tenterden, we continue to Doddington Place Gardens, beautiful landscaped gardens set in the grounds of an impressive Victorian mansion. The glorious woodland garden is spectacular in May with many different varieties of rhododendrons and azaleas. There is also a formal sunken garden with herbaceous borders.

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

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Saturday: Canterbury, Canterbury Cathedral and Whitstable

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.

Our next stop is Whitstable, a picturesque fishing and harbour town on the north coast of Kent, renowned for its fresh oysters and connections to Charles Dickens. You can enjoy sampling these culinary delights during dinner in a popular local seafood restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Sunday: Margate, Sandwich and The Salutation Gardens

This morning we head to the coastal town of Margate. This town epitomises the charm of a classic British seaside resort, with its unspoilt sandy bays, retro shops and a friendly atmosphere. As Margate is also home to a thriving arts community, you may like to browse the Turner Contemporary, a beautiful gallery overlooking the sea.

We then head to the historic town of Sandwich. Once a major port, there are still many original medieval buildings dotted around this enchanting town, making it a delight to explore.

We continue to The Salutation Gardens in Sandwich, where we enjoy a guided tour followed by lunch. Designed in 1912 by architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, the exquisite gardens are divided into a sequence of symmetrical 'rooms.' After around 70 years, the gardens sadly fell into disorder, but with a new owner and head gardener at the helm, an extensive restoration project was undertaken in 2005.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Monday: Leeds Castle and Godinton House

We visit Leeds Castle, a quintessential moated castle set in 500 acres of glorious parkland, where we enjoy a private guided tour. Dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

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

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Tuesday: Down House and Windsor 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'.

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 11<sup>th</sup> century by William the Conqueror, it has been remodelled by successive kings and queens and is regularly used for ceremonial and state occasions. The

## What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 2 nights at the Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery
- ❖ 6 nights at the Chilton 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
- ❖ 1 dinner at a popular local seafood restaurant
- ❖ 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 Eight** – Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery, Windsor

**Nights Two to Seven** – Chilton Park Hotel, Lenham

For more information on these hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.

magnificent State Apartments are furnished with some of the finest works of art to admire during our audio guided tour.

Later, we check back in to the Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Wednesday: Departure

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

Meals: Breakfast



Whitstable



Linlithgow Palace

## Bonnie Prince Charlie & the Jacobite Rebellion

May 10 to 20, 2020 from \$6,490 per person

Bonnie Prince Charlie, born to the exiled Stuart King James II, was raised in the belief that his family were the true rulers of Britain. Supported by his fellow Jacobites, his planned invasion of England started promisingly but ultimately ended in a disastrous defeat with the Prince forced to go on the run. Discover the fascinating story of the young prince's time in Scotland, visiting the places where he sought refuge, in a story that has shaped Scottish history.

### Eleven Day Itinerary

**Sunday:** Arrival

**Monday:** Palace of Holyroodhouse, National Museum of Scotland and Edinburgh Castle

**Tuesday:** Linlithgow Palace, Alloa Tower, Huntingtower Castle and Perth

**Wednesday:** House of Dun, Drum Castle and Aberdeen

**Thursday:** Craigievar Castle and Castle Fraser

**Friday:** Fyvie Castle, Brodie Castle and Dallas Dhu Distillery

**Saturday:** Inverness, Culloden Battlefield and Urquart Castle

**Sunday:** Loch Ness, Jacobite train journey and Glenfinnan Monument

**Monday:** Glencoe, Loch Lomond and Dumbarton Castle

**Tuesday:** Royal Yacht Britannia and Edinburgh Underground Vaults

**Wednesday:** Departure

### Tour Highlight

We board the famous **Jacobite Train** which takes us across the mountainous west coast of Scotland to the bustling port of Mallaig. This iconic railway is one of the top rail journeys in the world and takes in wonderful sights such as the Glenfinnan Viaduct.



Brodie Castle

### What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from Edinburgh\*
- ❖ 3 nights at the Principal Charlotte Square Hotel, Edinburgh
- ❖ 1 night at the Fonab Castle Hotel, Pitlochry
- ❖ 2 nights at the Marcliffe Hotel & Spa, Aberdeen
- ❖ 2 nights at the Rocpool Reserve Hotel & Chez Roux Restaurant, Inverness
- ❖ 1 night at the Glenfinnan House Hotel, Glenfinnan
- ❖ 1 night at the Mar Hall Golf & Spa Resort, near Glasgow
- ❖ Welcome drink and canapés
- ❖ Full Scottish 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
- ❖ Porterage

\*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

For more information on the hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.

### Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Private out-of-hours guided tour and refreshments at the Palace of Holyroodhouse
- ❖ Audio guided tour of Edinburgh Castle
- ❖ Guided tour of the House of Dun
- ❖ Guided tour of Drum Castle
- ❖ Guided tour of Craigievar Castle
- ❖ Guided tour of Castle Fraser
- ❖ Guided tour of Brodie Castle
- ❖ Tour of Dallas Dhu Distillery with whisky tasting
- ❖ Scenic Jacobite train journey
- ❖ Cruise on Loch Lomond
- ❖ Audio guided tour of the Royal Yacht Britannia
- ❖ Evening tour of the Edinburgh Underground Vaults
- ❖ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

For a full itinerary of this tour please call 1-866-834-8358 or visit [albionjourneys.com/royaloak](http://albionjourneys.com/royaloak)



Burghley House

## A Tour Around the Treasure Houses of England

June 21 to July 2, 2020 from \$5,990 per person

September 5 to 16, 2021 from \$5,990 per person

The Treasure Houses of England are a collection of the most magnificent palaces, houses and castles. Each with its own unique charm, stunning architecture and beautiful gardens, together these properties host some of the most important art collections in the world. We explore nine of these impressive places, alongside other historic gems, giving us a fascinating insight into life in England over the centuries.

### Twelve Day Itinerary

**Sunday:** Arrival

**Monday:** Beaulieu

**Tuesday:** RHS Garden Wisley and Leeds Castle

**Wednesday:** Hatfield House

**Thursday:** Holkham Hall, Norfolk villages and Ickworth House

**Friday:** Doddington Hall and Lincoln

**Saturday:** Chatsworth House

**Sunday:** Castle Howard and York

**Monday:** Harewood House

**Tuesday:** Burghley House

**Wednesday:** Blenheim Palace and Windsor Castle

**Thursday:** Departure



Castle Howard

### Tour Highlight

Begun in 1595 by the great Elizabethan architect Robert Smythson, **Doddington Hall** was completed in 1600 and has never been sold or cleared out since. Still a much loved and lived-in family home, this fine Elizabethan mansion's unfussy, symmetrical looking exterior contrasts with an elegant Georgian interior, full of captivating collections and family portraits that reflect 400 years of unbroken family occupation. We learn more on our exclusive guided tour.

### What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 2 nights at the Audleys Wood Hotel, Basingstoke
- ❖ 1 night at the Chilston Park Hotel, Lenham
- ❖ 2 nights at the Ickworth Hotel, near Bury St Edmunds
- ❖ 2 nights at the Lincoln DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Lincoln
- ❖ 2 nights at the Grand Hotel & Spa, York
- ❖ 1 night at the Hartwell House Hotel, near Aylesbury
- ❖ 1 night at the Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery, Windsor
- ❖ Welcome drink and canapés
- ❖ Full English breakfast each day
- ❖ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 11 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

For more information on the hotels please visit our website.

All single rooms have sold out on the 2020 departure; however we have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on the tour departing in 2021. These sell quickly.

### Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Guided Palace House tour at Beaulieu
- ❖ Introductory lecture and audio guided tour at Leeds Castle
- ❖ Guided tour of Hatfield House
- ❖ Private guided tour of Holkham Hall
- ❖ Exclusive guided tour of Doddington Hall
- ❖ Guided tour of Chatsworth House
- ❖ Guided tour of Castle Howard
- ❖ Tailor-made guided tour and lunch at Harewood House
- ❖ Guided tour of Burghley House
- ❖ Audio guided tour and cream tea at Blenheim Palace
- ❖ Audio guided tour of Windsor Castle
- ❖ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

For a full itinerary of this tour please call 1-866-834-8358 or visit [albionjourneys.com/royaloak](http://albionjourneys.com/royaloak)



Conwy Castle



Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens



Plas Newydd House



Bodnant Garden

# Glorious Gardens & Grandeur of North Wales

June 7 to 16, 2020

from \$5,750 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.

## 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, join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Meals: Dinner

### Monday: Stratford-upon-Avon and Shakespeare's Birthplace

We head to Stratford-upon-Avon, a town forever associated with England's greatest poet and playwright, William Shakespeare. We visit Shakespeare's Birthplace, where we explore the extraordinary story of Shakespeare in the house where he was born and grew up.

Later, we continue our journey to Wales, checking in to Bodysgallen Hall & Spa, one of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels, where we spend the next six nights.

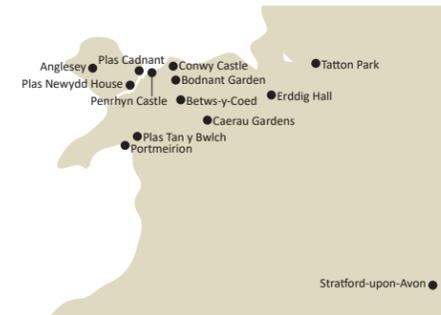
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Tuesday: Bodnant Garden and Penrhyn Castle

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

Next stop is the magnificent Penrhyn Castle. Built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in a neo-Norman style, Penrhyn 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.

Meals: Breakfast



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

Today we cross the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Menai Bridge to spend the day on the Isle of Anglesey. Our first visit is to the fine country house of Plas Newydd, where we enjoy a guided tour of the house and gardens. Its most famous past resident is the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 tender exotics and Mediterranean plants.

We continue on to Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens, a series of historic gardens which are gradually being restored to their former glory, where we enjoy a guided tour. 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 19<sup>th</sup>-century folly.

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

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### 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 17<sup>th</sup>-century country house which was once home to slate quarry owners the Oakeley family. 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 (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 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. Classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this imposing castle was built by Edward I during his conquest of Wales in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century and is considered to be among the finest surviving medieval fortifications in Britain with soaring curtain walls, round towers and fortified gateways.

This evening we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Friday: Erddig Hall and Caerau Gardens

Erddig Hall is an atmospheric early 18<sup>th</sup>-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. Our tour extends to the superb walled garden, now restored to its former 18<sup>th</sup>-century formal design with rare fruit trees and a national collection of ivies.

We then travel to Caerau Gardens, with their far reaching views over the Berwyn Mountains and Bala Lake. Situated at over 1,000ft above sea level, the gardens are believed to be Wales' highest gardens open to the public and were started in 1994 by Toby and Stephanie Hickish. The gardens now offer herbaceous borders, laburnum-covered pergolas, rose gardens, castellated yew topiary, spring gardens full of rhododendrons and azaleas, an arboretum with fine Japanese maples, pleached lime walkways, courtyard gardens, woodland walks and more.

This evening we enjoy a traditional fish and chip supper at a local restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Saturday: Portmeirion and Plas Brondanw Gardens

The day starts 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. The house and gardens were given to Sir Clough Williams-Ellis by his father in 1902 and the gardens are regarded by some as his finest creation. Inspired by the gardens of renaissance Italy, he created a unique garden landscape with stone walls, topiary and avenues of trees leading the eye to the dramatic mountainous backdrop.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Sunday: Tatton Park

Leaving Wales we journey east to Tatton Park, where we enjoy a guided tour followed by lunch. 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 color is provided by the Rose, Italian and Japanese gardens.

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

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Monday: Waterperry Gardens

We start the morning with some time at leisure in Stratford-upon-Avon, before travelling to Waterperry Gardens. Here we enjoy lunch followed by a guided tour. Made famous by Beatrix Havergal who established her School of Horticulture for

## What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 1 night at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ❖ 6 nights at Bodysgallen Hall & Spa
- ❖ 1 night at the Mercure Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Hotel
- ❖ 1 night at the Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery
- ❖ 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)
- ❖ 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 Seven** – Bodysgallen Hall & Spa, near Llandudno

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

**Night Nine** – Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery, Windsor

For more information on these hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.

Ladies here from 1932 to 1971, the eight acres of beautifully landscaped gardens now include a rose and formal knot garden, water-lily canal, and riverside walk.

Afterwards, we travel to the Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Tuesday: Departure

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

Meals: Breakfast



© Grace Towner

# South East England & the Bloomsbury Group

July 14 to 22, 2020  
from \$5,690 per person

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a group of writers, intellectuals, philosophers and artists who lived and worked in Bloomsbury were perhaps best known for their liberal views on politics and social conventions as well as their infamous love triangles. Luminaries including Virginia Woolf, John Maynard Keynes, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, E. M. Forster and Lytton Strachey also undertook an experimental attitude to ways they decorated their homes, resulting in highly original and inspired designs. We uncover the finest examples of their work as we visit the houses where they lived and loved.

## Nine Day Itinerary

### Tuesday: Arrival

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

Meals: Dinner

### Wednesday: Knole House and Standen

We visit Knole House for a guided tour\*. One of Britain's most important and complete historic homes, Knole House was home to the Sackville family, including novelist Vita Sackville-West who used the house as inspiration for her novel *The Edwardians*.

Next we visit Standen, a fine Arts and Crafts property, which combines the skills of architect Philip Webb and his friend William Morris. The light, airy rooms are decorated with Morris' wallpapers and textiles with William de Morgan pottery.

We then continue to our hotel for the next five nights, the South Lodge Hotel in Horsham.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

\*subject to availability

### Thursday: Charleston, The Church of St Michael and All Angels, and Farleys House & Gallery

This morning takes us to Charleston, home of artists Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell and country meeting place for the Bloomsbury Group. The house was transformed by the artists who painted the walls and furniture. Here we enjoy a private out-of-hours tour.



Afterwards we visit The Church of St Michael and All Angels in Berwick. During the war, many of the church's decorative stained glass windows were damaged and rather than replace the fragile glass, the Bishop of Chichester commissioned Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell to cover the walls with pastoral scenes.

We then 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. Roger Fry introduced Penrose to many Bloomsbury Group members, forging links between Bloomsbury and the surrealists. On our guided tour we can admire works by many of the Surrealist artists that are on display.

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

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Friday: Sissinghurst Castle Garden and Monks House

This morning we head to Sissinghurst Castle Garden where we enjoy an out-of-hours guided tour. Created in the 1930s by Vita Sackville-West and her husband Harold Nicolson, these world-famous gardens are laid out as a series of enchanting, individually-planted 'rooms'.

Afterwards we head to Monks House. Situated in the heart of rural Sussex, this 17<sup>th</sup>-century cottage was home to Leonard and Virginia Woolf from 1919 until Leonard's death in 1969. Carefully preserved to appear as it was when they lived there; learn more about this fascinating couple by viewing some of their most prized possessions. The Woolfs initially purchased the property for 'the shape and fertility and wildness of the garden' so make sure to explore the delightful cottage garden here too.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Saturday: Rye and Bateman's

Firstly today we visit Rye. This medieval town perched on a hill boasts enchanting streets and architectural treasures, which is why it's not surprising that Rye was a popular holiday haunt for the Bloomsbury Group.

Next we visit 17<sup>th</sup>-century Bateman's, that 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.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Sunday: Brighton

Today we visit Brighton, a popular seaside resort that was frequented by members of the Bloomsbury Group as a holiday destination, there is even a bus named after Vanessa Bell here! We have some free time to explore this vibrant location at our leisure and we include a visit to Brighton Museum & Art Gallery located in the Royal Pavilion Garden, where we find pieces on display created by members of the group as well as other 20<sup>th</sup>-century art.

This evening we enjoy dinner at a restaurant in Brighton.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Royal Pavilion

### Monday: Tate Britain and London

We travel into central London to visit Tate Britain to admire *A Walk Through British Art* exhibition, accompanied by an art historian to shed light on the paintings. The rooms of this exhibit showcase work by some of Britain's greatest artists, including that of Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell.

We then continue to our hotel for the next two nights, the Grange City Hotel. After checking in, there is time to explore London at leisure.

Meals: Breakfast

### Tuesday: Bloomsbury Group Walking Tour and British Museum

After breakfast, we enjoy a Bloomsbury Group Blue Plaque Walking Tour. See 46 Gordon Square, along with a number of other properties that were once home to members of the group. We also discover some of their places of work, for example 22 Fitzroy Square, Duncan Grant's former studio; and 21 Fitzroy Square, once Roger Fry's studio.

We then visit the British Museum which featured in Virginia Woolf's work *A Room Of One's Own* and *Jacob's Room*. This is our chance to see these locations for ourselves. The rest of the day is free to spend at leisure exploring England's vibrant capital city.

Back at the hotel this evening we enjoy a farewell dinner together and a chance to reflect on all that we have discovered about the famous Bloomsbury Group.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Wednesday: Departure

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

Meals: Breakfast

## What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 1 night at the Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery
- ❖ 5 nights at the South Lodge Hotel
- ❖ 2 nights at the Grange City 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 local restaurant
- ❖ 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

## Your Hotels

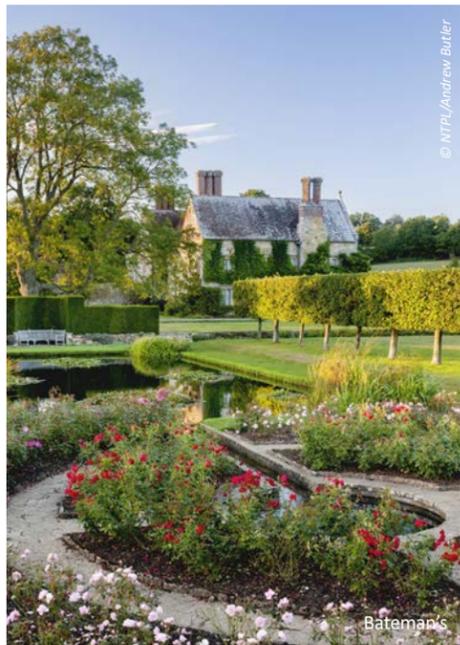
**Night One** – Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery, Windsor

**Nights Two to Six** – South Lodge Hotel, Horsham

**Nights Seven and Eight** – Grange City Hotel, London

For more information on these hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.



© NPT/Andrew Butler

## Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Guided tour of Knole House\*
- ❖ Private out-of-hours tour of Charleston
- ❖ Private guided tour at Farleys House & Gallery
- ❖ Private out-of-hours guided tour at Sissinghurst Castle Garden
- ❖ Entrance to the Brighton Museum & Art Gallery
- ❖ A *Walk Through British Art* exhibition at Tate Britain accompanied by an art historian
- ❖ Guided Bloomsbury Group Blue Plaque Walking Tour
- ❖ Themed evening talk by a Bloomsbury Group expert

\*subject to availability



© NPT/Coraline Akber

Monks House



© NPT/Andreas von Einsiedel

Knole House



Sissinghurst Castle Garden



Chatsworth House

## Aristocrats & Manor Houses & A Grand Tour to the North

2021  
departure  
coming  
soon

July 19 to 28, 2020 from \$5,490 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. From the world-famous Highclere Castle, television's *Downton Abbey*, to Winston Churchill's birthplace of Blenheim Palace and beyond, we discover several historic treasures and their society stories. We juxtapose these fine manor houses with the rugged landscapes of the north, providing us with the perfect opportunity to explore Britain's rich heritage and diverse countryside.



### Ten Day Itinerary

**Sunday:** Arrival

**Monday:** Highclere Castle

**Tuesday:** Chatsworth House and Nottingham

**Wednesday:** Hardwick Hall, York and Fairfax House

**Thursday:** Fountains Abbey and Harrogate

**Friday:** Castle Howard and Durham

**Saturday:** Alnwick Castle and Cragside

**Sunday:** Nostell Priory

**Monday:** Blenheim Palace

**Tuesday:** Departure

For a full itinerary of this tour please call 1-866-834-8358 or visit [albionjourneys.com/royaloak](http://albionjourneys.com/royaloak)

### Tour Highlight

We visit **Blenheim Palace**, undoubtedly one of Britain's grandest houses, set in over 2,000 acres of beautiful parkland landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. Seat of the Dukes of Marlborough and the birthplace of Winston Churchill, Blenheim was designed on an awe-inspiring scale by Vanbrugh and is home to one of the most important and extensive collections in Europe, which includes portraits, furniture, sculpture and tapestries. We enjoy an audio guided tour here followed by a traditional afternoon tea.



Castle Howard



### What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 1 night at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor
- ❖ 3 nights at the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel, near Melton Mowbray
- ❖ 2 nights at the Wood Hall Hotel, Wetherby
- ❖ 2 nights at the Lumley Castle Hotel, Chester-le-Street
- ❖ 1 night at the Hartwell House Hotel, near Aylesbury
- ❖ 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

For more information on the hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.

### 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 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



Cragside



Highclere Castle

## South West Classic English Manor Houses & the Downton Experience

August 2 to 11, 2020 from \$4,990 per person

The picturesque South West of England is home to a veritable treasure trove of impressive stately homes and atmospheric manors. These magnificent properties boast extraordinary interiors and often feature fascinating garden styles and parkland too, many of which were created by 18<sup>th</sup>-century garden design trendsetters such as 'Capability' Brown. On this tour, we uncover some of these classic and sometimes hidden gems, from the Elizabethan Longleat House to the tranquil Heale House Gardens and Italianate Peto Garden. We also enjoy a wonderful *Downton Abbey* experience with a special visit to Highclere Castle, a *Downton*-themed evening event and a tour of filming locations of this iconic television series and film.



### Ten Day Itinerary

**Sunday:** Arrival

**Monday:** Highclere Castle, Lacock and Lacock Abbey

**Tuesday:** Longleat House and Georgian House Museum

**Wednesday:** Bath – Victoria Park, Herschel Museum of Astronomy, Roman Baths and Pump Rooms

**Thursday:** Wells, Bishop's Palace & Gardens and Stourhead

**Friday:** Bradford-on-Avon, The Peto Garden and Great Chalfield Manor

**Saturday:** Bowood House and The Courts Garden

**Sunday:** Swinbrook, Bampton, Cogges Manor Farm and Castle Combe

**Monday:** Heale House Gardens, Winchester and Winchester Cathedral

**Tuesday:** Departure

For a full itinerary of this tour please call 1-866-834-8358 or visit [albionjourneys.com/royaloak](http://albionjourneys.com/royaloak)



Lacock Abbey



### What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor
- ❖ 7 nights at the Bailbrook House Hotel, Bath
- ❖ Welcome drink
- ❖ Full English breakfast each day
- ❖ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 5 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ❖ 2 dinners and 1 lunch in local restaurants
- ❖ 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

For more information on the hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.

### Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Special visit to Highclere Castle, the setting of *Downton Abbey*
- ❖ Spend a day touring some of *Downton Abbey*'s filming locations
- ❖ Guided walking tour of Bath
- ❖ Afternoon tea at The Pump Rooms, Bath
- ❖ Guided tour of the Bishop's Palace & Gardens
- ❖ Guided tour of The Peto Garden
- ❖ Guided tour and lunch at Bowood House
- ❖ Guided tour and lunch at Longleat House
- ❖ Guided tour of Winchester Cathedral
- ❖ Themed evening talk on *Downton Abbey* by a special guest speaker

### Tour Highlight

We enjoy a special visit 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 and 2019 film. Entrance includes access to the Egyptian Exhibition, which explores the achievements of the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon who discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922.



Blickling Hall



Fitzwilliam Museum



Houghton Hall



Audley End

# Cambridge & East Anglia Mansions & Villages

August 17 to 26, 2020  
from \$4,990 per person

The region of East Anglia is filled with natural beauty, charming villages and historic wool towns that have changed little since Tudor times, with their timber-framed buildings and crooked streets. On this insightful tour we explore some of these wonderful locations and discover magnificent houses rich in history and architecture such as elegant **Holkham Hall** and the breathtaking Jacobean mansion of **Blickling**.

## Ten Day Itinerary

### Monday: Arrival

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

*Meals: Dinner*

### Tuesday: Audley End and Orchard Tea Garden

Our first visit is to Audley End, one of the finest Jacobean houses in England with an impressive great hall, magnificent state apartments and a carefully restored service wing which gives a glimpse of life 'below stairs'.

From here we visit the Orchard Tea Garden in Grantchester for afternoon tea. The Orchard was first planted in 1868 and the tradition of taking afternoon tea here began purely by chance with a group of Cambridge students in 1897 and has continued ever since.

Later we check in to the University Arms Hotel, our base for the next four nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### Wednesday: Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum and Wimpole Estate

We make our way to Cambridge. Renowned for its world-famous university, this historic city is home to many fascinating sights which we discover on our guided walking tour, including the majestic college buildings.

Afterwards we visit the Fitzwilliam Museum. The art and antiquities museum of the University of Cambridge contains a vast collection of treasures from paintings and armor to ceramics, furniture, textiles, sculptures and manuscripts.



Our final stop is the working estate of Wimpole. The impressive mansion, at the heart of the estate, boasts some unique interior flourishes. 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.

Later, we enjoy dinner together at a bistro in Cambridge.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### Thursday: Oxburgh Hall and Anglesey Abbey

This morning we discover Oxburgh Hall. This romantic moated manor house has been home to the Catholic Bedingfield family since the 15<sup>th</sup> century and charts their precarious history from medieval austerity to neo-Gothic Victorian splendor. Look out for the 16<sup>th</sup>-century priest's hole as well intricate embroidery crafted by Mary, Queen of Scots.

We then make our way to Anglesey Abbey, Gardens and Lode Mill. 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.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### Friday: Saffron Walden, Flatford and Lavenham

We travel first to Saffron Walden, a charming medieval market town with many historic buildings including the half-timbered Guildhall.

Our next stop is the charming hamlet of Flatford, the inspiration for some of artist John Constable's most famous paintings. Here we enjoy a guided walking tour, discovering the lovely views and locations that Constable painted including Flatford Mill, immortalized in *The Haywain*.

The last visit of the day is to Lavenham, a remarkably well-preserved Tudor village that was one of the richest towns in England during the 15<sup>th</sup> century thanks to the woollen-cloth industry.

*Meals: Breakfast*

### Saturday: Mississippi Paddle Steamer and Felbrigg Hall

We make our way to the picturesque village of Horning where we enjoy a scenic cruise of the Norfolk Broads on the Mississippi Paddle Steamer. A unique and beautiful landscape of shallow lakes and rivers, these spectacular waterways are scattered with pretty market towns and villages along the shoreline.

We continue to Felbrigg Hall, one of East Anglia's finest country houses. Felbrigg's interior is a lavish blend of sumptuous furniture, ornate plasterwork and William Wyndham II's painting collection, gathered on his Grand Tour of Europe.

From here, we make our way to the Pheasant Hotel where we stay for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### Sunday: Holkham Hall and Blickling Hall

This morning we enjoy a private guided tour of Holkham Hall, an elegant 18<sup>th</sup>-century country mansion constructed in the Palladian style for Thomas Coke, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Leicester. The hall is currently home to the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Leicester. The spectacular Marble Hall was inspired by the Temple of Fortuna Virilis and the Pantheon in Rome, while the magnificent State Rooms boast superb collections of ancient statuary, original furniture, tapestries and works of art.

Blickling Hall is one of Britain's finest Jacobean houses. In decorative terms it's a wonderful house to explore because of its plasterwork and superb 18<sup>th</sup>-century Long Gallery. Discover Blickling's collections and learn about the National Trust's ambitious new conservation project to secure the future of one of the most significant book collections in the country.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### Monday: Houghton Hall and Walsingham Abbey

We start with a private guided tour of Houghton Hall, one of England's finest Palladian houses. Built in the 1720s by Great Britain's first Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, the Hall boasts sumptuous state rooms lavishly endowed with pictures, statuary and fine furniture while outside is an award-winning five acre garden and contemporary sculpture park.

Later we visit Walsingham Abbey, famous for the spectacular remains of a medieval priory. A place of pilgrimage since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the priory was destroyed during Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. We have time to wander through the tranquil gardens scattered with medieval ruins and explore the unspoiled woodland and landscape parkland.

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### Tuesday: Sandringham Estate and Ely Cathedral

We visit the house, gardens and museum of the Sandringham Estate, the country retreat of Her Majesty the Queen. Built in 1870, Sandringham has been the private home of four generations

## What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ❖ 4 nights at the University Arms Hotel
- ❖ 3 nights at the Pheasant 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)
- ❖ 1 dinner at a bistro in Cambridge
- ❖ 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*

## Your Hotels

**Nights One and Nine** – Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor

**Nights Two to Five** – University Arms Hotel, Cambridge

**Nights Six to Eight** – Pheasant Hotel, Kelling

*For more information on these hotels please visit our website.*

*We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.*

of British monarchs. The interiors are home to many exhibits such as an important collection of oriental arms and armor. The museum, housed in the former coach houses and stable block, holds extraordinary collections of Royal vehicles, rare ceramics, photographs and memorabilia. We enjoy lunch here during our visit.

Afterwards we visit the historic Fenland city of Ely and the 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. Later, we return to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Wednesday: Departure

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

*Meals: Breakfast*



Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo



The Kelpies

### Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Cruise on Loch Lomond
- ❖ Guided walking tour of Glasgow
- ❖ Guided tour of Stirling Castle
- ❖ Three-course meal, wine & whisky and recital by members of the Edinburgh Tattoo at the Amber Restaurant within the Scotch Whisky Experience
- ❖ Prime location seat for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo
- ❖ Guided tour of Scone Palace
- ❖ Audio guided tour of the Palace of Holyroodhouse



Loch Lomond

# Classic Scotland featuring the Edinburgh Tattoo

August 20 to 25, 2020  
from \$3,750 per person

Join us as we combine the iconic landmarks and historic attractions of the vibrant Scottish cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh with magnificent castles and palaces which have played a key role in Scotland's history. We complement our tour with a truly remarkable experience – the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, with an exclusive dining package and prime location seats. Set against the impressive backdrop of Edinburgh Castle and a spectacle like no other, the Edinburgh Tattoo combines music, dance, lights and marching bands with daredevil displays of skill and military showmanship, featuring hundreds of performers gathered from all corners of the UK and across the world.

## Six Day Itinerary

### Thursday: Arrival

On arrival at Edinburgh airport, a private transfer will take you to the Hotel du Vin in Glasgow, our base for the next two nights. This afternoon there is the option to join a guided walking tour of the West End of Glasgow, passing Oran Mor, the Botanic Gardens, the Ha'Penny Footbridge and the Sixty Steps.

In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink at the hotel, followed by dinner.

Meals: Dinner

### Friday: Loch Lomond Cruise, Mackintosh at the Willow Tearooms and Glasgow walking tour

This morning we head northwards to embark on a cruise of Loch Lomond, the largest expanse of fresh water on mainland Britain. The loch is situated amidst one of Scotland's most idyllic and unspoilt areas in the Trossachs National Park and boasts a stunning mountain backdrop and a variety of wildlife.

We return to Glasgow and enjoy lunch together at the famous Mackintosh at the Willow Tearooms which boast a variety of beautiful spaces, each with their own character and unique design. First opened in 1903, these are the only surviving tea rooms designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Afterwards we enjoy a guided walking tour of Glasgow, including St Mungo's, City Halls and Old Fruitmarket, Trongate Steeple and the Tenement House as well as a visit to Glasgow Cathedral, one of Scotland's most magnificent medieval buildings.



The present building was consecrated in 1197 but not everything is old! The cathedral has one of the finest post-war collections of stained glass windows to be found in Britain.

This evening we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Saturday: Stirling Castle, The Kelpies, Amber Restaurant Scotch Whisky Experience and Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

We check out of our Glasgow hotel and head first to Stirling Castle where we enjoy a guided tour. Originally built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with additions and renovations undertaken over the years, the castle has played a key role in Scottish history. As well as being an important outpost during the Wars of Scottish Independence, the castle was once home to the doomed Mary Queen of Scots, who is said to haunt the castle to this day.



Scone Palace

From here we continue our journey, passing the famous Kelpies, the largest equine sculptures in the world, before checking in to the Principal Charlotte Square Hotel in Edinburgh, where we stay for the remainder of our tour.

In the late afternoon, we transfer by black cab to start our Edinburgh Tattoo experience at the award-winning Amber Restaurant within The Scotch Whisky Experience on the Royal Mile. Here we enjoy a three-course, specially selected Scottish meal with wine and a wee dram of whisky before enjoying a brief recital by members of the Edinburgh Tattoo cast.

Afterwards we are escorted to the Castle Esplanade to take our seats in a prime location for the spectacular Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Hosted each year, the show brings together musicians and performers from every part of the world for a fabulous display of international culture.

**Please note:** we advise you to be prepared with waterproofs etc in case of inclement weather during the Tattoo. It will go ahead whatever the weather – no performance has ever been cancelled.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Edinburgh Castle

### Sunday: Edinburgh Castle

The morning is left free for you to spend at leisure – you may wish to relax at the hotel, explore the city further, or engage in some retail therapy in some of Edinburgh's stylish boutiques. We then enjoy lunch together in a local restaurant.

After lunch we head back up to Edinburgh Castle, one of the most important strongholds in the Kingdom of Scotland, which has witnessed many of the defining events of Scottish history. Highlights include the Crown Jewels of Scotland, the Royal Palace and the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Great Hall.

Later, we enjoy dinner together back at the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Monday: Scone Palace, Perth and Palace of Holyroodhouse

We head to Scone Palace, crowning place of Scottish kings including Robert the Bruce and Charles II and family home of the Earls of Mansfield. We enjoy a guided tour of the palace with its fine collections of furniture, porcelain, ivories, clocks, paintings and other *objets d'art*.

Next we visit the city of Perth, located on the banks of the River Tay. A former capital of Scotland, Perth has a rich and influential history that stretches back over 800 years. Due to its location, it is often referred to as the 'Gateway to the Highlands'.

In the afternoon we return to Edinburgh and visit the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the Queen's official residence in Scotland. Here we can view the State Apartments as well as the Queen's Gallery which hosts a program of changing exhibitions from the Royal Collection.



## What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from Edinburgh\*
- ❖ 2 nights at the Hotel du Vin Glasgow
- ❖ 3 nights at the Principal Charlotte Square Hotel
- ❖ Welcome drink and canapés
- ❖ Full Scottish breakfast each day
- ❖ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 2 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ❖ 3 dinners in local restaurants (including the Amber Restaurant within the Scottish Whisky Experience)
- ❖ 2 lunches in local restaurants
- ❖ 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

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## Your Hotels

**Nights One and Two** – Hotel du Vin Glasgow  
**Nights Three to Five** – Principal Charlotte Square Hotel, Edinburgh

For more information on these hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.

Tonight we dine together at a local restaurant and toast farewell to Edinburgh with a wee dram in a whisky bar.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Tuesday: Departure

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

Meals: Breakfast



Perth



*Special extras included in your itinerary*

- ❖ Guided tour of Chiswick House
- ❖ Guided tour of Strawberry Hill House
- ❖ High tea at Cliveden House Hotel
- ❖ Guided tour and lunch at Waddesdon Manor
- ❖ Guided tour and refreshments at Sezincote
- ❖ Guided walking tour of Oxford
- ❖ Guided tour of Houghton Lodge
- ❖ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker



# Oxford & the Home Counties' Picturesque Houses & Gardens

September 6 to 13, 2020  
from \$4,990 per person

The pastoral landscapes of the Home Counties that surround London provide a beautiful backdrop to some of Britain's most impressive homes. We uncover the fascinating stories of these magnificent places with their wonderful mix of architectural styles and fine treasures within, and explore spectacular landscape gardens and parkland. Our tour is complemented by a stay at Hartwell House Hotel, a stunning stately home and one of the Historic House Hotels of the National Trust.

## Eight Day Itinerary

### Sunday: Arrival

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

Meals: Dinner

### Monday: Chiswick House and Strawberry Hill House

We travel to west London to enjoy a guided tour of one of the most stunning examples of 18<sup>th</sup>-century British architecture, Chiswick House. The Roman-style Palladian villa was designed by the third Earl of Burlington and architect and designer William Kent. Admire the stunning ceilings of the upstairs rooms as well as the beautiful velvet wallpaper.

Our next stop is Strawberry Hill House, a magnificent Gothic Revival villa created by author Horace Walpole in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to house his vast collection of treasures. Elegant and eccentric, it is Britain's finest example of this style of architecture and we have the chance to see the highlights of both the house and garden with a guided tour.

Later we check in to the Hartwell House Hotel & Spa, one of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels and our base for the next four nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Tuesday: Cliveden Gardens and High Tea at Cliveden House Hotel

Set high above the River Thames with far-reaching views, Cliveden's glorious gardens and majestic woodlands have uniquely captured the grandeur of a bygone era. From the formal Parterre and elegant



Water Garden to the Italianate Long Garden with quirky statuary and topiary plus a historic maze, these impressive gardens have a special charm.

In 1837, Cliveden was purchased by Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland, to be used as a home away from London. The house is now a luxury hotel and after our gardens visit, we savor the quintessentially British pastime of high tea here.

Meals: Breakfast, High Tea, Dinner

### Wednesday: Waddesdon Manor and Nether Winchendon House

This morning takes us to Waddesdon Manor. Built by the wealthy Rothschild family, Waddesdon is a renaissance-style chateau that looks as though it's been transported to the gentle Buckinghamshire countryside from France's Loire Valley. Along with a guided tour of the sumptuous interiors, we also enjoy lunch here.

Afterwards we visit Nether Winchendon House, an enchanting medieval and Tudor manor house set in seven acres of tranquil gardens. From its medieval origins, this extraordinary house has evolved into an exciting mix of styles with curling Tudor chimneys, crenellations, tall Gothic windows, a 12<sup>th</sup>-century Great Hall and 16<sup>th</sup>-century Dining Room. Since the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, Nether Winchendon has had continuous family occupation and remains a family home to this day.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Thursday: Sezincote and Kiftsgate Court Gardens

We start the day at Sezincote, where we enjoy a guided tour of this unique and exotic palace followed by refreshments. In the early 1800s, Charles Cockerell, who had worked for the East India Company, commissioned his architect brother, Samuel, to design and build an Indian house in the Mogul style of Rajasthan. Assisted by the artist Thomas Daniell, the result is a unique combination of Hindu and Muslim architecture with a weathered-copper onion dome, minarets and curving orangery while outside is a romantic Indian fantasy of temples, grottoes and waterfalls with a landscape reputedly designed by Humphry Repton.

From here we head to Kiftsgate Court Gardens, set on the edge of the Cotswold escarpment with lovely views towards the Malvern Hills. The gardens are the creation of three generations of women gardeners, started by Heather Muir in the 1920s. Developed organically with harmonious color schemes, the gardens have many unusual shrubs and plants and are known for the Kiftsgate rose, a scented climbing rose claimed to be the largest rose in Britain.

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

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Friday: Oxford and Houghton Lodge

We visit historic Oxford this morning, famous seat of learning. On our guided walking tour, we discover the history of many of the city's magnificent buildings including the colleges of the famous Oxford University. Following our tour, we have a little free time to enjoy the city at leisure. The University of Oxford Botanic Garden, the Ashmolean (the world's first public museum) and Bodleian Library are just some of the attractions here.

Next we travel to Houghton Lodge. Home of the Busk family for more than a century, the lodge is one of the finest (and earliest) surviving examples of the *cottage ornée* style, a genre of 'picturesque' Gothic architecture that flourished for about 25 years from 1790. Our guided tour gives us an insight into the history of this unique house. Outside, the lovely gardens feature both formal and informal gardens, a traditional kitchen garden, an orchid house, peacock garden and herbaceous borders.

In the early evening we return to the Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery where we stay for the last two nights of our tour.

Meals: Breakfast

### Saturday: Painshill Park

Our final visit is to Painshill Park, an elegant 18<sup>th</sup>-century landscape garden created between 1738 and 1773 by the Hon. Charles Hamilton. Inspired by Renaissance art and his Grand Tours across Europe, as well as his passion for plants, Hamilton's vision was to create 'living paintings' in a new style of garden. The result is a sequence of breathtaking vistas across the landscape punctuated by mystical follies including a ruined abbey and Gothic temple, a serpentine lake, vineyard, woodland and more.

Back at the hotel tonight we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Sunday: Departure

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

Meals: Breakfast

## What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 3 nights at the Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery
- ❖ 4 nights at the Hartwell House Hotel & Spa
- ❖ 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)
- ❖ 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

## Your Hotels

**Nights One, Six and Seven** – Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery, Windsor

**Nights Two to Five** – Hartwell House Hotel & Spa, near Aylesbury

For more information on these hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.





Mayflower II



The Hoe, Plymouth

### Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Guided walk in Lyme Regis
- ❖ Guided walking tour of New Street, Plymouth
- ❖ Private guided tour of Dartmouth Royal Naval College
- ❖ Pilgrims walking tour in Dartmouth
- ❖ Refreshments at Bayards Cove Inn
- ❖ Guided tour of Exeter Cathedral
- ❖ Audio guided tour of SS Great Britain
- ❖ Guided walking tour of Oxford
- ❖ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker



SS Great Britain



Saltram

# Mayflower 400 Celebration Tour

September 10 to 20, 2020

from \$5,990 per person

2020 marks the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Mayflower's* pioneering voyage from England to America. In 1620, an intrepid group of dissenters set sail across the Atlantic on what was then an incredibly dangerous journey to start a new life in the New World. To commemorate this anniversary, we follow in the footsteps of the *Mayflower* Pilgrims and trace the *Mayflower's* journey en-route for America, learning more about the ship that links four nations and the legacy of a voyage that changed history.

## Eleven Day Itinerary

### Thursday: Arrival

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

Meals: Dinner

### Friday: Rotherhithe, Mayflower Pub and London

Our first stop is Rotherhithe – the London homeport where in July 1620, the *Mayflower* took on board 65 passengers before journeying onwards to Southampton. Rotherhithe has a long seafaring and ship building history and was the home of Christopher Jones, captain of the *Mayflower*.

We head to the Mayflower pub in Rotherhithe village, the oldest pub on the River Thames where we enjoy lunch together. You can also spot the original 1620 mooring point of the *Mayflower*. This afternoon we have free time to explore London.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

### Saturday: Southampton, Merchant's House, Winchester and Winchester Cathedral

Southampton was a thriving sea port and many of the buildings and streets familiar to the Pilgrims then still exist today. The *Mayflower* arrived in Southampton in late July 1620, before being joined by the *Speedwell*, setting sail on 15 August with the intention to sail in company direct to America.

We visit Merchant's House where we take in the history of Southampton's 'old town' before heading to the medieval city of Winchester, ancient capital of England.

Later, we check in to the Lainston House Hotel where we stay overnight.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



### Sunday: Lyme Regis and Exmouth

Lyme Regis is a historic seaside town and fishing port, nestling in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the Jurassic Coast. The town has a fascinating maritime heritage and rich history and we discover more on our guided walk.

We then enjoy some free time in the picturesque holiday resort of Exmouth, a bustling little town surrounded by glorious countryside with a vibrant shopping centre, a lovely small harbour and many tempting bars and cafés.

From here, we travel to the Bovey Castle Hotel, our base for the next five nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Monday: Coleton Fishacre and Buckfast Abbey

Today begins at Coleton Fishacre, a 1920s Arts and Crafts-style house built for the D'Oyly Carte family. The house's surviving Art Deco interior contrasts with the magical 30-acre garden.

Our next stop is Buckfast Abbey, nestled on the banks of the River Dart. Dating back to 1018, the abbey is home to a community of Benedictine monks. Explore the Abbey church or wander the tranquil gardens. On our way back to the hotel this evening, we stop to enjoy dinner in a traditional country pub.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Tuesday: Greenway and Saltram

We board the ferry to Greenway, the much-loved holiday home of the famous author Agatha Christie and her family. Nestled on the side of the River Dart, this atmospheric house is set in the 1950s and contains many of the family's collections.

Next we head to Saltram, an elegant Georgian mansion set in a rolling landscape park and one of the National Trust's least discovered treasures. Home to the Parker family for several generations, the house is a rare survival of the period; particularly because it comes complete with its original, impressively lavish contents, including stunning paintings, ceramics and textiles.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Wednesday: Plymouth, Elizabethan House, The Box and The Hoe

Our day is spent in Plymouth, Britain's ocean city. It was from Plymouth, on 16 September 1620, that the *Mayflower* and her passengers made their final voyage to the New World. We enjoy a guided walking tour along New Street in the Barbican, one of Plymouth's oldest streets. The listed buildings

have retained their historic facades, transporting us into the past. One such property is Elizabethan House – built in the 1580s, the house is a rare surviving example of its time.

Next we visit The Box, which opens in 2020 as the flagship building for the *Mayflower 400* commemorations. One of its first exhibitions will be *Mayflower 400: Legend and Legacy*. Afterwards we take in the stunning views at The Hoe before we enjoy free time in Plymouth.

Meals: Breakfast

### Thursday: Dartmouth Royal Naval College, Pilgrims Walking Tour and Bayards Cove Inn

This morning we visit the picturesque port of Dartmouth, situated on the banks of the River Dart. Dartmouth has a significant naval history and we start with a private guided tour of the Royal Naval College, home of initial Naval Officer training in the UK since 1863. Here we discover the rich history, role and relevance of this building with its iconic architecture and the naval training conducted here today. The tour includes the elegant Chapel, the Quarterdeck, Parade Ground, Senior Gun Room and Britannia Heritage Museum.

Later we enjoy a Pilgrims walking tour where we learn of the town's links to the Pilgrim Fathers. In August 1620, having made a detour to Dartmouth, the Pilgrim Fathers departed from Bayards Cove for the New World aboard the *Mayflower* and the *Speedwell*. Unfortunately the *Speedwell* started to sink 300 miles off Land's End and they all returned to Plymouth from where the *Mayflower* continued her journey alone to America.

Before leaving Dartmouth, we visit the 500-year-old Bayards Cove Inn for a relaxing drink. We return to our hotel in the late afternoon for time at leisure.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Friday: Exeter Cathedral, Bristol and SS Great Britain

Leaving Dartmoor we stop en-route in the city of Exeter where we enjoy a guided tour of Exeter Cathedral. Dating back 900 years, it is one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture anywhere. Notable features include an early set of misericords, a 15<sup>th</sup>-century astronomical clock, a minstrels' gallery and the longest uninterrupted Gothic vaulted ceiling in the world.

We continue on to the city of Bristol where we visit *SS Great Britain*, the great-great grandmother for all modern ships. Created in 1843 by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the ship has been painstakingly restored and we get under the skin of life at sea at the Dockyard Museum and step onto the ship itself on our audio guided tour.

From here we make our way to the Queens Hotel Cheltenham – MGallery where we stay overnight.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



## What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 2 nights at the Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery
- ❖ 1 night at the Lainston House Hotel
- ❖ 5 nights at the Bovey Castle Hotel
- ❖ 1 night at the Queens Hotel Cheltenham – MGallery
- ❖ 1 night at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ❖ Welcome drink and canapés
- ❖ 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
- ❖ 1 dinner at a traditional country pub
- ❖ 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

## Your Hotels

**Nights One and Two** – Castle Hotel Windsor – MGallery, Windsor

**Night Three** – Lainston House Hotel, Winchester

**Nights Four to Eight** – Bovey Castle Hotel, Dartmoor

**Night Nine** – Queens Hotel Cheltenham – MGallery, Cheltenham

**Night Ten** – Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor

For more information on these hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.

### Saturday: Oxford

We spend our final day in Oxford, the city of dreaming spires. On our guided walking tour, we discover the history and many of the magnificent buildings of the city. Afterwards we enjoy time at leisure here. We then check in to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Sunday: Departure

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

Meals: Breakfast



Windsor Castle



Blenheim Palace



Greys Court



Waddesdon Manor

# 'Step Back in Time' Traditional Country House Christmas in England

December 2 to 7, 2020  
from \$3,900 per person

Christmas in England conjures up images of Dickensian London and *A Christmas Carol* or traditional country houses where families gather around roaring fires. We celebrate the spirit of Christmas past and catch a glimpse of festivities of times gone by as we travel from London to the pastoral Home Counties. We enjoy enchanting visits to magnificent properties which are specially decorated for the season, from the royal residence of Windsor Castle to Blenheim Palace, the birthplace of Winston Churchill. To complete our festive getaway we experience the magic of *Christmas at Kew* and also visit the lovely city of Oxford, where we indulge in the quintessentially British tradition of afternoon tea and have time for some Christmas shopping.

## Six Day Itinerary

### Wednesday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, our base for the next two nights. In the late afternoon there is the option to join a guided walking tour of Windsor. Situated on the River Thames, this ancient royal town has a rich heritage dating back over 1,000 years with many beautiful buildings and cobbled streets. We trace the origins of the town from its roots in the aftermath of the Battle of Hastings to its heyday as a bastion of Queen Victoria's reign.

In the evening, join the group for a welcome drink at the hotel, followed by dinner.

Meals: Dinner

### Thursday: Windsor Castle, Ham House and Kew Gardens

We begin our day with free time in Windsor, where the independent boutiques and shop-lined streets offer the perfect chance to stock up on some festive goodies.

Next, we 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 for you to admire, beautifully decorated at this time of year. We find out more of the castle's history on our audio guided tour.

We continue to Ham House and Gardens, one of Europe's greatest 17<sup>th</sup>-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. The atmosphere of a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Christmas is recreated during the festive season with decorations adorning the house and gardens.

Later, a festive treat awaits us at the world-famous Kew Gardens, where the iconic architecture and tree canopies are brought to life, drenched in Christmas color and sparkling with seasonal decorations. Discover an enchanting festive trail of lights that winds its way through the botanic gardens, before enjoying some seasonal treats from one of the many enticing stalls.

This evening we enjoy a late dinner at a local restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Kew Gardens

### Friday: Waddesdon Manor

Checking out of the hotel, we head to Waddesdon Manor, built by the wealthy Rothschild family in the style of a Renaissance chateau and filled with royal treasures. During our guided tour we explore the interiors, given an extra sparkle around Christmas with lavish festive decorations, before enjoying a festive lunch here. The Christmas theme continues into the gardens with light trails and stunning illuminations, including Waddesdon's 30ft high real Christmas tree with its magical fairy lights, as well as a charming Christmas Fair offering a range of Christmas treats.

Later, we check into the Hartwell House Hotel, one of the National Trust's Historic House Hotels, where we stay for the next two nights.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Saturday: Oxford and the Ashmolean Museum

This morning we enjoy a guided walking tour in Oxford, known as the city of dreaming spires and famed for its world-renowned university colleges, some of which we enter during our tour. We take in the city's highlights before visiting the Ashmolean, the world's first public museum. Founded in 1683, the museum focuses on art and archeology and the world-famous collections range from Egyptian mummies to contemporary paintings and sculptures. There is then time for a spot of retail therapy before indulging in a festive afternoon tea at a lovely hotel in the city.

Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea, Dinner



Blenheim Palace

### Sunday: Blenheim Palace and Greys Court

Today we visit Blenheim Palace, set in over 2,000 acres of beautiful parkland landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. As the seat of the Dukes of Marlborough, the palace is synonymous with the Churchill family and is the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. A permanent exhibition commemorates the life of this famous wartime Prime Minister, whilst the magnificent State Rooms will be sumptuously dressed for Christmas and reveal a superb collection of tapestries, paintings, porcelain and furniture.



Waddesdon Manor



## What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 3 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ❖ 2 nights at the Hartwell House Hotel
- ❖ Welcome drink and canapés
- ❖ 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 restaurant
- ❖ 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

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## Your Hotels

**Nights One, Two and Five** – Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor  
**Nights Three and Four** – Hartwell House Hotel, near Aylesbury

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



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

Afterwards, we check back in to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel where we toast the festive season with a farewell dinner this evening and enjoy a private carol singing performance, highlighting some of the traditions and customs during this special time of year.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Monday: Departure

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

Meals: Breakfast



## Monasteries, Castles & Manors of Ireland

June 6 to 14, 2021 from \$4,990 per person

With the beautiful and vibrant cities of Dublin and Galway as our base, we discover Ireland's long and rich history through its magnificent buildings. St Patrick introduced the monastic way of life to the country in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, promoting simple living in remote places. This simplicity contrasts with the grand castles and manors which we also explore, including a unique tour of Birr Castle, where we are entertained by the owners, Lord and Lady Rosse. These illuminating visits are complemented by lovely experiences which deliver a real taste of Ireland, including a music trail through Galway, a cruise on River Corrib and a state-of-the-art whiskey distillery tour.



### Nine Day Itinerary

**Sunday:** Arrival

**Monday:** Dublin – Trinity College, Christ Church Cathedral and Chester Beatty Library

**Tuesday:** Athlone Castle and Clonliffe House

**Wednesday:** Kylemore Abbey, Sheep dog demonstration, Ashford Castle and Galway Music Trail

**Thursday:** Lough Corrib Cruise and Galway

**Friday:** Clonmacnoise Monastery and Tullamore D.E.W Distillery

**Saturday:** Birr Castle and Castletown House

**Sunday:** Farmleigh House and National Museum of Ireland: Decorative Arts and History

**Monday:** Departure

For a full itinerary of this tour please call 1-866-834-8358 or visit [albionjourneys.com/royaloak](http://albionjourneys.com/royaloak)

### Tour Highlight

A unique experience awaits us at Birr Castle, the private residence of Lord and Lady Rosse, who will be our hosts for the day. We start with a brief history of the castle before Lord and Lady Rosse take us on a tour of the main rooms and collections. After lunch, Lord Rosse takes us on a tour of the beautiful gardens.



### What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from Dublin\*
- ❖ 4 nights at the Iveagh Garden Hotel, Dublin
- ❖ 4 nights at the Park House Hotel, Galway
- ❖ Welcome drink and canapés
- ❖ Full Irish breakfast each day
- ❖ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 3 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ❖ 5 dinners in local restaurants
- ❖ 1 lunch in Galway
- ❖ 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

For more information on the hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.

### Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Guided walking tour of Dublin
- ❖ Guided tour of Athlone Castle
- ❖ Sheep dog demonstration
- ❖ Afternoon tea at Ashford Castle
- ❖ Galway music trail
- ❖ Lough Corrib cruise
- ❖ Afternoon tea in Galway
- ❖ Guided tour of Tullamore D.E.W distillery
- ❖ Drinks reception, lunch and guided castle and gardens tour with the owners at Birr Castle
- ❖ Guided tour of National Museum of Ireland: Decorative Arts and History
- ❖ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker



## Turrets, Towers & Spires of Yorkshire

June 13 to 21, 2021 from \$4,690 per person

Glorious Yorkshire is home to some of the most beautiful landscapes in Britain as well as a wonderfully rich and diverse skyline, showcasing a range of architecture which reflects its fascinating heritage. Many of the region's finest historic houses have been lived in by the same families for generations, including remarkable Harewood House, magnificent Castle Howard and the largest privately-owned country house in Europe, Wentworth Woodhouse, bursting with architectural splendor and filled with treasured collections. Our tour is complemented by accommodation at two of the Historic House Hotels of the National Trust, country houses with their own stunning architecture that have been rescued and carefully restored, bringing them back to life as luxury hotels.



### Nine Day Itinerary

**Sunday:** Arrival

**Monday:** Coventry Cathedral and Hardwick Hall

**Tuesday:** York, York Minster and River Ouse Cruise

**Wednesday:** Harewood House and Harrogate

**Thursday:** Whitby Abbey and Sion Hill Hall

**Friday:** Castle Howard

**Saturday:** Wentworth Woodhouse and Cannon Hall

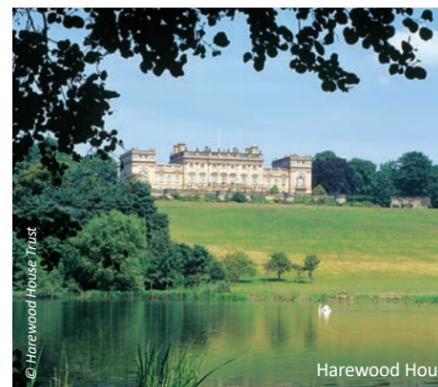
**Sunday:** Renishaw Hall and Sulgrave Manor

**Monday:** Departure

For a full itinerary of this tour please call 1-866-834-8358 or visit [albionjourneys.com/royaloak](http://albionjourneys.com/royaloak)

### Tour Highlight

Designed by Sir John Vanbrugh, Castle Howard has twice appeared as the titular house in film and television adaptations of Evelyn Waugh's classic novel, *Brideshead Revisited*. This magnificent 18<sup>th</sup>-century residence offers world-renowned collections and stunning architecture, all set within 1,000 acres of breathtaking scenery. Home to the Howard family for over 300 years, each generation has brought different characteristics to the stewarding of this grand house and estate.



### What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 2 nights at the Hartwell House Hotel, near Aylesbury
- ❖ 6 nights at Middlethorpe Hall Hotel, York
- ❖ 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)
- ❖ 1 dinner at a restaurant in York
- ❖ 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

For more information on the hotels please visit our website.

We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.

### Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Guided tour of Coventry Cathedral
- ❖ Guided walking tour of York
- ❖ Cruise on the River Ouse in York
- ❖ Guided tour and lunch at Harewood House
- ❖ Guided tour of Sion Hill Hall
- ❖ Private guided tour and lunch at Castle Howard
- ❖ Guided tour of Wentworth Woodhouse
- ❖ Guided tour of Renishaw Hall
- ❖ Guided tour of Sulgrave Manor
- ❖ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker





Eastnor Castle

## Castles Along the Welsh Borders

July 4 to 13, 2021 from \$4,990 per person

The rolling hills and picturesque valleys of the Welsh borders are peppered with hundreds of defensive castles and ancient fortresses, reflecting a turbulent history between England and Wales. With battles fought over these lands for centuries, it is no surprise that the Welsh borders once had the greatest concentration of castles in Europe. Many still stand proudly in their strategic positions today, from Chepstow Castle, the crucial gateway to Wales, to England's impressive Berkeley Castle, built shortly after the Norman Conquest to defend against the Welsh. During our fascinating tour, we weave across the Anglo-Welsh border, exploring these architectural splendors and discovering their captivating stories.



### Ten Day Itinerary

**Sunday:** Arrival

**Monday:** Oxford and Sudeley Castle

**Tuesday:** Eastnor Castle and Tewkesbury Abbey

**Wednesday:** Berkeley Castle and Chepstow Castle

**Thursday:** Cardiff Castle, Fonmon Castle and Cardiff

**Friday:** Castell Coch and Caerphilly Castle

**Saturday:** Raglan Castle, Monmouth and Croft Castle

**Sunday:** Stokesay Castle, Worcester and Worcester Cathedral

**Monday:** Kenilworth Castle, Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick Castle

**Tuesday:** Departure

For a full itinerary of this tour please call 1-866-834-8358 or visit [albionjourneys.com/royaloak](http://albionjourneys.com/royaloak)

### Tour Highlight

We enjoy a guided tour of Cardiff Castle. The castle's history spans over 2,000 years, although the Gothic Victorian fantasy castle we see today was created for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess of Bute, one of the world's richest men. We discover the lavish and opulent interiors, rich with murals, stained glass, marble, gilding and elaborate wood carvings.



Warwick Castle



### What's Included

- ❖ Return airport transfers from London Heathrow\*
- ❖ 2 nights at a well-appointed hotel, Windsor
- ❖ 2 nights at the Queens Hotel Cheltenham – MGallery, Cheltenham
- ❖ 3 nights at a well-appointed hotel, Cardiff
- ❖ 2 nights at the Stanbrook Abbey Hotel, near Worcester
- ❖ 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*

*For more information on the hotels please visit our website.*

*We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.*

### Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Guided tour and lunch at Eastnor Castle
- ❖ Guided tour of Berkeley Castle
- ❖ Guided tour of Cardiff Castle
- ❖ Guided tour of Worcester Cathedral
- ❖ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker



Kenilworth Castle



Johnstown Castle

## Discover the South East of Ireland: Kinsale, Waterford & Dublin

September 6 to 14, 2021 from \$4,990 per person

Join us on a journey of discovery to Ireland's Ancient East, with its beautiful lush green landscapes, idyllic towns and rich heritage dating back 5,000 years, where we enjoy the opportunity to experience a slice of Irish life. From Waterford's Viking Triangle and medieval Kinsale to the story of the Irish famine emigrants of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we take a step back in time in this fascinating, unspoilt region full of legends and stories. We finish our enchanting tour in the capital of Dublin, enjoying the diverse highlights of this captivating city.



### Nine Day Itinerary

**Monday:** Arrival

**Tuesday:** Kinsale, Charles Fort and Desmond Castle

**Wednesday:** Curraghmore House, Waterford, Medieval Museum and Bishop's Palace Museum

**Thursday:** Tintern Abbey, House of Waterford Crystal and Reginald's Tower

**Friday:** Ros Tapestry, Dunbrody Famine Ship and Enniscorthy Castle

**Saturday:** Johnstown Castle, Ferrycarrig Castle, Wexford and Wells House & Gardens

**Sunday:** Huntington Castle, Museum of Literature Ireland and Dublin

**Monday:** Dublin Cathedral, Dublin Bay Cruise and Jameson Whiskey Distillery

**Tuesday:** Departure

For a full itinerary of this tour please call 1-866-834-8358 or visit [albionjourneys.com/royaloak](http://albionjourneys.com/royaloak)

### Tour Highlight

We enjoy a special guided tour of Johnstown Castle where we get a real sense of what life was like at this 19<sup>th</sup>-century Gothic-Revival castle, with its remarkable servants' tunnel. The estate also contains a fascinating Irish Agricultural Museum and spectacular ornamental gardens and lakes.



Dublin



### What's Included

- ❖ Airport transfers from Cork/to Dublin\*
- ❖ 2 nights at the Oriel House Hotel, Ballincollig
- ❖ 3 nights at the Waterford Castle Hotel & Golf Resort, Waterford
- ❖ 1 night at the Brandon House Hotel, New Cross
- ❖ 2 nights at the Iveagh Garden Hotel, Dublin
- ❖ Welcome drink and canapés
- ❖ Full Irish breakfast each day
- ❖ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 5 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ❖ 2 dinners in local restaurants
- ❖ 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*

*For more information on the hotels please visit our website.*

*We have a limited number of single places available with no supplement on this tour. These sell quickly.*

### Special extras included in your itinerary

- ❖ Guided walking tour of Cork
- ❖ Guided walking tour of Kinsale
- ❖ Guided tour of Curraghmore House
- ❖ Guided walking tour of Waterford
- ❖ Costumed guided tour of Bishop's Palace Museum
- ❖ Guided tour of the House of Waterford Crystal
- ❖ Costumed guided tour on the Dunbrody Famine Ship
- ❖ Guided tour of Enniscorthy Castle
- ❖ Special tour of Johnstown Castle
- ❖ Guided house and gardens tour plus lunch at Huntington Castle
- ❖ Evening panoramic tour of Dublin
- ❖ Cruise on Dublin Bay
- ❖ Guided tour of Jameson Whiskey Distillery



County Waterford

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How do I make a booking?

You can book via our website, [www.albionjourneys.com/royaloak](http://www.albionjourneys.com/royaloak) or over the telephone on our toll-free number **1-866-834-8358**. Our offices are open 9:00am-5:00pm EST Monday to Friday. If you have any questions or queries you can also email us at [info@albionjourneys.com](mailto: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 finalized 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 organization of all operational aspects of the tour. If you have any queries or experience any issues during the tour, they are there to assist you.

## Will the excursions change?

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

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

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

While it is not compulsory, it is customary to tip the coach driver and Tour Director as well as offering a small gratuity to the transfer drivers to acknowledge the services they have provided. As a guideline we suggest a rate of £5 per day for your driver, £10 per day for your Tour Director and a couple of pounds for your transfer driver. Gratuities for hotel staff and the tour guides you may meet at properties on your day trips are covered by Albion Journeys.

*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](http://www.albionjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions).*



OPERATED BY

# ALBION

Journeys Inspired By Heritage

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Find us on 

*Front Cover Image: Arab Room Ceiling, Cardiff Castle*

*Back Cover Image: Blenheim Palace*

