

A Tour around England

Days 1-3 London

Spend the first two days in London, the itinerary will be tailor-made for your group. Perhaps include visits to the Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral, the British museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Gallery or maybe a tour to Greenwich, a coach panoramic tour of central London, or a walking tour, the choice is yours.

Day 4 Windsor and Hampton Court

We visit Windsor Castle, a short journey from London it is the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world and one of the three official residences of the Queen. We visit the sumptuous state apartments of the palace within a castle. The afternoon can be a free afternoon in Windsor or London or we can visit Hampton Court. First built as a manor house for Cardinal Wolsey, it was Henry VIII who turned Hampton Court into a palace. Later William III and Queen Mary employed Sir Christopher Wren to extend it so it is a fascinating mix of Tudor and Baroque architecture. The interiors are decorated with paintings and furniture from the Royal Collection. The Palace is situated in a beautiful riverside setting with lovely gardens.

Day 5 Kent.

Today we take a day trip to Kent. We can include Canterbury and its cathedral, Chartwell or perhaps Leeds Castle or Sissinghurst Gardens, the choice is yours. Once an important Roman town Canterbury is where Christianity gained a firm foothold on English soil 1,400 years ago with the arrival of St Augustine. The fine cathedral was built over many centuries and embraces all the stages of Gothic architecture. The site of Thomas Becket's martyrdom in 1170, Canterbury Cathedral holds a unique place in the history of the Church of England and it is still today the seat of its senior Archbishop and the mother church of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Leeds Castle is often considered to be the most romantic castle in England. It has 900 years of history and in the 1920s it was purchased by the Lady Bailie, an American, and got striking new interior design by Armand-Albert Rateau and Stephen Boudin. Chartwell is the former home of Winston Churchill which is still furnished as it was when he lived there. Churchill was a keen amateur painter you will also see his painting studio and some of his paintings. Sissinghurst Castle Gardens are remarkable gardens created by Vita Sackville West and her husband Harold Nicolson in the 1930s. Overnight in London.

Day 6 Stonehenge and Bath

Today we leave London and travel to Stonehenge to discover this ancient prehistoric structure. How was it built? How were the stones transported and what was it for? This atmospheric site has fascinated and inspired throughout its history. Later we travel through beautiful countryside to the UNESCO World Heritage City of Bath. A walking tour of the city can be included and a visit to the Roman Baths Museum. Bath has been a spa town for 2000 years and is famous for its Georgian architecture, see its most famous streets the Royal Crescent and the Circus. Overnight in Bath.

Day 5 Cotswolds and Oxford

This morning we explore the Cotswolds visiting the villages of Castle Combe and Bibury or Burford. Designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Cotswolds is a stretch of rolling hills lying mostly in Gloucestershire. The picturesque towns and villages, full of charming limestone cottages, were built as the result of wealth created from the wool trade in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the area has kept its wonderful old world charm. Overnight in Stratford upon Avon

Day 6 Stratford upon Avon and York

We start today by exploring Stratford upon Avon. This lovely Warwickshire town is famous for its connections with Shakespeare. He was born here in 1564, educated at the local Grammar School and married a local girl Anne Hathaway. After his career in London he returned to Stratford for his retirement. See the house where he was born, Holy Trinity Church where he is buried, Anne Hathaway's Cottage and many other places associated with him. After lunch we travel to York. Overnight in York.

Day 7 York

Today we have a full day in York. Enjoy a tour of York Minster famous for its medieval stained glass and considered one of the finest Gothic cathedrals in Europe. We can also include a walking tour of York including some of the city walls, learn about the influence that the Romans, the Vikings, chocolate and the railways have had on this wonderful city as well as its role in the development of Christianity. Overnight in York.

Day 8 Fountains Abbey and Castle Howard

Today we take an excursion from York to visit two very special places nearby. The dramatic and atmospheric ruins of Fountains Abbey are set in the beautiful Skell Valley and are surrounded by gardens and park land. The Abbey was a Cistercian Monastery but became a ruin as a result of the Reformation. It became a World Heritage site in 1986. In the afternoon we visit Castle Howard one of the country's grandest country houses. It is still the seat of the Howard family one of the leading aristocratic families of England and one of the few country houses that we have in the English Baroque style. Castle Howard is also renowned for its rich collections, the long gallery has paintings by Canaletto Gainsborough, Reynolds and Stubbs. Alternatively we could visit one of the above and spend the rest of the day exploring the beautiful Yorkshire Dales and perhaps visiting the Wensleydale cheese factory. Overnight in York.

Day 9 Coventry and London.

On the way back to London we make a stop at Coventry Cathedral for a guided tour. Coventry cathedral's architecture has an extraordinary and very powerful story behind it, one of ruin and rebuilding. Today the cathedral has an equally remarkable ministry of reconciliation which was also born out of its traumatic World War II destruction and rebirth. The tour includes both the ruins of the old cathedral and the impressive modern cathedral. The tour ends in London.

This itinerary can also be tailor-made to your requirement. A transfer from Heathrow airport to your hotel can be arranged on the day prior to your tour and one for your return flight can be included the day after the end of the tour if required.