



*Europe and Worldwide Spring Collection*

UNIQUE EXPERIENCES IN SPECTACULAR DESTINATIONS

Save up to £150 per person

# Welcome to our *European & Worldwide* Spring Collection for 2025

Whether you're looking for a city break rich in culture and architecture, a garden holiday that offers a chance to admire native plants or an island-hopping experience, we have an escorted tour perfectly suited to you.

Delve into the beauty of Monet's magnificent gardens or the vibrant colours of the Menton Lemon Festival in France, wander Spain's Alhambra Palace with its surrounding grounds, or journey through time and explore UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Portugal. Archaeology lovers can look forward to visiting sites such as Khirokitia, a well-preserved Neolithic walled village on the island of Cyprus or Malta's millennia-old Mnajdra Temples. Venture further across the world and you'll find Japan, where you can wander the exquisite, manicured grounds of temples and explore an atmospheric bamboo forest.

Culturally, there is also much to experience and our collection of European and Worldwide tours offer you the chance to admire architecture and art, encounter wildlife and birds, and indulge in delicious regional cuisine, while of course enjoying beautiful landscapes and wonderful weather.

Wherever piques your interest, you can be assured of the best, culturally rich experience on a Brightwater Holiday. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Best wishes,

*Alison Wilson*  
Managing Director



*"The holiday was well planned so that there was time to relax as well as excursions to interesting places."*  
Guest - May 2024

## Horticultural expertise

Take a garden holiday and in many cases you will be accompanied by an experienced horticulturalist with a wealth of experience and knowledge as well as the practical skills needed to ensure the smooth running of your tour. From award-winning garden designers to the former Head Gardener to the Queen Mother and the Curator of one of Britain's most prestigious gardens you are sure to be in good hands.

*"Very good. We could never have seen all these marvellous sights on our own. Excellent tour guide."*  
Guest - May 2024

## Your *holiday*, your way

### Overseas tours

All our holidays include travel to your destination from the UK by plane or train and include all overseas transfers. Each holiday page details the travel arrangements included. If you would like something different please let us know and we will do our best to arrange it for you.

## You are in *expert* hands

When you travel with Brightwater Holidays you are travelling with the experts. We have been creating holidays for over 30 years and take great pride and care in getting it right for you. Many of our guests have been travelling with us for many years and it is our attention to detail, meticulous planning and the feeling that a Brightwater Holiday gives which keeps them coming back year after year.

Your votes meant that we were delighted to win Gold for Best Travel Company for Coach Holidays at the 2023 British Travel Awards, along with Silver for Best Company for UK Coach/Touring Holidays. We were awarded the Feefo 2024 Trusted Service Award for excellence in customer service throughout 2023 and were voted Garden Tour Operator of the Year at the International Garden Tourism Awards in Canada.



Give our Specialist Sales Executives a call, Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm, on:

**01334 804 711**

Alternatively, send us an email to:

[info@brightwaterholidays.com](mailto:info@brightwaterholidays.com)

For further details, please visit our website:

[www.brightwaterholidays.com](http://www.brightwaterholidays.com)

## Get in touch with an *expert*

## An *unforgettable* holiday experience

Choose to travel with Brightwater Holidays and you can expect a unique holiday experience. From expertly designed tours and itineraries, hand-selected accommodation, exclusive access and visits to private gardens and comfortable travel, we make sure that all your needs are taken care of so you can sit back and enjoy your holiday from the moment you join.

### Unique European Experiences

However you choose to holiday, our European tours offer memorable experiences and new discoveries for everyone. Chase the Northern Lights in Iceland while discovering the country's geological wonders, cruise between the Canary Islands to discover their exotic plants, enchanting forests and landscapes of craters and volcanoes, enjoy the spectacle of the Menton Lemon Festival in the glamorous South of France, go in search of unique treasures in atmospheric Malta, follow Portugal's stunning almond blossom route, relax on a scenic vintage train journey from Solferino to Palma in lovely Mallorca or admire some of the world's most famous works of art in Antwerp's most prestigious museums.



# Europe

Home to some truly incredible destinations, all within easy reach whether by air or rail. Discover the elegant gardens of the south of France, enjoy some spring sunshine in Sicily or explore the amazing gardens and architecture of Mallorca.

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*"An amazing holiday, well planned and enthusiastically guided. A lot packed in to a few days but I never felt rushed."*

Guest - May 2024

# Glorious Gardens of the Canary Islands

Canary Islands

This volcanic archipelago off the coast of north-western Africa is home to black sand beaches, lunar landscapes, lush forests and hidden gardens filled with indigenous plants, some of which are on the verge of extinction. During this eight-day voyage we not only have the opportunity to enjoy some much-needed winter sun, we also explore six of the eight main islands. Our adventures will include visits to Mount Teide National Park, the largest park in the Canary Islands, the garden of Sitio Litre in Tenerife, the National Park of Caldera de Taburiente and the Botanical Garden of La Palma. While on the island of Gran Canaria, we'll explore the lovely garden of La Marquesa de Arucas and on Lanzarote we'll visit the Cactus Garden, a former quarry that has been transformed by extensive plantations of prickly pear cacti, and the Green Heart of Haria, an oasis for wildlife and endemic plants.



**YOUR TOUR MANAGER**  
**TREVOR EDWARDS**

Horticulturalist Trevor is looking forward to guests joining him for some winter sun discovering the volcanic landscapes and glorious gardens of the Canary Islands.

## Discover more...

- » The Canary Islands are home to a whole host of horticultural wonders. The Botanical Gardens of Puerto De La Cruz boast many species of exotic and sub-tropical plants, including Coussapoa dealbata, a tree with intertwining trunks found in South America.
- » The Orchid Gardens of Sitio Litre is a must-see, famous for its Dragon Tree which is believed to be nearly 600 years old.
- » Delve deeper into local culture and history with an onboard lecture when we reach La Palma and a demonstration of La Gomera's unique whistled language.
- » On Lanzarote, look forward to a visit to Jardín de Cactus, a former quarry that has been transformed into a wonderful garden, and The Green Heart of Haria, an oasis for wildlife with a vast collection of native plants.



MV La Belle Des Océans

## Tour highlights

- » Enjoy a trip to Mt Teide National Park in central Tenerife, a unique landscape of craters, volcanoes and petrified lava.
- » Visit the stunning treasures of the Botanical Gardens of Puerto De La Cruz and the Orchid Gardens of Sitio Litre.
- » Explore Caldera de Taburiente National Park, home to an enormous crater and a declared UNESCO Biosphere reserve.
- » Head to the island of La Gomera, filled with craggy mountains and sprinkled with verdant forests of ferns and moss-covered trees.
- » Discover the gems of the Canary Islands, such as Gran Canaria, Lanzarote, Fuerteventura and more.

**8 DAYS** from **£4,145**

**DEPARTURE POINT:** London

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Seven nights' full board on board the MV La Belle Des Océans in a Horizon cabin on deck 3
- Drinks on board with meals and at the bar *(excluding premium drinks and spirits)*
- Flight from London to Tenerife, returning from Lanzarote
- Visits include: Mt Teide National Park, Botanical Gardens of Puerto De La Cruz, Caldera de Taburiente National Park, Jardín de Cactus & The Green Heart of Haria

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
1 - 8 Feb		
Deck 3	<del>£4,295</del>	£4,145
Deck 4	<del>£4,725</del>	£4,575
Deck 5	<del>£5,155</del>	£5,005
Panorama	<del>£5,585</del>	£5,435
Riviera	<del>£6,075</del>	£5,925
Ocean	<del>£6,395</del>	£6,245
Single Supplement		from £1,495

# Iceland Northern Lights

Aurora borealis, Reykjavík

Seeing the Northern Lights is a bucket list item for many of us, but aurora borealis aside, Iceland offers a host of attractions, quite unlike anywhere else in the world. From geothermal dips to moonlit trips, this tour is a Who's Who of once-in-a-lifetime experiences. It may be the focus of our tour, but the aurora borealis is only one of the many natural wonders present in Iceland. It's unlikely you'll find another country with such extensive otherworldly appeal: lunar lava-formed landscapes, thunderous waterfalls, moody geysers and glistening glaciers — and those are just the geological bits! Our tour is split between Reykjavík, the world's most northerly capital, and the southern town of Hella, to maximise our chances of seeing the aurora. Bucket list at the ready...



Geyser



**YOUR TOUR MANAGER**  
**ALASTAIR WALKER**

Returning to Iceland in 2025 Alastair is looking forward to sharing the geological and cultural wonders with guests as they experience this unique country.

## Discover more...

- » The Raufarhólshellir Lava Tunnel offers a unique experience exploring the inner workings of a volcanic eruption.
- » Our full-day tour of south Iceland includes Skógafoss waterfall, a visit to Skógar Folk Museum and the chance to walk behind Seljalandsfoss waterfall.
- » The remote Skálholt church and Þingvellir National Park await, where the tectonic plates of Europe and North America meet. We also view the Gullfoss waterfall and visit the Geysir Geothermal Area, where we can see Strokkur erupt.
- » We enjoy a city tour of Reykjavík, including its iconic Hallgrímskirkja church, the panoramic viewing platform Perlan and the Aurora Reykjavík centre. We bathe in the geothermal Laugarvatn Fontana springs and after dinner go in search of the Northern Lights.

## Tour highlights

- » Explore the inner workings of a volcanic eruption
- » Discover Iceland's ancient culture
- » Stand on the geological border between Europe and North America
- » Marvel at the biggest geothermic mud pool in Iceland
- » View the Northern Lights (naturally)

**5 DAYS** from **£2,220**

**DEPARTURE POINT:** London

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast: two nights at the Stracta Hotel, Hella and two nights at the Grand Hotel Reykjavík
- One lunch
- Return flights London to Keflavík
- Visits include: Skógar Folk Museum, Skálholt church and Þingvellir National Park
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- Services of Alastair Walker as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
9 - 13 Feb	<del>£2,295</del>	£2,220
Single Supplement		£395

\*The Northern Lights are a natural phenomenon and therefore unpredictable. The order of the itinerary may be changed to accommodate the best viewing conditions but no guarantees of seeing the lights can be given.

# Gardens of the French Riviera - Menton Lemon Festival



Menton Lemon Festival parade

Menton's zesty Lemon Festival brings a vibrant burst of colour to our tour of the French Riviera. Exotic gardens, cacti collections and azure seas complete our sparkling itinerary. At the Clos du Peyronnet we have an exclusive tour, where a passion for exotic plants is reflected in the colour and variety of this fascinating garden. At St. Jean Cap Ferrat, we visit the exquisite gardens of the Fondation Ephrussi de Rothschild, while a short hop over the border to Italy finds us at the incomparable Hanbury Gardens.



**YOUR TOUR MANAGER**  
**TREVOR EDWARDS**

Trevor is looking forward to guests joining him for one of the gardening highlights of the beautiful French Riviera.

## Discover more...

- » In February, the town of Menton hosts the colourful Lemon Festival, one of the largest and most colourful events on the south coast of France, and a wonderful tonic at the start of the gardening year. Elaborate floats and imaginative sculptures in dazzling shades of orange and yellow are paraded through the Promenade du Soleil in Menton, bringing huge bursts of colour and a lemony zest to the early spring, with a carnival spirit and *joie de vivre* that is typically French.
- » In addition to a full day of fruity fun in Menton, we visit some of the finest gardens that were created here in the 19th century, along with a trip to glamorous Monte Carlo, playground to the rich and famous.



Monte Carlo

## Tour highlights

- » Sit back and enjoy all the colour and spectacle of the Menton Lemon Festival
- » Discover Cacti of every shape and size in Èze
- » Admire the richness of the plant collection at the Hanbury Garden
- » Take in the marvellous sea views and opulent surroundings in St Jean Cap Ferrat

*"Most enjoyable; wonderful gardens, weather and area to visit."*

Guest - February 2024

**6 DAYS** from **£1,920**

**DEPARTURE POINT:** London

## YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Five nights' bed & breakfast at the 4-star Hotel Le Grimaldi, Nice (or similar)
- ▶ Three dinners and four lunches
- ▶ Return flights from London to Nice
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Visits include: Jardin Exotique D'Èze, La Mortola and Serre de la Madone
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager (Trevor Edwards 13th Feb)

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
13 - 18 Feb*	<del>£2,045</del>	£1,970
20 - 25 Feb	<del>£1,995</del>	£1,920
Single Supplement		£325

# Cultural Malta



Casa Rocca Piccola

## Tour highlights

- » Marvel at priceless art treasures at St John's Cathedral
- » Stroll through the walled citadel of Mdina
- » Discover the 5000-year-old temple of Ħaġar Qim
- » Take a boat trip to the Blue Grotto
- » Enjoy a splendid afternoon tea in the opulent Palazzo Parisio

Nowhere on earth concentrates as much turbulent past into such a small land mass as Malta, so if you want to learn as much as possible about the complex history and rich cultural heritage of the Mediterranean region in just five days, at a time of year when the weather offers a pleasant winter escape, this is the tour for you. The island has been inhabited since 5900 BC. and ruled by a succession of powers, so it is little wonder it presents such a captivating tapestry.



Valletta

## Discover more...

- » Malta's treasures are just waiting to be uncovered. Our guided tour of the capital takes us through the bustling streets of Valletta, featuring the Upper Barrakka Gardens, a breathtaking panorama of the Grand Harbour and St John's Cathedral, adorned in centuries-old riches such as the world-famous Caravaggio painting.
- » This tour offers the perfect chance to step into history at the walled citadel of Mdina, Malta's former capital city, and the significant site of Ħaġar Qim, home to huge megaliths from the Tarzian phases of around 3000-2500BC.
- » You can also expect memorable experiences such as an exclusive afternoon tea in the stunning Palazzo Parisio and a boat trip to the Blue Grotto, a complex of sea caverns surrounded by sparkling azure waters.



Ħaġar Qim

*"Excellent. It ran really smoothly. Our hotel was beautiful, clean, well appointed and had great food and lots of it!"*

Guest - March 2024

**5 DAYS** from **£1,120** | **NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**

**DEPARTURE POINT:** London

## YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner (with wine), bed & breakfast at the 4-star Doubletree by Hilton, St Paul's Bay
- ▶ Return flights from London to Malta
- ▶ Afternoon tea at Palazzo Parisio
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Visits include: Palazzo Parisio, Ħaġar Qim and Upper Barrakka Gardens
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
4 - 8 Mar	<del>£1,195</del>	£1,120
<b>NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT</b>		

# Malta's Archaeological Heritage



Upper Barrakka Gardens

Malta's diminutive archipelago is by no means any indication of the vast riches it holds — from the Neolithic to now, they are many and varied — a land of golden limestone cliff coasts, lucid seas, beautiful laidback towns and heart-stirring views. During this tour, we venture inside the walled citadel of Mdina, explore the warren of narrow tomb lined passages of St Paul's Catacombs, and take to the waves for a boat trip around the spectacular cliffs and caverns of the famed Blue Grotto. But most startling of all, perhaps, are the mysterious sites left by civilisations with whom we are just starting to get acquainted: the millennia-old Mnajdra Temples and the megaliths of Ħaġar Qim which make for a truly unforgettable archaeological expedition.



Ħaġar Qim

## Discover more...

- » Explore the world-renowned Ħal Saflieni Hypogeum. Dating back to around 3300 BC and one of the best-preserved examples of Maltese temple-building culture, this historic wonder is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Neolithic subterranean structure is renowned for its intricate chambers spread across three levels and served both as a sanctuary and a necropolis.



Marsaxlokk

## Tour highlights

- » The Upper Barrakka Gardens, the Grand Master's Palace and the Archaeological Museum.
- » Museum of Roman Antiquities
- » Visit Ħaġar Qim and the Mnajdra Temples.
- » Boat trip to the stunning Blue Grotto and the Dingli Cliffs.
- » Tour of the fishing village of Marsaxlokk.
- » The Ħal Saflieni Hypogeum.

*"Excellent. I feel as though I saw so much of Malta's archeological history and the brilliant explanation by Chantelle, our guide, put it all together so well."*

Guest - May 2024

**7 DAYS from £1,720 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**

DEPARTURE POINT: London

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Six nights' dinner (with wine), bed & breakfast at the 4-star Doubletree by Hilton, St Paul's Bay
- ▶ Return flights from London to Malta
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Visits include: Ħal Saflieni Hypogeum and the Mnajdra Temples
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
4 - 10 Mar	£1,795	£1,720

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**

# Galicia's Camellia Route



Santiago de Compostela

## Tour highlights

- » Tour of La Coruña to see its modern parks and the historic city centre.
- » Visit to the garden of Pazo de Mariñan, overlooking the quiet waters of a river estuary.
- » Santiago de Compostela to explore the Monasterio de San Lorenzo de Trasouto.
- » Visit to the Pazo de Santa Cruz de Rivadulla at Vedra-Ortigueira, one of the region's best plant collections, with hundreds of varieties of Camellia.
- » The impressive hill top Castillo de Soutomaioir



**YOUR TOUR MANAGER**  
**TONY RUSSELL**

Tony is looking forward to returning to one of his favourite corners of Spain.



Camellia



Gardens at Soutomaioir

## Discover more...

- » Amongst the botanical varieties to be found in the garden of Pazo de Mariñan are many old camellia plants with multiple trunks, along with others which have been planted over the years to add fragrance and colour to the garden in the winter and spring.
- » The Monasterio de San Lorenzo de Trasouto garden is occupied by an extraordinary masterpiece of box topiary; a wriggling rounded hedge with only the smallest of spaces separating its parts creating a sculpture of the Virgin clothed in ivy.

*"Very enjoyable and a different sort of holiday."*

Guest - March 2024

**6 DAYS from £1,420**

DEPARTURE POINT: London

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Five nights' hotel accommodation on a bed & breakfast basis, plus three dinners with wine; two nights at the 4-star Eurostars Ciudad de La Coruña; two nights at the 4-star Eurostars Gran Hotel, Santiago de Compostela; one night at the 4-star Eurostars de Vigo (or similar)
- ▶ Return flights from London to La Coruña
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Visits include: Santiago Cathedral, Pazo San Lorenzo and Pazo Oca
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Tony Russell as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
12 - 17 Mar	£1,495	£1,420

Single Supplement **£195**

# Portugal - Route of the Almond Blossom



Almond trees, Douro Valley



**YOUR TOUR MANAGER**  
TREVOR EDWARDS

Join Trevor on this delightful spring tour experiencing the delicate Almond blossom of the Douro Valley and some of Northern Portugal's best gardens.



Porto's Ribeira district



Camellia Japonica

## Discover more...

» The stunning almond blossom vistas of the Douro Valley are comparable with the more famous cherry blossoms in Japan but closer to home. Vila Nova de Foz Côa is a small town known for its stunning landscape and, at this time of year, its almond trees with their masses of delicate white and pink flowers. During the almond blossom season, the streets are filled with festivities and events to celebrate this natural wonder.

## Tour highlights

- » Explore The Ribeira area, the historic centre of Porto, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- » Visit the Crystal Palace Gardens
- » Almond blossom in Vila Nova de Foz Côa
- » Visit to Casa de Mateus
- » Camelias Flavius nursery, home to more than 2300 varieties and strains of camellia

**8 DAYS** from £2,495

**DEPARTURE POINT:** London

## YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed & breakfast: three nights at the 4-star Hotel Vila Gale Porto, one night at the Quinta de Terrincha, three nights at the 4-star Vila Gale Collection Hotel Braga
- ▶ Return flights from London to Porto
- ▶ Welcome and farewell dinners
- ▶ Two lunches
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Visits include: Casa Mateus, Casa do Campo and Quinta da Arcadia
- ▶ Services of Horticulturalist Trevor Edwards as tour manager

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
12 - 19 Mar	<del>£2,595</del>	£2,495
19 - 26 Mar	<del>£2,595</del>	£2,495
Single Supplement		£395

# Gardens and Architecture of Mallorca



Cathedral La Seu at sunset

Away from the busy beach resorts, the Balearic island of Mallorca offers a timeless, verdant landscape of wooded hills and orange groves, sweeping bays and rocky mountains. Dotted around the island is a host of historic gardens whose origins date back hundreds of years, as well as more modern creations, providing a rich range of horticultural delights to be enjoyed in the warm sunshine. These include the gardens at Raixa and Alfaiba, both with Moorish origins and later Christian influences, and Son Marroig, a former residence of Archduke Luis Salvador with dramatic views.

Elsewhere we visit the monastery of Real Cartuja de Valldemosa, with its peerless location high in the mountains; tour the island's principal city of Palma with its Gothic cathedral and Arab baths and take an exhilarating ride on the Tren de Soller, a heritage train that runs through spectacular mountain scenery.



Necropolis of Son Real

## Discover more...

- » Tour Palma, with visits to the Cathedral (*La Seu*), the second tallest Gothic cathedral in Europe, which contains many fine works of art; the former royal residence Palacio de la Almudaina and the adjacent Hort del Rei (*the king's garden*) and the Castell de Belver, a heavily fortified Gothic castle - now the city's museum.



Garden at Son Marroig

## Tour highlights

- » Enjoy Moorish gardens in Raixa and Alfaiba
- » Visit the largest prehistoric cemetery in the Balearics
- » Visit the monastery of Real Cartuja de Valldemosa
- » Spectacular mountain scenery
- » Take a ride on the vintage train that runs along a highly scenic route from Soller to Palma.

**6 DAYS** from £1,520

**DEPARTURE POINT:** London

## YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Five nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 4-star Hotel THB Maria Isabel, Playa de Palma, plus one lunch
- ▶ Return flights from London to Palma
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Visits include: Gardens of Raixa, Son Marroig and Alfaiba
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
18 - 23 Mar	<del>£1,595</del>	£1,520
22 - 27 Apr	<del>£1,995</del>	£1,920
Single Supplement		£395

## Gardens and Villas of Sicily



Villa Giulia

Sicily has become one of Europe's best-loved destinations in recent years and it is truly an island of the senses. As soon as you step on to its warm and fertile shores you'll understand why. Our eight-day tour takes in the best that the island has to offer, with a strong emphasis on gardens, which is what sets this holiday apart from other Sicilian offerings. We begin on the slopes of Mount Etna, Europe's highest active volcano, as we visit an elegant garden which thrives on the fertile soil here and then ascend the mountain itself, observing the change from lush groves to stark, desert landscapes. In Taormina we visit a private garden which boasts spectacular views across the bay before exploring the Greco-Roman remains of the city itself. Heading south we gain an exclusive insight into Sicilian gardening with a member of the team at Villasmundo and visit the private garden of a Sicilian aristocrat. A treat for the senses awaits at Gli Aroma Sicily as we discover an extensive selection of herbs and spices and we also enjoy lunch at a monastery high in the mountains. We conclude in Palermo, a melting-pot of architectural styles with both Norman and Arabic influences.

### Discover more...

- » Explore Taormina and its many highlights, including the private garden of Casa Cuseni. Created by Robert Kitson, a British painter of the early 20th century, its house and exuberant plantings demonstrate clear links with the Arts and Crafts movement.



Monreale Cathedral

### Tour highlights

- » Drive up the slopes of Mount Etna.
- » Tour with a member of the gardening team at Giardini San Guiliano, Villasmundo.
- » Lunch at a former Benedictine Monastery.
- » An eclectic mix of cultures at Palermo.

*"Excellent. Great tour manager with a wealth of knowledge"*

Guest - March 2024

8 DAYS from £2,420

 DEPARTURE POINT: London

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' dinner including wine, bed & breakfast: three nights in Giardini Naxos; two nights in Ragusa; two nights in Palermo
- ▶ Three lunches
- ▶ Return flights from London to Sicily
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Visits include: Villa Trinità, Casa Cuseni and a tour of Gli Aromi Sicily
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
18 - 25 Mar	£2,495	£2,420
Single Supplement		£395

## The Art & Architecture of Antwerp



Antwerp

A gem in the Flanders region of Belgium, famed for its medieval streets and renaissance monuments, Antwerp is home to thousands of paintings by the Old Masters, housed in some of the most famous museums in the world. Our tour explores some of the most wonderful architecture to be found in the city, including the Cathedral of Our Lady which is still unfinished (although construction began in 1351!) and the impressive Centraal Station which has been voted the most beautiful in the world on several occasions. We are joined by local guides as we explore the art collections of Antwerp's best museums, including the KMSKA – Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Snijders & Rockox Huis and the Plantin-Moretus Museum. We also have a visit to the newly re-opened Rubens House Experience and Gardens.



Centraal Station



Grote Markt of Antwerp

### Discover more...

- » Our walking tour of Antwerp reveals several architectural wonders such as Antwerpen-Centraal Station, one of the most beautiful stations in the world, the medieval fortress of Steen and Saint James Church, home to a striking pulpit, stunning stained-glass windows and the burial chamber of the painter Rubens.
- » There is also the chance to visit several incredible museums, including the Rubens Experience Centre and Gardens. At the KMSKA – Royal Museum of Fine Arts, we are joined by one of the local guides for a tour through the collections, with over a hundred paintings on display by Flemish masters such as Fouquet, Rodin, Chagall and more. Snijders & Rockox Huis is based in two former town houses and showcases works by Rubens, Jordaens and Van Dyck, while the Plantin-Moretus Museum was the first to be ordained on the UNESCO World Heritage list and tells the story of over three hundred years of book printing.

### Tour highlights

- » Discover central Antwerp on a walking tour
- » Take a guided tour of the KMSKA - Royal Museum of Fine Arts
- » Discover Snijders & Rockox Huis on a guided tour
- » Visit the Rubens Experience Centre and Gardens
- » Explore the UNESCO World Heritage listed Plantin-Moretus Museum

5 DAYS from £1,320 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

 DEPARTURE POINT: London St Pancras International

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' bed and breakfast at the 4-star Mercure Antwerp (or similar)
- ▶ Two dinners
- ▶ Return Eurostar from London to Brussels and onwards rail to Antwerp (first class upgrades and regional connections available at a supplement)
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Visits include: Rubens Experience Centre and Gardens, Plantin-Moretus Museum, KMSKA – Royal Museum of Fine Arts and Snijders & Rockox Huis
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager plus local guides

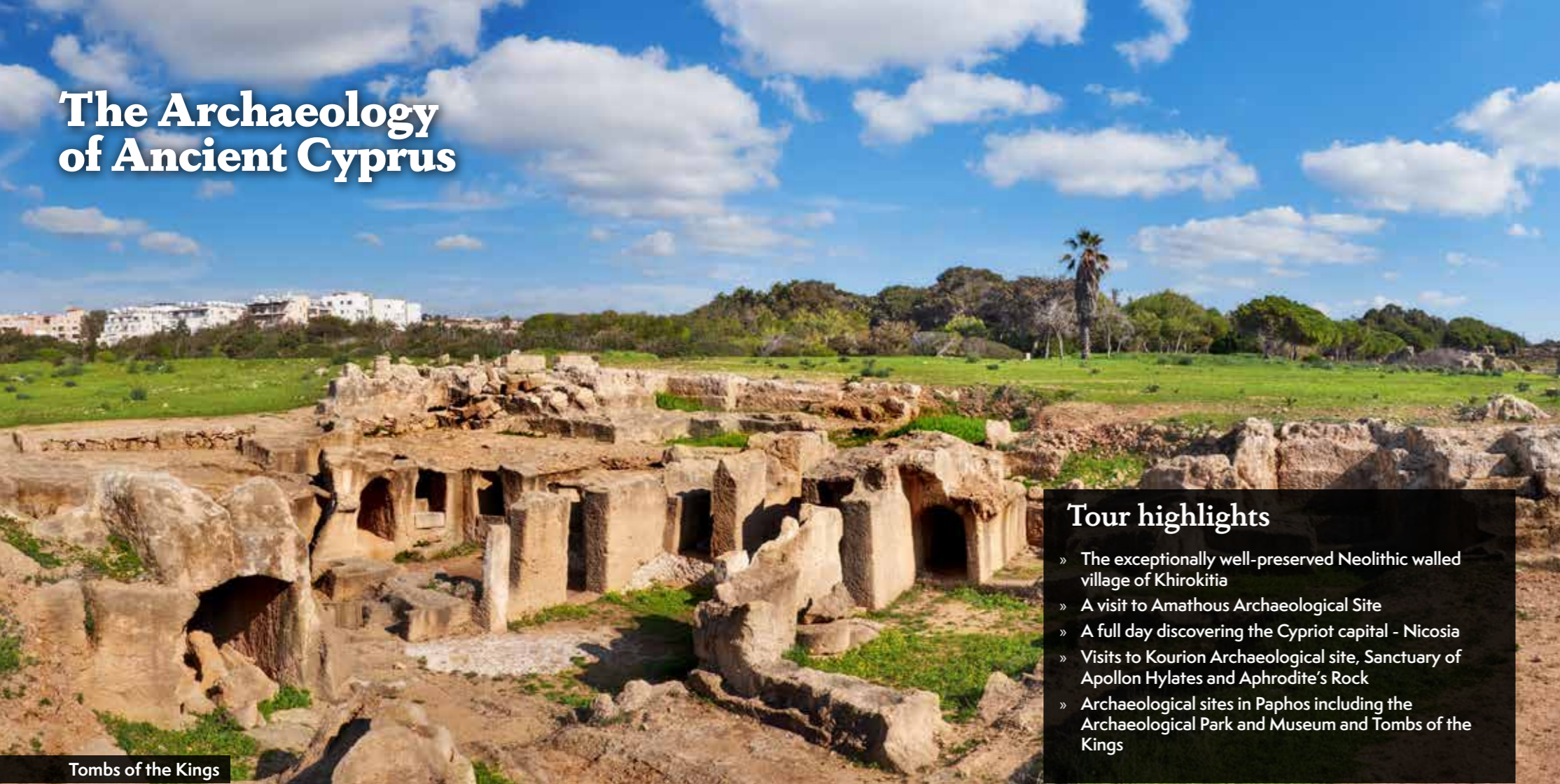
#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
27 - 31 Mar	£1,395	£1,320

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT



# The Archaeology of Ancient Cyprus



Tombs of the Kings

## Tour highlights

- » The exceptionally well-preserved Neolithic walled village of Khirokitia
- » A visit to Amathous Archaeological Site
- » A full day discovering the Cypriot capital - Nicosia
- » Visits to Kourion Archaeological site, Sanctuary of Apollon Hylates and Aphrodite's Rock
- » Archaeological sites in Paphos including the Archaeological Park and Museum and Tombs of the Kings

The Mediterranean island of Cyprus has a rich Prehistoric, Classical and Medieval past. In recent years research has shown that the earliest occupation of the island dates to over 10,000 years ago, and over these millennia the Cypriot people have developed their own distinctive artefacts, buildings, art and culture. With mild spring weather, Cyprus lends itself perfectly as an escape from the cooler weather at home, while providing the opportunity to explore the sites in the comfort of the mild spring weather rather than the heat of the summer.

Among the highlights are three UNESCO World Heritage sites, Khirokitia and the Archaeological Park and Tombs of the Kings at Paphos, along with a host of other fascinating sites, including the very spot where the newborn goddess Aphrodite came ashore in her shell, a popular subject for classical painters.



Pathos



Tombs of the Kings



Kourion

## YOUR TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1** We depart from London to Cyprus. *(D)*
- Day 2** After breakfast, we depart for **Khirokitia**, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This well-preserved Neolithic walled village is home to over 60 stone round houses. Following this, we visit the village of **Kalavassos**, where the settlement of **Tenta** is of special interest, an aceramic Neolithic settlement that dates back to 7000 BC. Our last visit is to **Amathous Archaeological Site**, which has yielded some interesting finds such as the Agora, public baths and the Temple of Aphrodite. *(B)*
- Day 3** Today we have a full day discovering the Cypriot capital of **Nicosia**. A settlement since the Bronze Age, the city has been continuously inhabited for almost 5,000 years. We have a visit to the **Cyprus Archaeological Museum** which is home to the world's most extensive collection of Cypriot archaeology. We have **lunch** in a local taverna with wine included, followed by some free time to explore. *(B, L)*
- Day 4** Today is yours to spend at leisure. *(B)*
- Day 5** After breakfast we check out of our hotel and head to **Kourion Archaeological site** which is one of Cyprus's most important



Nicosia City

city-kingdoms from antiquity. The centrepiece of the site is the impressive Greco-Roman theatre that was built in the 2nd century BC. Other remains include the private villa 'House of Eustolios' where we can see the remains of 5th century mosaic floors and a bathing complex. Our next visit is to the **Sanctuary of Apollon Hylates** and our final stop is **Aphrodite's Rock**, the goddess's mythical birthplace. We later head to our hotel in Paphos. *(B)*

**Day 6** Today we have a long but rewarding day. Our first visit is the **Archaeological Park** at Kato Pafos, which has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1980. Here we discover sites and monuments from the 4th century through to the Middle Ages. We then head to **Paphos Archaeological Museum**. In the afternoon, we depart for the **Tombs of the Kings**, an elaborate rock-cut necropolis which dates from the 3rd century BC followed by a visit to **Lemba Archaeological Project**, home to prehistoric projects in western Cyprus for over 30 years. *(B, L)*

**Day 7** Today is yours to spend relaxing. Later this evening we enjoy a farewell dinner with wine at a local restaurant. *(B, D)*

**Day 8** After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our return flight to London. *(B)*

**Inc. meals:** B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner

**8 DAYS** from £2,020

**DEPARTURE POINT:** London

## YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed and breakfast: four nights at the 4-star Mediterranean Hotel, Limassol and three nights at the 4-star Mayfair Hotel Paphos *(or similar)*
- ▶ Two dinners and two lunches at local restaurants with wine
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager and local guides

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
25 Mar - 1 Apr	<del>£2,095</del>	£2,020
Single Supplement		£325

## FOUR-DAY PAPHOS EXTENSION FROM £175pp

Why not extend your holiday with a three-night stay at the 4-star Mayfair hotel *(or similar)* including breakfast and airport transfers giving you the chance to spend a few days at leisure.

## Unique *Worldwide* Experiences

Everything is taken care of on a Brightwater holiday, whether you choose to stay closer to home or venture further afield. We make sure that all your needs are taken care of so you can sit back and enjoy your holiday from the moment you join, with expertly designed tours and itineraries, hand-selected accommodation, exclusive access and visits to private gardens and comfortable travel.

Memories to last a lifetime await on our selection of tours to spectacular destinations across the world, all just waiting to be discovered. Marvel at the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx of Giza in Egypt, enjoy a unique chocolate-making adventure at St Lucia's "Hotel Chocolat", look out for giant tortoises in sun-drenched Mauritius, explore some of the Caribbean's most stunning gardens in Barbados or have dinner with a maiko in the Gion district of Kyoto before taking the bullet train to Tokyo the next day. With so much more on offer, there is plenty to look forward to on these exciting holidays.



## *Worldwide*

If you're looking to explore more of our wonderful world, we have a spectacular array of long-haul holidays to choose from, which can take you from the ancient temples of Japan and the tropical rainforest of Costa Rica to stunning Caribbean gardens in sun-soaked St Lucia. So, whether you're looking for a wild escape or a scenic break, you're bound to find inspiration from our once-in-a-lifetime itineraries on the following pages.

- 20 Gardens of Costa Rica
- 22 Gardens and Temples of Ancient Egypt
- 24 Gardens of Barbados
- 26 Gardens of Saint Lucia
- 28 Seasonal Gardens of Japan
- 30 Gardens of Mauritius

*"Comprehensive itinerary - well designed to follow the ancient history of Egypt in chronological order and visit the main sites."*

Guest - February 2024

# Gardens of Costa Rica



Monteverde

## Tour highlights

- » The imposing volcano of Arenal
- » Explore the cloud forest at Monteverde
- » Spotting subtropical wildlife in the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge
- » Else Kientzler Botanical Garden with a vast collection of tropical plants

The term biodiversity may have been coined with Costa Rica in mind, such is the range of different species within its pristine, tropical forests. Throw in some spectacular scenery and resplendently laid-back citizens, and you have all the makings of a life-affirming holiday experience.

Visit a broad range of gardens both public and private, such as the Else Kientzler Botanical Gardens with its world-class collection of plants. At the Monteverde Cloud Reserve we will see some of the 100 mammals, 400 bird species and more than 2,500 varieties of plants that thrive here, including, if we are lucky, the famously elusive resplendent quetzal.



## Your tour manager Colin Crosbie

Returning to Costa Rica again in 2025 join Colin as he explores the rich tropical rainforests.

Colin Crosbie was the Head Gardener to Her Majesty The Queen Mother in Windsor prior to taking up the position of Head Curator at RHS Garden Wisley, and is currently the President of the Scottish Rock Garden Club. His extensive horticultural knowledge and experience coupled with his good humour have established him as one of Brightwater's most popular guides.



sloth, Manuel Antonio National Park



Orchid

## YOUR TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1** Enjoy access to the airport Executive lounge before we depart from London to **San José**. (IF, D)
- Day 2** After breakfast, we visit the stunning **Else Kientzler Botanical Garden**, home to a vast array of tropical plant species from around the globe. Later, we visit **Ark Herb Gardens** where there are more than 1,600 species of ornamental plants and fruits. (B, L, D)
- Day 3** Today we visit **Lankester Botanical Garden**, a research centre that is part of the University of Costa Rica and which is dedicated to the exhibition, conservation and study of orchids. (B, L, D)
- Day 4** This morning we visit the **CATIE Botanical Gardens** home to a century old kapok tree, dripping orchids, and hanging bromeliads. Later, we visit **Hacienda Tayutic** a century-old plantation. (B, L, D)
- Day 5** Today after breakfast, we head for **Palmitour** where we learn about the growing and processing of palm hearts. This afternoon we visit a **Pineapple plantation**. (B, L, D)
- Day 6** A full day awaits at the **Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge**, where we can expect to see a diverse range of flora. Later we enjoy **Arenal's hot springs**. (B, L, D)



Blue hummingbird

- Day 7** After a **boat trip** on **Lake Arenal**, we head south to **Monteverde**. In the afternoon we visit an **orchid garden**. (B, L, D)
- Day 8** Tour the **Monteverde Cloud Reserve**, with its complex ecosystem and vast array of flora and fauna. Animal species include the jaguar, ocelot, Baird's tapir and birds such as the three-wattled bellbird. (B, L)
- Day 9** This morning we visit a **butterfly garden**, where we can expect to see myriad different species of these delicate, colourful creatures. (B, L)
- Day 10** Today we visit **Villa Vanilla**, where we have a tour of the farm and can see a variety of spices such as vanilla, true Ceylon cinnamon, cacao, black pepper and allspice. (B, L)
- Day 11** Explore the **Manuel Antonio National Park**, one of the most beautiful and bio-diverse areas in the world before we return to San José. (B, L, D)
- Day 12** We transfer to San José airport for our return overnight flight to London. (B, IF)
- Day 13** We arrive in London.

Inc. meals: IF: In flight, B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner

13 DAYS from £4,845

 DEPARTURE POINT: London

## YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ 11 nights' bed & breakfast: three nights at the 4-star Bougainvillea Hotel, San José; two nights at the 3-star Villa Florencia, Turrialba; two nights at the 3-star Arenal Paraiso, Arenal; two nights at the 3-star Heliconia, Monteverde; two nights at the 4-star Parador, Manuel Antonia (or similar)
- ▶ Eight dinners and ten lunches
- ▶ Return flights from London to San José
- ▶ London pre-flight Executive lounge access
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Colin Crosbie and a local guide

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Was	Now
Early booking offer*		
26 Jan - 7 Feb	£4,995	£4,845
Single Supplement		£995



# Gardens and Temples of Ancient Egypt

Great Sphinx

## Tour highlights

- » Marvel at the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx of Giza
- » Admire the stunning Al-Orman Garden
- » Lunch at the luxurious Sofitel Winter Palace
- » Enjoy a four-night Nile cruise
- » Discover the unique Valley of the Kings

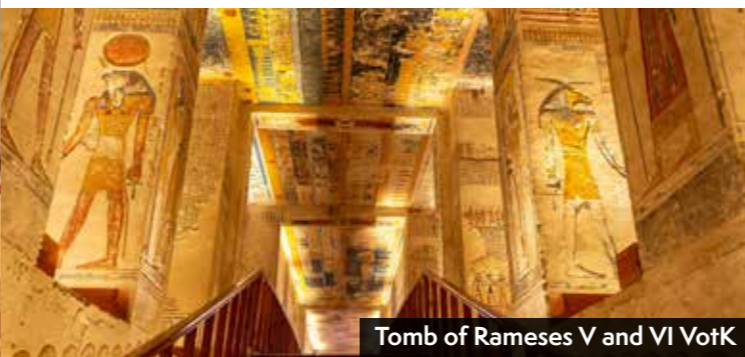
Over the millennia, countless civilizations have come and gone, risen and fallen, turned from towering citadels to piles of rubble and ash. Not so Ancient Egypt. We will find ourselves face to face with one of the most recognisable and iconic monuments anywhere in the world - the Great Pyramids and Sphinx of Giza. That is just the start of our journey along the Nile, the mighty river that sustained one of the greatest civilizations ever seen. We will also see the Step Pyramid, built nearly 5,000 years ago; the Temple of Luxor and Karnak Temple; the Valley of the Kings, filled with the funerary temples of one Pharaoh after another, and Edfu Temple, one of the best-preserved shrines in Egypt, though a mere youngster at slightly more than 2,000 years old. We also enjoy a four night cruise aboard a Nile river vessel.



Luxor



Cairo



Tomb of Rameses V and VI

## YOUR TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1** Enjoy access to the airport Executive lounge before we depart from London to **Cairo** and transfer to our hotel. *(IF, D)*
- Day 2** We begin our full day of discovery in the company of a local expert Egyptologist visiting **Pharaonic Cairo, Saqqara** and **The Step Pyramid**. After lunch we discover **The Great Pyramids and Sphinx of Giza**, considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World and one of most important sites in Egypt. *(B, L, D)*
- Day 3** Today we visit the **Old Egyptian Museum** then visit the **Al-Orman Garden** – a stunning botanical garden which dates from 1875. Later we visit **Khan El-Khalili bazaar**, filled with tempting treasures. *(B, L, D)*
- Day 4** Today we fly to **Luxor** and enjoy lunch and a tour inside the luxurious **Sofitel Winter Palace Luxor** which has a history of hosting royalty and celebrities throughout the years. *(B, L, D)*
- Day 5** This morning we enjoy a private half-day tour, visiting the **Temple of Luxor** and the **Karnak Temple**. We later transfer to our **5-star river vessel** and enjoy lunch, a free afternoon and entertainment in the evening. *(B, L, D)*
- Day 6** A full day visiting the ancient tombs of the **West Bank** today, including visits to **The Valley of the Kings, Antef**, the **Temple of Setil** and the **Valley of Asasif**. We return to our river vessel for lunch and cruise overnight to **Esna**. *(B, L, D)*


- Day 7** We begin with a visit to **Edfu Temple**, one of the best-preserved shrines in Egypt. Later we visit the **Kom-Ombo Temple**, built by the Ptolemaic dynasty during the Roman invasion. *(B, L, D)*
- Day 8** Cruise to **Aswan** where we have a private tour of the **High Dam** and the **Unfinished Obelisk**. We then visit **Philae Temple**, take a Felucca around Aswan Islands and visit the **Botanical Gardens**. *(B, L, D)*
- Day 9** Optional excursion to **Abu Simbel**, a temple built by Ramesses II. Later enjoy **afternoon tea** at the Old Cataract Hotel where Agatha Christie wrote *Death on the Nile*. *(B, AT, D)*
- Day 10** Free time to relax before we transfer to Aswan airport for our flight to Cairo. *(B, D)*
- Day 11** Visit **Alexandria** for full day tour including the **Montazah Palace Gardens**. *(B, L, D)*
- Day 12** We take our return flight to London. *(B)*

Inc. meals: *IF: In flight, B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner*



Karnak Temple

12 DAYS from £4,445

 DEPARTURE POINT: London

## YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Seven nights' dinner, bed and breakfast: five nights at the 5-star Ramses Hilton in Cairo, one night at 5-star Jolie Ville Luxor, one night at 5-star Mövenpick Aswan *(or similar)*
- Four nights on a full board basis aboard a 5-star Nile Cruise
- Four lunches and one Afternoon Tea
- London pre-flight Executive lounge access
- Return flights from London to Cairo
- Flights Cairo to Luxor and Aswan to Cairo
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- On arrival Tourist Visa Entry Fee
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of an expert tour manager

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Was	Now
Early booking offer*		
6 - 17 Feb	£4,595	£4,445
Single Supplement		from £1,175

# Gardens of Barbados



Hunte's Botanical Garden © Trevor Edwards

## Tour highlights

- » Explore Hunte's Garden, offering a multi-dimensional experience
- » Visit George Washington House, where he resided for two months in 1751
- » Discover Harrison's Cave and the Flower Forest, a crystalline limestone cavern
- » Stroll through the island's vibrant capital of Bridgetown
- » Admire the Flower Forest, located in one of the most beautiful areas of Barbados

At 21 miles long and 14 miles wide, Barbados is a small and perfectly formed vision of pure Caribbean paradise. This is a place of upbeat welcomes, radiant seas, sandy beaches, golden palms, and thick gleaming rainforest – the quintessential island idyll. It's also a place where private gardens blossom, lilies and heliconias burst vibrantly out of the undergrowth, and species of orchid thrive in their thousands. This laid-back tour really does have something for everyone. Picture gazing across the sweeping vistas of Cherry Tree Hill, watching the lively resident monkeys of the Andromeda Botanical Garden and exploring the George Washington House, an important remnant of the island's plantation past. Join us as we escape the bustle of mainland life, and channel your inner castaway.



## Your tour manager David Hurrion

For more than 20 years David has written and edited for the main British gardening magazines, formerly as Associate Editor for BBC Gardeners' World Magazine. Join David as he explores the wonderful tropical gardens of Barbados.



Pink Stem Ginger



Swallowtail

## YOUR TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1** Enjoy access to the airport Executive lounge before we depart from London to **Bridgetown** and transfer to our hotel. *(IF, D)*
- Day 2** Our tour of Barbados begins at the **George Washington House**, where the young George and his ailing brother Lawrence resided for two months in 1751. Our next visit provides a most colourful and fragrant experience as we explore the **Tropical Gardens**, home to more than 20,000 orchids. *(B, L)*
- Day 3** Today we visit the **Andromeda Botanical Gardens**, which play an important part in horticultural research and education. Later, we discover **Hunte's Garden**, located in a gully in the centre of Barbados' rainforest. Thanks to such an interesting location, the garden offers a multi dimensional experience, with vigorous plants densely growing on many levels, from sunny and open spaces, down to a mysterious, dark heart of real Caribbean jungle. *(B, L)*
- Day 4** We explore **Harrison's Cave** this morning, a crystalline limestone cavern which lies in the centre of the island. We will also take a leisurely walk along the nature trail that has been created here. We continue with a visit to the **Flower Forest**, located in one of the most beautiful areas of Barbados and built on a former sugar plantation. *(B, L)*
- Day 5** We explore the **St. Nicholas Abbey Plantation**, 400 acres of undulating sugar cane fields, lush tropical gullies, mahogany forests



Bridgetown, Barbados

and formal gardens. We will also enjoy a scenic ride on the **heritage railway** that winds through the plantation. Later, we visit historic **Speightstown**, which dates back to 1630 and has a pleasing blend of colonial and modern architecture. *(B, L)*

**Day 6** Today is free to stroll along the beach, take a swim or perhaps venture further afield. Alternatively, join our **optional excursion**, a cruise aboard a **Catamaran yacht**. Relax on board watch the beautiful coastline of Barbados slip by, then drop anchor for a swim followed by a sumptuous Barbadian lunch. *(B)*

**Day 7** We explore the island's capital **Bridgetown** today, which was founded by English settlers in 1628. Historic Old Bridgetown and its Garrison is now inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There will also be free time for shopping. *(B, D)*

**Day 8** Enjoy some last minute shopping before we transfer to the airport for our return overnight flight to London. *(B, IF)*

**Day 9** We arrive in London.

**Inc. meals:** *IF: In flight, B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner*

*"Overall a well-planned trip. Tour leader was knowledgeable. Excellent accommodation and food. Enjoyed visiting gardens and natural areas in Barbados."*

Guest - January 2024

**9 DAYS from £3,495**

**DEPARTURE POINT: London**

## YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Seven nights' bed & breakfast at the 4-star Accra Beach Hotel, Barbados *(or similar)*
- Two dinners and four packed lunches
- Return flights from London to Bridgetown
- London pre-flight Executive lounge access
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of horticulturalist David Hurrion as tour manager

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Was	Now
Early booking offer*		
6 - 14 Feb	<b>£3,595</b>	<b>£3,495</b>
Single Supplement		<b>£795</b>

# Gardens of Saint Lucia



Rodney Bay

## Tour highlights

- » A visit to the Eclectic Garden nestled at a private home, an oasis in the midst of a bustling neighbourhood
- » The award-winning Diamond Botanical Gardens, where a stunning display of profound beauty of flora and fauna awaits
- » Mamiku Gardens, nestled on St. Lucia's picturesque east coast with a panoramic view of Praslin Bay
- » Visit Project Chocolat where a unique chocolate-making adventure at "Hotel Chocolat" on the historic Rabot Estate awaits

When travelling to the Caribbean you expect sun, sea and beautiful beaches, and while we can promise all of that, this bespoke tour of Saint Lucia takes us much further. Saint Lucia is unique in its natural splendour partially due to its volcanic origin. The soil, rich in minerals, coupled with the equatorial climate, makes it the perfect place for lush vegetation, where all manner of tropical plants flourish. We not only explore some of the island's most notable gardens including the Diamond Botanical Gardens and Marantha Prayer Garden but we also visit one of the island's most famous sustainable farms, the Rabot Estate, where we learn about cocoa growing and processing and craft our very own chocolates.

A melting pot of cultures with influences from the Arawak and Carib Indians, then later colonial influences from the French, English and Dutch means today's Saint Lucia has flourished into a truly wonderful place to explore.



## Your tour manager David Hurrion

A vastly experienced horticulturalist, David has travelled the world in search of new plants and gardens.

David has travelled to every continent, with the exception of Antarctica, to discover plants and gardens, both independently and on more than 70 trips accompanying groups of gardeners.



Castries market



Hummingbird on Heliconia



Pitons

## YOUR TOUR ITINERARY

**Day 1** Enjoy access to the airport Executive Lounge before we depart from London to Saint Lucia. On arrival, we transfer to our hotel. *(IF)*

**Day 2** Today after breakfast, we visit the **Eclectic Garden**, an oasis nestled at a private home and carefully tended and crafted by the owners. As the name suggests, the Eclectic Garden provides a mishmash of plants against the backdrop of twittering tropical birds and fluttering butterflies. Afterwards, we stop at the renowned **Castries market**. *(B, L)*

**Day 3** Today we embrace the magical scenery of the west coast of the island as we travel through fascinating coastal villages and verdant vegetation to enchanting **Soufrière**, which is dominated by the majestic Pitons rising from the sea. We embark on a journey through the award-winning **Diamond Botanical Gardens**, where a stunning display of flora and fauna awaits, and the senses are captivated by a cascading waterfall. We travel onwards to **Emerald Estate**, where a delightful exploration of organic farming featuring the cultivation of mangoes, avocados, guavas and more awaits. Here, we can also witness the traditional handcrafted process of brewing local beer. We enjoy lunch at the **Mango Tree Restaurant** before our visit to the **Marantha Gardens**, a small but exquisitely designed garden which serves as a sanctuary for prayer and reflection. *(B, L)*

**Day 4** Today is free to relax and enjoy the hotel facilities. Alternatively, you may wish to join our optional excursion onboard a **Rainforest Aerial Tram**, gliding through the tropical canopy on an open-air gondola. *(B)*

**Day 5** This morning, we depart for **Mamiku Gardens**, nestled on Saint Lucia's picturesque east coast and renowned for its historical significance. We delve into the world of medicinal herbs, uncovering their various uses, and gain insights into the conservation of endangered trees and plants, complete with a snack and a refreshing beverage. *(B)*

**Day 6** Today we depart by boat to visit **Project Chocolat**. We set sail aboard a power boat along the panoramic west coast of the island and indulge in a unique chocolate-making adventure at "Hotel Chocolat" on the historic **Rabot Estate**. Guided by a skilled Cocoa Grower and chocolatier, we stroll through a cocoa grove before creating our very own chocolate bar. Lunch is at the delightful Rabot Market. *(B, L)*

**Day 7** After breakfast we visit **Greenwood Terrace** – a Heritage and Cultural Site which is home to over 350 flowering plants, tropical foliage, fruit trees and a Heritage Museum which showcases aspects of life on Saint Lucia in days gone by. Later this evening we head to the beautiful Rodney Bay Marina and **Sea Salt Restaurant** which offers local and International Cuisine. Here we enjoy a farewell dinner while enjoying views of the marina. *(B, L, D)*

**Day 8** After a morning at leisure, we transfer to the airport for our overnight flight to London. *(B, IF)*

**Day 9** We arrive in London.

**Inc. meals:** *IF: In flight, B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner*

**9 DAYS from £4.445**

 **DEPARTURE POINT: London**

## YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed and breakfast at the 4-star Coco Palm Hotel, Saint Lucia *(or similar)*
- ▶ Three lunches and one dinner
- ▶ Return flights from London to Saint Lucia
- ▶ London pre-flight executive lounge access
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist David Hurrion as tour manager

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Was	Now
Early booking offer*		
27 Feb - 7 Mar	<del>£4,595</del>	£4,445
Single Supplement		£1,195

# Seasonal Gardens of Japan



Mount Fuji

## Tour highlights

- » The temples and gardens of Kyoto, probably the finest in Japan
- » Stepping back in time to old Japan at Omihachiman
- » Watching the deer roam free in Nara Park
- » Riding the bullet train to Tokyo
- » The enormous Buddhas at Todaiji and Kamamura
- » Stunning scenery in Hakone, including the iconic Mount Fuji
- » The pulsating light show that is Tokyo at night
- » Dinner with a Maiko in Kyoto



Maiko

The origin of the Japanese garden lies in simple, gravel-covered forest clearings where the gods could manifest themselves. Over the centuries the gardens have evolved into an idealized reflection of the natural landscape through the careful use of stone and water features, trees, plants and moss. They are places of exquisite beauty, where the eye is led gently to perfectly framed views, often 'borrowing' a distant landscape as part of the picture being created. Trees and plants are carefully chosen for certain qualities of form, colour or texture, all of which combine to create an atmosphere of calm and contemplation. Spring foliage is particularly highly prized.

Many of the most notable gardens are in and around Kyoto, the former capital of Japan, and we will have three full days exploring both public and private gardens here. We have included a variety of different styles: landscape gardens, stroll gardens, pond-and-island, each with its own particular charm and beauty. One of the best known is Kinkaku-ji, with the three-tiered Golden Pavilion at its heart.

## Your tour manager Colin Crosbie

Colin will be in his element here with such a wide range of plants and trees to help identify. Having lead tours to Japan for some years, Colin has great insight into not only the horticultural highlights but also local customs and traditions.



The Great Buddha of Kamakura



Traditional kimono in Kinkakuji Temple

## YOUR TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1** Enjoy access to the airport Executive lounge before we depart from London to **Osaka** on our overnight flight. *(IF)*
- Day 2** Upon arrival in Osaka, we head to the gardens of the **Imperial Palace** and from here, we continue to our hotel for dinner and a welcome drink. *(D)*
- Day 3** We enjoy **Kyoto's** outstanding gardens, including **Daisen-in temple, Ryogen-in, Zuiho-in, Kinkakuji temple** and **Ryoan-ji temple**. *(B)*
- Day 4** Beginning in **Otsu**, we visit the ancient temple of **Ishiyamadera** and then continue along the shores of **Lake Biwa-ko** to historic **Omihachiman** and the **Hachimanbori Canal**. Before returning to Kyoto, we'll also visit the **Nishikawake House**. *(B)*
- Day 5** Today we explore **Ginkaku-ji** or 'Silver Pavilion', a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the private garden of **Hakusasonso** and **Kyoto Botanical Garden**. Sagano's otherworldly Bamboo Forest Path awaits too. *(B)*
- Day 6** Enjoy Kyoto at leisure or join an optional excursion by train to **Hiroshima**. *(B)*
- Day 7** We transfer to **Nara** and explore the **Todai-ji Temple**, enjoy **Nara Park** and visit the significant **Kasuga Grand Shrine**. Later, we discover the **Kodai-ji Temple** and this evening we have a special treat as we transfer to the geisha district of Gion to have **dinner with a maiko**. *(B, L, D)*



Kannon-Hall at Ginkaku-ji Temple

- Day 8** After checking out, we visit the **Heian-jingu Shrine**, a rare example of an extensive pond garden, and the quintessential **Nanzen-ji Temple complex**. Later, we take the famous 'Shinkansen' or **Bullet Train** to Tokyo. *(B)*
- Day 9** We journey to the seaside town of **Kamakura** to visit the **Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine**. Next, we admire the **Great Buddha**, which has survived tidal waves, earthquakes, fires and typhoons before continuing to the **Hase Kannon Temple**. *(B, L)*
- Day 10** Enjoy a full day excursion to **Hakone** and **Mount Fuji**, which begins with a visit to **Onshi Hakone Park**, an area of forested mountains and deep ravines. We also enjoy a cruise on **Lake Ashi** and after lunch, drive along the foot of **Mount Fuji** for a further photo stop at **Lake Kawaguchi**. *(B, L)*
- Day 11** Our day begins at the garden of **Kyu Furukawa**, a masterpiece combining authentic Japanese and Italian styles. Next is **Mukojima Hyakkaen Garden**, the only surviving flower garden of the Edo period. *(B)*
- Day 12** We have a full day sightseeing in **Tokyo** today. Highlights include the sacred **Senso-ji Temple**, the beautiful **Rikugien Garden** and the **Imperial Palace East Garden** with its bamboo and Japanese spring blossom. Later, we explore **Hamariky Garden** and take a cruise along the **Sumida River** before concluding with a farewell dinner. *(B, D)*
- Day 13** We check out of our hotel today and transfer by coach to Tokyo Airport, for our return flight to London. *(B, IF)*

Inc. meals: *IF: In flight, B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner*

"An excellent holiday well managed."

Guest - March 2024

13 DAYS from £6,845

✈️ DEPARTURE POINT: London

- 11 nights' bed & breakfast; six nights at the 4-star ANA Hotel, Kyoto and five nights at the 4-star Grand Prince Hotel New Takanawa, Tokyo *(or similar)*
- Dinner and welcome drink on first evening, a dinner with a maiko, three lunches and a farewell dinner
- Flights from London to Osaka, returning from Tokyo
- London pre-flight Executive lounge access
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of horticulturalist Colin Crosbie as tour manager

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
24 Mar - 5 Apr		£6,995	£6,845
Single Supplement			£1,250

# Gardens of Mauritius

Île aux Aigrettes



## Tour highlights

- » Look out for giant tortoises at La Vanille
- » See giant waterlilies at Pamplemousse
- » Discover rare trees and exotic birds in the Black River Gorges
- » Enjoy a taste of local rum at Labourdonnais
- » Relax in a luxurious resort hotel and bathing in the warm Indian Ocean



Giant tortoise

The Indian Ocean island of Mauritius is only the size of the county of Surrey, yet it is blessed with a rich and diverse flora and fauna, and is home to some of the rarest plants and creatures in the world. Caressed by a benign climate and light but regular rainfall, virgin forests and coastal lands provide ideal habitats for myriad species, many of them unique to the island – of the 1,000 or so plants indigenous to Mauritius, about 300 are totally unique. Our exploration will reveal trees that will be the last of their kind in existence, giant waterlilies, and colourful Cannas and Heliconias. We will witness outstanding conservation work with almost extinct plants and animals and there will also be plenty of time to enjoy the facilities of our resort hotel, the white sandy beaches and turquoise waters, and soak up the local culture, with its unique combination of European, Indian and African influences.



## Your tour manager Sue Pomeroy

Sue is looking forward to exploring the beauty of Mauritius and a plethora of exotic plants!



Seven Coloured Earths



Grand Bassin

## YOUR TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1** Enjoy access to the airport Executive lounge before we depart from London on our overnight flight to **Mauritius**. (IF)
- Day 2** Upon arrival in Mauritius, we transfer to our hotel and have the rest of the day to settle in and relax. (D)
- Day 3** Our day starts at **La Vanille Tropical Garden**, beautifully landscaped with tropical plants. In the afternoon we visit the **Domaine de Saint Aubin**, a colonial house from 1819 with a Botanical Garden, home to one of just two *Chorisia* (silk floss trees) in Mauritius and a Spice Garden. (B, D)
- Day 4** After breakfast, we head to Morcellement St André, where we visit a **large greenhouse** and also meet the owner. Next stop is the capital of **Port Louis** to explore the colourful **market** and **Blue Penny Museum**, featuring the 1847 Blue and Red Penny stamps, which are amongst the most sought-after stamps in the world. **Caudan Waterfront** including the local handicraft market rounds off the day. (B, D)
- Day 5** We head to the beautiful **Black River Gorges National Park**, looking out for the rare tambalacoque or dodo tree, black ebony trees and the exotic birds that perch in them. We also visit the **Plaine Champagne**, the **Grand Bassin** and the **Seven Coloured Earths**, a rare geological oddity created by volcanic activity. (B, D)
- Day 6** Today we take a boat trip to the island's nature reserve of **Île aux Aigrettes**, where we see species that were once the verge of extinction, such as rare orchids and pink pigeons. We continue to the

well-stocked **Vaneron Garden Centre and Nursery at Trianon**. An **afternoon tea** with pastries is included here. (B, AT, D)

- Day 7** Free day to relax and enjoy the facilities of the hotel or explore the surrounding area at your leisure. (B, D)
- Day 8** Enjoy a guided visit to **Curepipe Botanical Garden**, notable for its doomed palm *Hyphorbe amaricaulis*. In the afternoon we visit **Le Domaine de Bois Cheri**, the oldest tea plantation in Mauritius, where we tour the museum and enjoy a tasting. (B, D)
- Day 9** This morning, we spend time in **Port Louis** before visiting the **Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolan Botanic Garden** at Pamplemousses, famous for its giant waterlilies. Later we visit the **Domaine de Labourdonnais** to discover the Château and the Nursery and taste local rum or fruit juice. (B, D)
- Day 10** We begin with a visit to the **plantations** in Moka, where we see all manner of plants. Later we visit a **pineapple plantation** and include a tasting of the delicious fruit before exploring **Eureka House**, a colonial mansion with a dramatic woodland ravine as well as a garden, with lunch included. (B, L, D)
- Day 11** For our final day we relax in the hotel and then transfer to the airport for our overnight flight to London. (B, IF)
- Day 12** We arrive in London.

**Inc. meals:** IF: In flight, B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, AT: Afternoon Tea, D: Dinner



Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden

*"Beyond expectations. Fabulous, wonderful... would highly recommend it."*

Guest - March 2024

**12 DAYS** from **£4,045**

**DEPARTURE POINT:** London

## YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Nine nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 4-star Anelia Resort and Spa
- One Afternoon Tea and one lunch
- Return flights from London to Mauritius
- London pre-flight Executive lounge access
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of horticulturalist Sue Pomeroy as tour manager

## DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Was	Now
Early booking offer*		
26 Mar - 6 Apr	<del>£4,195</del>	£4,045
Single Supplement		£795





**Get in touch**  
**with an** *expert*

Give our Specialist Sales Executives a call, Monday to Friday  
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