

# SCOTLAND, GARDENS AND SPECIAL INTEREST HOLIDAY COLLECTION 2025

UK AND WORLDWIDE

14 New Tours | Travel with experts

Save up to \$280 per person | \$0 single supplement places available



## Explore more with *Brightwater* Holidays

Welcome to our second edition brochure for 2025, featuring a selection of inspiring tours across the UK and Europe plus our extended range of Worldwide departures.

In our first edition, we were delighted to unveil seven long-haul holidays, including stunning destinations across Vietnam, Japan, Brazil, California, St Lucia, Namaqualand and the Hudson Valley. Yet we never stand still here at Brightwater, so we are pleased to introduce a further 14 tours in this brochure, giving you the chance to uncover even more wonders.

There is plenty of choice for the year ahead, whether you would like to discover Puglia's white-washed, sun-soaked cities, the historic treasures of the Czech Republic or the colourful gardens of the Neapolitan Riviera. Or how about embarking on a cruise around the lovely French island of Corsica? Combining a mix of enchanting forests, fragrant orange groves, olive trees and a wide array of flowers with sea caves, sparkling coastal views and a honey farm, this break is a real delight for the senses.

Closer to home, you can step back in time at Eastern Scotland's storied castles, palaces and abbeys, admire the horticultural wonders of County Clare's the Burren, follow in the footsteps of the Prince and Princess of Wales and visit their favoured holiday destination of the Isles of Scilly and so much more. However you choose to holiday in 2025, memorable experiences and new memories await on every tour. I do hope you enjoy browsing our new brochure and we look forward to the pleasure of your company once again.

Best wishes,

*Alison Wilson*  
Managing Director

*P.S: Please keep an eye on our website as new tours and departure dates are being added all the time!*



## *Special* offers

### SAVE UP TO \$280 PER PERSON\*

If you book holidays featured in this brochure, you can save up to \$280 per person. This offer ends on 15 October 2024.

### PLUS PAY IN FULL AND SAVE AN ADDITIONAL 10%\*

If you pay in full at the time of booking you will receive a further discount of 10% off your holiday price. This offer ends on 15 October 2024.

\*Early booking offer 2025: Savings applicable are: \$70pp if you book at tour up to the value of \$1,400pp; save \$105pp if you book a tour between \$1,401-\$5,600pp; save \$140pp if you book a tour between \$5,601-\$11,200pp save \$280pp if you book a tour over \$11,201pp. Offer is valid for tours departing 1st January – 31st December 2025. Discount can only be applied at the time of booking. This offer cannot be combined with any other offers and expires on 15th October 2024 but may be withdrawn at any time. Offers are not applicable to private groups.  
10% pay in full: Offer is valid at the time of booking and for tours departing from 1st January – 31st December 2025. Discount is applicable on the remaining balance after early booking offer 2025 discount has been applied. Offer expires on 15th October 2024 but may be withdrawn at any time. Offer is not applicable to travel agent bookings or private groups.

## Get in touch with an *expert*

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

**646 802 1526**

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)

### New important information for 2025 travel to Europe: EES & ETIAS

If you are travelling outside of the UK from November 2024 onwards, new mandatory border checks (EES – Entry & Exit System for Visiting the EU) and travel authorisation requirements (ETIAS – European Travel Information Authorisation System) will affect your holiday. Please read the information on page 130 carefully to understand how this may affect your journey and what pre-travel requirements you will need to make.

Further details can be found at <http://travel-europe.europa.eu>

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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

### Financial protection

All our holidays are fully bonded and financially protected. Holidays with flights included are protected by ATOL and those without flights by ABTOT.



# Explore more with *Brightwater* Holidays



## We get you more

Our experience and excellent relationships mean that a tour with Brightwater Holidays is often unlike that you will get with other operators. Many of our tours include private access behind the scenes, tours by the estate or garden owners themselves and of course the in-depth knowledge that comes from our expert Tour Managers.

## An Award-winning Garden Tour Operator

Our award-winning garden holidays offer memorable holidays to glorious gardens in the UK and around the World. The UK is home to some of the best gardens including the delightful gardens at Sissinghurst and the iconic RHS Garden Bridgewater both of which you can visit with Brightwater Holidays.

Further afield no garden holiday collection would be complete without visits to the kaleidoscope of colour that is the Dutch bulbfields or the sublime spectacle of the cherry blossom in Japan.

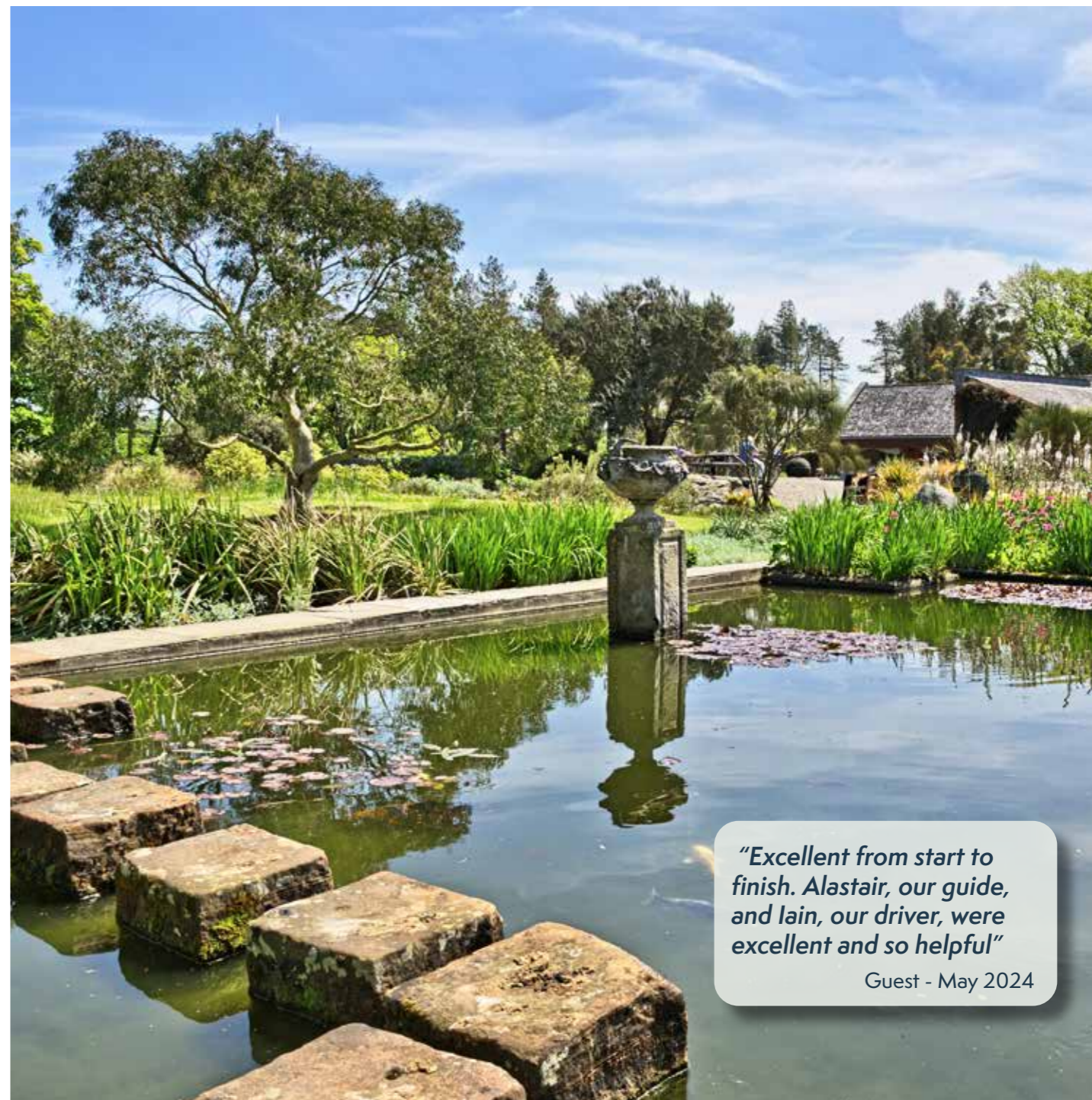


appeal is endless. Our expertise and knowledge of Scotland can be found in our diverse holiday collection which includes island hopping in the Outer Hebrides, fascinating insights into ancient wonders plus art and architecture in Glasgow and Edinburgh. New for 2025 are specially designed seasonal tours Autumn Tints of Dumfries & Galloway and Gardens of Wester Ross.

## Unique Worldwide Experiences

Enjoy expert-led tours featuring exclusive access to some of the most fascinating properties and beautiful gardens in the UK, Europe and Worldwide. From the Gardens of Marrakech to Malta's Archaeological Heritage, Brightwater Holidays offers the opportunity to create a holiday tailored to your travel needs.

All our holidays, whether they are in the UK or in Costa Rica, are led by expert Tour Managers, every step of the way and on every excursion, giving you peace of mind and the assuredness that everything is taken care of.



*"Excellent from start to finish. Alastair, our guide, and Iain, our driver, were excellent and so helpful"*

Guest - May 2024

## 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.





## Knowledgeable Tour Managers

A tour with Brightwater Holidays means that everything is taken care of and our tour managers ensure that your holiday runs smoothly from start to finish. They are often also experts in the destinations you visit so you get to see more and learn more. Your tour manager will often become a friend and we find that many customers will choose to travel with same tour manager on future holidays.

*"Overall, holiday experience was fantastic the journey was beautiful from start to finish"*

Guest - March 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.

*"Enjoyable and relaxing. Led by the knowledgeable Colin Crosbie excellent coach driver Mark"*

Guest - May 2024

*"Very good. We could never have seen all these marvelous sights on our own. Excellent tour guide."*

Guest - May 2024

*"I really enjoyed the holiday, The gardens were very special. The group were lovely, friendly and very kind."*

Guest - June 2024



### David MacLennan

*Since retiring from full time employment David has worked as a tour manager and guide throughout Scotland. Though native to Lancashire, David is of Scottish descent and if you are lucky he may even wear his kilt!*

### Alastair Walker

*A native of Inverness with a rural background, Alastair's knowledge of Scotland is wide ranging, from the Northern Isles and the Hebrides to Perthshire, Galloway and the Borders.*



### Sue Pomeroy

*Having studied horticulture in places ranging from New Zealand to Chile, Sue now lives in the north-west Highlands. Her personal garden is open to the public and it has featured in Country Life and Gardeners' World.*

### Trevor Edwards

*Award-Winning Garden Designer, Writer and Broadcaster Trevor Edwards is one of our most popular Tour Managers. Trevor's deep knowledge and love of horticulture along with the planning he does before any new tour speaks volumes for the positive feedback we get from satisfied guests.*



### Mike Nelhams

*Mike Nelhams is the Curator of Tresco's Abbey Gardens and one of Brightwater Holidays' most popular and well-travelled garden experts. His association with Brightwater goes back to the earliest days and he has acquired his own loyal following of guests.*

### Colin Crosbie

*Colin Crosbie was the Head Gardener to Her Majesty The Queen Mother and former Head Curator at RHS Garden Wisley. His extensive horticultural knowledge coupled with his good humour have established him as one of Brightwater's most popular guides.*





# A *unique* holiday experience

Choose to travel with Brightwater Holidays and you can expect a unique holiday experience. From expertly designed tours and itineraries, comfortable 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 destinations and innovative itineraries

Choose from a range of award-winning holidays to fascinating countries worldwide - a curated collection of the very best spots to delve into, with all tours expertly planned, allowing you to enjoy every step.

## Exclusive access to private gardens

Explore botanical sanctuaries, many private and exclusive to our tours, and discover more about rare, tropical and stunning gardens. Delve into the latest discoveries and learn what goes on behind the scenes, alongside our expert tour managers, with their extensive knowledge.

## Solo travellers welcome

Many of our guests are single travellers and we have a large number of holidays where there is no single supplement to pay. Just look for the 'NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT' message on the tour page.

## Expect quality & comfort

You can be assured of excellent quality and comfort on a Brightwater holiday, as we only select trusted hotels to provide the best possible stay, along with travel from easy-to-reach pick-up points.

## So much included

Enjoy exceptional value. With your accommodation, travel and excursions to must-see highlights and hidden gems - all included in the price of your holiday. Many holidays have a selection of meals included, just look out for the details against each individual holiday.

- ▶ Great value for money with coach travel, visits, accommodation and most evening meals included
- ▶ Over 30 years of experience and knowledge
- ▶ Unique and innovative holidays
- ▶ Exclusive access to private gardens and visits
- ▶ No hidden extras
- ▶ Well-planned and perfectly-paced itineraries
- ▶ Friendly and authoritative tour managers
- ▶ Professionally recognised partnerships
- ▶ Welcoming, friendly service from first contact
- ▶ Enjoy peace of mind with financial protection

*“Excellent tour itinerary with attentive and conscientious tour manager and extremely knowledgeable local guides.”*

Guest - May 2024

## Expert tour managers

With their knowledge and passion, our tour managers are with you from start to finish, ensuring you enjoy your holiday to the fullest.

## Financial protection

All our holidays are fully bonded and financially protected. Holidays with flights included are protected by ATOL and those without flights by ABTOT.



# Your *holiday*, your way

## UK tours

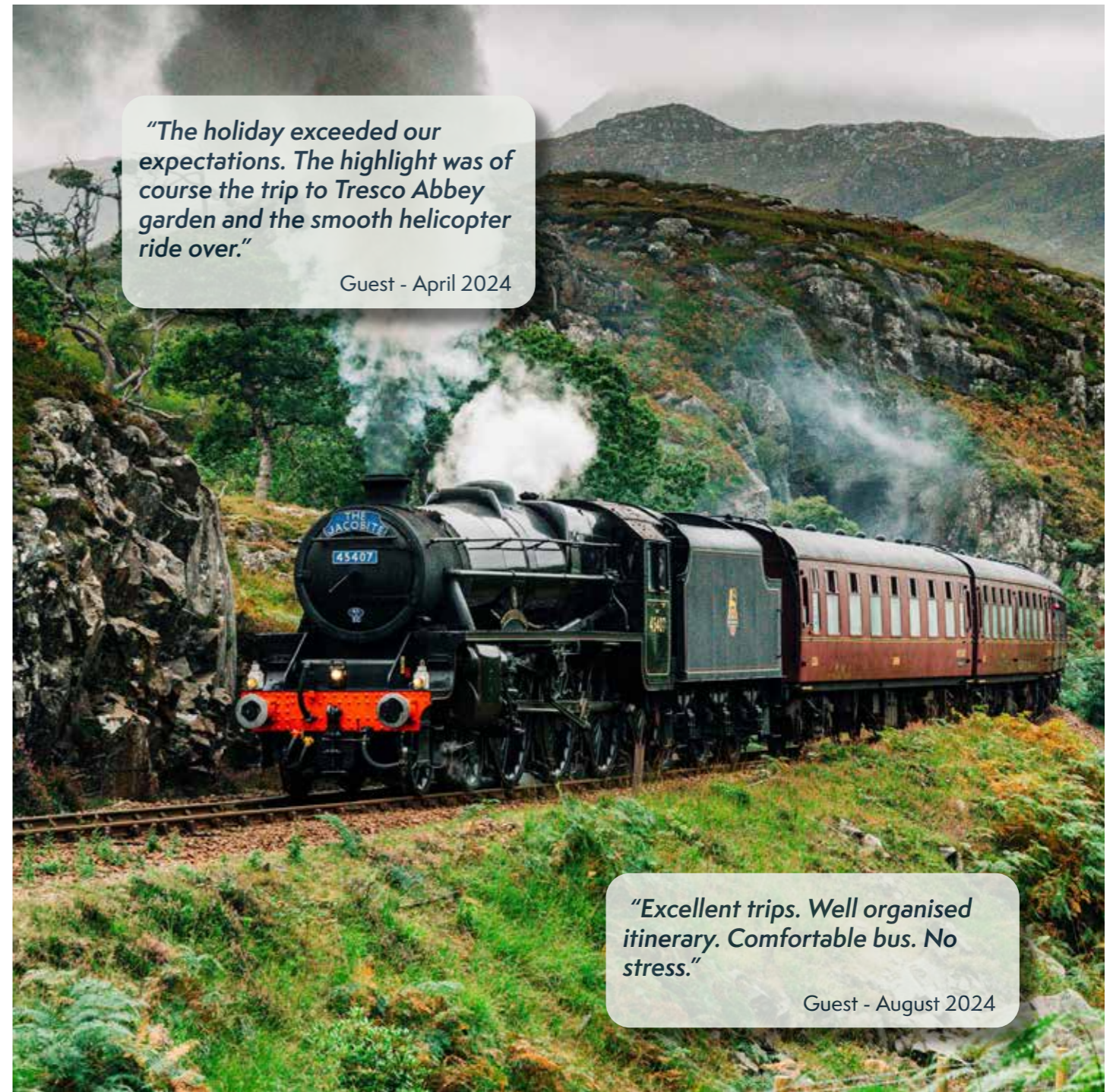
Your holiday in the UK starts from the moment you join your easy-to-reach coach pick-up point (as detailed on every tour page). Then simply sit back, relax and let us take care of the driving for you. Full details will be provided of where and when we will pick you up with your holiday confirmation.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to travel at your own pace, you can make your own way and join the tour at the first visit or the hotel, allowing for greater flexibility and choice. A seat will still be reserved for you on the coach for excursions, so you can really make the most of exploring the local area. Please note that if you choose to join your holiday at the hotel then you may miss any en-route visits or tours.



## Overseas tours

Each holiday page details your travel arrangements which we include. If you would like something different please let us know and we will do our best to arrange it for you.



*"The holiday exceeded our expectations. The highlight was of course the trip to Trecco Abbey garden and the smooth helicopter ride over."*

Guest - April 2024

*"Excellent trips. Well organised itinerary. Comfortable bus. No stress."*

Guest - August 2024

## Your UK *holiday* starts here



### Regional Coach pick-ups

Our coach tours have local pick-up points available. Please see each tour page for further details of where you can join.



### Rail departures

We offer a number of departures by rail. Regional connecting trains are available on request. Please contact us for further information.

# Upgrade and enjoy more

All our accommodation is comfortable and well-appointed, but you may want to treat yourself to a flight upgrade, a cabin or room upgrade or perhaps enjoy an airport lounge. We are experts at helping you enjoy your holiday your way and are pleased to help.



## Extend pre- or post-tour

If you want to explore more of what your chosen destination has to offer, why not extend your trip by adding extra nights before or after your tour.



## Room and cabin upgrades

Whether you want to treat yourself to a room with a sea view, sprawl out in a junior suite or gaze across the water from an upper deck cabin, let us know and we'll do what we can to make it happen.



## Air connections

Many guests contact us to help them get to their departure points and we can always book your regional flights, should you require them. We can also help you with airport parking, just get in touch to discuss your needs.



## Extra nights either side

If you have to travel to reach your departure point, you may want to take it easy with a night at a hotel on either side of your holiday either in a relevant city or at an airport. We can help you to book this for a reasonable supplement.

## Get in touch with an *expert*

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between 9am and 5pm, on:

**646 802 1526**

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)**

**brightwater**  
tailor-made group travel

# Private group travel

A small group of friends, a club of 50 or anything in between we can tailor-make a tour for you!

For over 30 years we have been creating memorable bespoke tours for private groups and societies. From private garden tours to historic escapes, walking holidays to grand castles and from rail tours to cruises – there is nothing we can't do!

BESPOKE PACKAGES EXCLUSIVELY FOR YOUR GROUP

• LOCAL PICK-UP POINTS OR AIRPORTS

• HOTEL ACCOMMODATION - 3-STAR TO 5-STAR LUXURY

• ADMISSION TO ALL VISITS, EXCLUSIVE ACCESS AND PRIVATE GUIDED TOURS

• SERVICES OF A SPECIALIST TOUR MANAGER, IF REQUIRED

• FREE MARKETING MATERIALS AND ALL BOOKING AND ADMIN

• DEDICATED GROUP TRAVEL DEPARTMENT



## Get in touch and get the ball rolling



Jenni Duncan is our Private Groups Manager and she would love to help plan your next group holiday.

Please get in touch by calling her on **01334 658 008** or emailing **[groups@brightwaterholidays.com](mailto:groups@brightwaterholidays.com)** to get things started. You can also visit our website for some inspiration: **[www.brightwaterholidays.com](http://www.brightwaterholidays.com)**

No matter what stage of planning you're at, our team will be able to work with you every step of the way.

# New adventures in *2025*

We have had a busy summer here at Brightwater not only assisting our guests as they head off on their summer holidays but also crafting a collection of 14 brand new tours for 2025. We are delighted to bring you two new Italian tours, as well as an awe-inspiring adventure to the Mid-Atlantic archipelago of the Azores. Closer to home we have expanded our Scottish tours with the addition of five exciting new itineraries.



## Tall Ships in Aberdeen

Experience the spectacle that is the Tall Ships as they descend on Aberdeen in summer 2025. **See pg.34**



## Castles, Palaces and Abbeys of Eastern Scotland

The East of Scotland is home to a fine collection of Royal Palaces and historic castles. Join us as we explore some of the most famous in the area with connections to Mary, Queen of Scots including Linlithgow Palace, Falkland Palace and Loch Leven Castle. **See pg. 32**



## The Isles of Scilly

The Isles of Scilly - the most fortunate of all the islands around Britain's coasts with clean seas, stunning beaches, wonderful scenery. **See pg. 60**



## History and Horticulture in Corsica

Sail around Corsica, explore the native marquis, visit a honey farm and the gardens of U Giardinu di l'Isuli. **See pg. 70**



## Gardens of the Neapolitan Riviera

Fantastic villas, gardens, vineyards and lemon groves all doused in the ancient culture. **See pg. 82**



## Autumn Tints of Dumfries & Galloway

See the gardens of South-west Scotland as they are bathed in the fiery hues of Autumn. **See pg.39**



## Gardens of Wester Ross

Explore the gardens of the North-west Highlands in the expert company of David Hurrion. **See pg. 40**



## Gardens of Perthshire and the Scone Palace Fair

Experience the annual spectacular that is the Scone Palace Garden Fair. **See pg. 44**

## Gardens and Wildflowers of the Burren

The Burren, from the Irish bhoireann - a stony place - lies in the northwestern corner of Co Clare. At first glance it presents a bleak appearance, but closer examination reveals the beautiful diversity of flora for which the whole region has justly become famous. The colourful exuberance and profusion of the wild flowers is simply captivating **See pg. 66**



## White Cities of Puglia

Italy's 'boot', famed for its white-washed villages, extravagant churches and miles of coastline. **See pg. 84**



## Highlights of Northumberland

The best historic houses, castles and gardens of the North-east and a dabble of Roman history. **See pg. 46**



## Gardens of Yorkshire

Some of the best gardens in Yorkshire are accompanied by the stunning RHS Harlow Carr. **See pg. 56**



## The Azores: its Gardens and Natural Wonders

Standing in the Atlantic Ocean at the very spot where the tectonic plates for Europe, Africa and North America meet, the Azores are built from ancient volcanic eruptions, have lush green scenery, enchanting lakes, picturesque villages and overall a peaceful yet mysterious aura. **See pg. 90**



## History and Culture of the Czech Republic

Discover the history, archaeology and natural wonders of the Czech Republic. **See pg. 94**



# UK & Ireland

Glorious gardens, historic houses, world-class art and evocative archaeological sites await in the British Isles, and a tour here will show you just how much there is to discover. We have a broad range of UK-based holidays that can take you from private gardens to grand castles and their grounds, and everything in between.

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Luskentyre



The Jacobite steam train

## A Classic Scottish Steam Break

4 DAYS from \$1,045 | NO/LOW SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

 **PICK-UP POINTS:** Aberdeen, Stonehaven, Forfar, Dundee, Perth, Kinross, Dunfermline, Edinburgh

Steam locomotion has an enduring fascination for many of us and combined with the wonderful scenery of Scotland it becomes utterly irresistible. The Jacobite steam train, from Fort William to Mallaig, is one of the longest steam-hauled rail journeys available in Britain today, an 84-mile round trip through some spectacular scenery that also includes the 21-arch Glenfinnan Viaduct. A gentler pace is set as we sail 'Doon ra Watter' on the world's last seagoing paddle steamer, the PS Waverley\*, still elegantly plying her trade on the Clyde. There can be no better way to enjoy the gentle beauty of the Argyll hills and the Kyles of Bute than from the deck of this grand old lady. We also enjoy a taste of steam as we cruise aboard the newly restored SS Sir Walter Scott on the calm waters of Loch Katrine amid the spectacular scenery of the Trossachs, and take a trip on the Falkirk Wheel, the world's first rotating boat lift and a modern engineering marvel. We offer two different packages for this tour following the same itinerary: one staying at the Arrochar Hotel and one staying at the Stirling Highland Hotel.



Falkirk Wheel



The Waverley

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel to the **Falkirk Wheel**, the world's first rotating boat lift. Once the wheel has made its ascent to join the **Union Canal** 35m above, we sail under the Antonine Wall, the Romans' most northern frontier. We continue to our hotel. (D)

**Day 2** Today is long but rewarding as we journey back in time aboard the **Jacobite steam train** and experience one of the most spectacular railway journeys in the world, the **Fort William to Mallaig line**. From the slopes of Ben Nevis, the line runs through rugged mountains, past sea and inland lochs and on to the coast at Mallaig. (B, D)



Loch Katrine

**Day 3** Today we sail on the world's last seagoing paddle steamer, the **Waverley\***, built in 1946 to replace the 1899 Waverley, which was sunk at Dunkirk. We leave the ship at Tighnabruach and our coach will take us back to the hotel. (B, D)

**Day 4** Following breakfast we cruise on **Loch Katrine**, set among the Trossachs. We continue by Aberfoyle, the Duke's Pass and Loch Venachar to **Callander**, where free time awaits before we return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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

\*Please note that the itinerary is subject to confirmation of the Waverley's sailing schedule. The Waverley does not sail in Apr, May & Oct therefore we will enjoy a cruise on Loch Lomond and a visit to Inveraray Castle instead.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the Arrochar Hotel or Stirling Highland Hotel
- ▶ Comfortable coach and standard class rail travel on the Jacobite steam train
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### ARROCHAR HOTEL

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
24 - 27 Apr	<del>\$1,115</del>	\$1,045
8 - 11 May	<del>\$1,185</del>	\$1,115
25 - 28 Jun	<del>\$1,325</del>	\$1,255
21 - 24 Aug	<del>\$1,325</del>	\$1,255
10 - 13 Oct	<del>\$1,115</del>	\$1,085

Single Supplement \$130

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT IN APRIL

### STIRLING HIGHLAND HOTEL

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
23 - 26 May	<del>\$1,295</del>	\$1,225


Single Supplement \$225



Luskentyre

## A Grand Tour of the Outer Hebrides

5 DAYS from \$1,570 | 6 DAYS from \$2,130

 PICK-UP POINTS: Dundee, Perth, Kinross, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Glasgow

Whether you choose our five or six day itinerary, our best-selling grand tour takes in all the beauty and diversity of this very special environment with ten different islands and four ferry trips included. Two comfortable hotels ensure that this holiday is as relaxing as possible while at the same time offering great variety and the sense of a true journey of discovery which will live long in the memory. Our odyssey begins as we travel via Glencoe, Fort William and Glenfinnan to Mallaig. From here we take the ferry to Lochboisdale in South Uist and cross the causeway to Benbecula, the 'stepping stone' between the Uists, before visiting the islands of Eriskay, Vatersay and Barra.

A captivating journey follows as we travel through the magnificent mountain scenery of Harris, the rolling moorland of Lewis, and on to Stornoway. We continue with visits to the Standing Stones of Callanish [\*the main Callanish site will be closed from 1 Sept 2024 until early 2026 and we will visit the nearby smaller circles instead], the tranquil little Norse Mill and the distinctive Black Houses at Ghearrannan.



Kisimul Castle



St Clement's Church

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points for Mallaig, where we take the ferry to Lochboisdale, with dinner served on board. On arrival we continue to our hotel in **Benbecula**. (D)

**Day 2** We drive south to the island of **Eriskay** and continue by ferry to **Barra**. We will visit **Castlebay** with views of **Kisimul Castle**; watch as the plane lands on the beach which serves as the island's runway, and visit **Vatersay** with its amazing beaches of white sand and turquoise sea. (B, D)

**Day 3** We travel north today as we take the ferry from Berneray to Leverburgh on the isle of **Harris**, visiting **St Clement's Church** at Rodel before continuing through the mountains to **Lewis** and our hotel in Stornoway. (B, D)

**Day 4** The 5,000-year-old **Standing Stones of Callanish\***, **Black Houses of Ghearrannan** and **Norse Mill** at Shawbost await us today. (B, D)



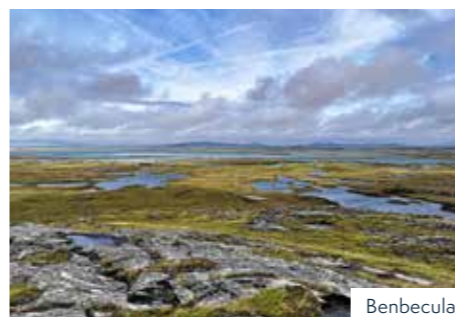
Ghearrannan

**Day 5** We visit **Lewis Castle and Museum** and **St. Columba's Ui Church**, one of the most important archaeological sites in the area. We then see the **Port of Ness** and the **Butt of Lewis**. (B, D)

**Day 6** We take an early ferry to **Ullapool** and return to our original pick-up points. (B)

*Our Stornoway to Benbecula itinerary operates in reverse, with two nights in Stornoway and three nights in Benbecula. \*The main Callanish site will be closed from 1 September 2024 until early 2026 and we will visit the nearby smaller circles instead.*

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



Benbecula

**SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\***

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES 6-DAY ITINERARY

- ▶ Five nights' dinner, bed & breakfast: two nights at the Dark Island Hotel, Benbecula and three nights at the Cabarfeidh Hotel, Stornoway (one dinner and one breakfast served on board the ferry)
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all ferry crossings
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON BENBECULA TO STORNOWAY

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
8 - 13 Jun		\$2,235	\$2,130
20 - 25 Jul		\$2,235	\$2,130
10 - 15 Aug		\$2,235	\$2,130
Single Supplement			\$350

**SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\***

### 5-DAY ITINERARY

We also offer a five-day itinerary exploring the delights of these charming islands. Highlights include: Cockleshell Beach, the Standing Stones of Callanish\*, the Norse Mill at Shawbost and much more.

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast: two nights at the Dark Island Hotel, Benbecula and two nights at the Cabarfeidh Hotel, Stornoway (one dinner and one breakfast served on board the ferry)
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all ferry crossings
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON BENBECULA TO STORNOWAY

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
14 - 18 Apr		\$1,675	\$1,570

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
17 - 21 Aug		\$1,815	\$1,710
6 - 10 Oct		\$1,675	\$1,570
Single Supplement			\$280



St Ninian's Isle



Lerwick

## Highlights of Orkney & Shetland

6 DAYS from \$2,410

**PICK-UP POINTS:** Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen

Sail away to lands steeped in history, wildlife and stunning scenery – the Orkney and Shetland isles. Many people have landed there before us, some as early as 3000 BC. Most famous of all were the Vikings, but they were not alone and all around you historical treasures can be found. Both Orkney and Shetland have their own identities - Orkney is green and fertile, while Shetland has rugged cliff and sea loch landscapes. However, both share a colourful history of Picts, Norsemen, ancient antiquities and seafaring legends – bound together with an independent spirit that sets them apart from the rest of Scotland. We sail with Serco Northlink Ferries aboard their modern, purpose-built vessels overnight from Aberdeen to Lerwick, and then there are two full days to tour Shetland. After rejoining the ship for an evening sailing to Kirkwall, we have two days to explore Orkney.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points for Aberdeen and take the overnight ferry to Lerwick. (D)

**Day 2** We leave the ship after breakfast and start our **Shetland** tour. Our first stop is in **Scalloway**, the former capital of Shetland, where we visit the ruined castle. We then continue north towards the spectacular cliffs of **Eshaness**, and the narrow isthmus known as **Mavis Grind**. (B, D)

**Day 3** Our day starts at the Prehistoric and Norse Settlement of **Jarlshof**. Over three acres of remains are here, spanning 3,000 years since the days of the Stone Age, including Bronze Age houses, Iron Age broch and wheel houses, Viking long houses and medieval farmhouses. We also visit **Sumburgh Head** with its RSPB reserve and enjoy free time in **Lerwick**. Later we take the evening sailing to Kirkwall, with dinner served on board. On arrival we transfer to our hotel. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning we have a full day excursion of west mainland Orkney visiting the **Heart of Neolithic Orkney – World Heritage Sites**. We begin at **Maeshowe**, the finest chambered tomb in Western Europe. Built before 2700 BC. Maeshowe was raided by Vikings in the 12th Century. It thus houses the largest collection of runic inscriptions to be found in any one place in

the world. We shall also visit the **Standing Stones of Stenness**, with the adjacent Neolithic village of **Barnhouse**, before continuing to **Skara Brae**, with its new visitor centre depicting the history of this world famous monument and **Skail House**, a fascinating architectural medley to the side of Skara Brae. (B, D)

**Day 5** This morning, we have free time to explore **Kirkwall**. Later, we tour the south end of Orkney, crossing the **Churchill Barriers** and visiting the charming **Italian Chapel**, which was built on a former prisoner of war camp. (B, D)

**Day 6** After breakfast we catch the ferry from Stromness back to the mainland. From here, we return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Standing Stones of Stenness



St Magnus Cathedral

**SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\***

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ One night's dinner, bed and breakfast at the Scalloway Hotel, Shetland and three nights' bed and breakfast (plus two dinners) at the Kirkwall or Shore Hotel, Orkney
- ▶ All ferry crossings, including one night's accommodation in two-berth inside cabins on Serco Northlink Ferries MV Hrossey/Hjaltrand on the outward sailing
- ▶ One breakfast and two dinners on board ship
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
12 - 17 May	\$2,515	\$2,410
26 - 31 May	\$2,585	\$2,480
20 - 25 Aug	\$2,655	\$2,550
29 Sep - 4 Oct	\$2,585	\$2,480
Single Supplement		\$630
Outside Cabin Supplement		\$80

## Orkney & Shetland by Air

5 DAYS from \$2,830

**DEPARTURE POINTS:** Aberdeen or Edinburgh

You asked and we listened! As it's a long way by road and sea, we have launched this alternative itinerary that explores the glorious and wild Orkney and Shetland Isles by air.

Over the course of five memorable days, we will explore lands steeped in history, wildlife and stunning scenery, far from the jostling crowds as we lose ourselves in the haunting beauty of the Orkney and Shetland Isles. Many people have landed there before you - some as early as 3000 BC. Most famous of all were the Vikings, but they were not alone and all around you will find historical treasures. Both islands, but particularly Shetland, in summer have virtually no darkness and the beauty of this 'Simmer Dim', as it is called locally, has to be seen to be realised.

**Day 1** We depart this morning on a flight from Aberdeen or Edinburgh to Sumburgh. On arrival we will transfer to **Sumburgh Head**, where the North Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean. The cliffs here are quite spectacular and home to an RSPB reserve. We will then visit the outstanding Prehistoric and Norse Settlement of **Jarlshof**, spanning 3000 years since the days of the Stone Age. This afternoon we will transfer to **Scalloway**, the former capital of Shetland where we see the ruined castle built in 1600 by the infamous Earl Patrick Stewart. We then continue north towards the spectacular **cliffs of Eshaness**, look out for the 'Otters Crossing' sign at the narrow isthmus known as **Mavis Grind**. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast, we will head to the island's capital town of **Lerwick**, where we enjoy some free time. You may wish to visit the state of the art Shetland Museum. Later, we will travel through small local communities until we reach Sandwick, where we will cross as foot passengers on the ferry over to the little island of **Mousa**, where we will visit the 2000 year old iron age **broch**. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today we depart from Sumburgh Airport to **Kirkwall**. On arrival, we will depart on a tour of the south end of **mainland Orkney**, crossing the **Churchill Barriers** which were built

after the sinking of HMS Royal Oak in October 1939. We also stop off at the beautiful **Italian Chapel**, built on the site of a former prisoner of war camp. We then return to Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney, where we have free time to explore at leisure. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning after breakfast, we have an all day excursion of west mainland Orkney visiting the **Heart of Neolithic Orkney – World Heritage Sites**. We begin at **Maeshowe**, the finest chambered tomb in Western Europe. Built before 2700 BC. Maeshowe was raided by Vikings in the 12th Century. It thus houses the largest collection of runic inscriptions to be found in any one place in the world. We shall also visit the **Standing Stones of Stenness**, with the adjacent Neolithic village of **Barnhouse**, before continuing to **Skara Brae**, with its new visitor centre depicting the history of this world famous monument and **Skail House**, a fascinating architectural medley to the side of Skara Brae. (B, D)

**Day 5** After breakfast we transfer to Kirkwall Airport where we will take the flight back to Aberdeen or Edinburgh. (B)

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



The Italian Chapel



The Italian Chapel - Interior

**SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\***

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Two nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the Busta House Hotel, Shetland and two nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the Kirkwall or Shore Hotel, Orkney
- ▶ Flights from Aberdeen to Sumburgh, Sumburgh to Kirkwall, and Kirkwall to Aberdeen (Edinburgh flight supplement \$225pp)
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
5 - 9 May	\$2,935	\$2,830
16 - 20 Aug	\$2,935	\$2,830
Single Supplement		\$385



Jarlshof



Bressay Island

## An Archaeologist's View of Orkney and Shetland

6 DAYS from \$2,410

PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Dundee

The islands of Orkney and Shetland are littered with archaeological remains. People first came here over 5,000 years ago and many of their remains survive. Research is ongoing here and excavations by archaeologists continue to uncover new information. The islands are therefore of enormous interest to anyone who enjoys first-hand contact with ancient settlements and buildings as well as the people who once lived here.

During our time on Shetland we will visit the uninhabited island of Mousa with its 2,000-year-old full size broch, the Prehistoric and Norse Settlement of Jarlshof; St. Ninian's Isle with its 6th century church and the ruined castle of Scalloway. We then travel to Orkney where we visit the Italian Chapel and the Churchill Barriers; Maeshowe, the finest chambered tomb in Western Europe; the stone circles of Stenness and Brodgar and the famous site at Skara Brae as well as Skaill House. En route to Aberdeen, we will stop for a photo opportunity at Dunnottar Castle, a cliff-top fortress dating back to the 3rd century.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head for Aberdeen. We will stop for a photo opportunity at **Dunnottar Castle**, a dramatic ruined cliff-top fortress, before taking the overnight ferry to Lerwick. (D)

**Day 2** We begin our exploration of Shetland with a visit to the Iron Age broch on the little island of **Mousa**. Remarkably the broch of Mousa still stands to its original height of 13m. The island is also a nature reserve and is rich in wildlife. We continue to the outstanding Prehistoric and Norse Settlement of **Jarlshof**, spanning 3,000 years of human habitation. Finally, we stop at the nearby cliffs at **Sumburgh Head**, an RSPB reserve renowned for the seabirds that reside here. (B, D)

**Day 3** Our first visit of the day is to **St. Ninian's Isle** and its church dating from the 6th century when Christianity first came to Shetland. We then travel to **Scalloway** to visit the ruined castle and continue through the **Tingwall Valley**, the site of the old Norse parliament. (B, D)

**Day 4** We tour the southern end of Orkney Mainland with visits to the **Churchill Barriers** and the **Italian Chapel**, built on the site of a former prisoner of war camp. Several hundred Italians, captured during the North African campaign of World War II were sent here to work on the Causeways and converted two huts into a chapel. Later, we return to **Kirkwall** for some free time and a chance to visit the architectural masterpiece of St. Magnus Cathedral. (B, D)

**Day 5** Today we head west into the **Heart of Neolithic Orkney**, where we find some of the most impressive and important archaeological sites in Europe, including the mysterious stone circles at **Stenness and Brodgar**, the chambered tomb at **Maeshowe** and the famous stone age village at **Skara Brae** and **Skaill House**. (B, D)

**Day 6** After breakfast we take the ferry back to the mainland and continue to our original departure points. (B)

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



Churchill Barriers



Dunnottar Castle

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ One night dinner, bed and breakfast at the Scalloway Hotel, Shetland and three nights' bed and breakfast (plus two dinners) at the Kirkwall or Shore Hotel, Orkney
- ▶ All ferry crossings, including two dinners and one night's accommodation in two berth inside cabins on Serco Northlink Ferries MV Hrossey/Hjaltland on the outward sailing
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an archaeological expert as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
14 - 19 Apr	\$2,515	\$2,410
25 - 30 Sep	\$2,725	\$2,620
Single Supplement		\$630
Outside Cabin Supplement		\$80

## Shetland and its Outer Isles

5 DAYS from \$1,990

PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Dundee, Forfar, Stonehaven, Aberdeen

If you want to get away from it all, Shetland is the place to be. As close to Norway as it is to Scotland, Shetland is rugged and remote, with a raw natural beauty, a unique culture and wonderful wildlife. There are over a hundred islands here, only 16 of which are inhabited, each with its own individual character, and our tour offers the opportunity to visit four of them, providing a real taste of the diversity of this amazing archipelago, not to mention the simple pleasure of travelling by boats, both large and small, as the indomitable inhabitants of these islands have done for hundreds of years.

We visit the little island of Mousa, whose Iron Age broch is the best-preserved example anywhere in the world, the Shetland Croft House Museum which gives an insight into a typical 19th century croft, while Jarlshof provides a unique archaeological time-capsule, spanning 3,000 years of successive settlements. Finally we have a tour of the northernmost islands of Yell and Unst, a day of stunning seascapes and air so fresh it takes your breath away.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel to Aberdeen. From here, we sail overnight to Lerwick. (D)

**Day 2** Disembarking at Lerwick, we begin our visits at the **Shetland Croft Museum**, housed in a typical thatched croft house of the 19th century restored with traditional materials, low doorways and uneven floors and warmed by a peat fire. Next, we explore the outstanding Norse settlement of **Jarlshof**, with over three acres of remains, spanning 3,000 years since the days of the Stone Age. This afternoon, we visit the little island of **Mousa** and the 2,000 year old broch, the best preserved example in the world. The island is also a nature reserve and is rich in wildlife. Storm petrels, Arctic terns and skuas nest here, and harbour seals lounge on the shore. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today we enjoy a full day tour to the northern isles of **Yell** and **Unst**. We travel north through Tingwall and Girsta and past the oil terminal at **Sullom Voe**, which has transformed life in Shetland since it started operating in 1973, before

arriving at Toft, where the ferry departs for the island of Yell. On arrival in Unst, we visit **Muness Castle**, **Baltasound** and **Saxa Vord Hill**. (B, D)

**Day 4** After breakfast, we return to **Lerwick** to enjoy some free time. Later, we take the overnight ferry to Aberdeen. (B, D)

**Day 5** We disembark and return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Lerwick



Mousa Broch

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the Busta House Hotel and two nights in two-berth inside cabins on Serco Northlink Ferries
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
9 - 13 Aug	\$2,095	\$1,990
Single Supplement		\$490
Outside Cabin Supplement		\$80

## Undiscovered Orkney

5 DAYS from \$2,130 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Inverness

An archipelago of 70 islands, each with their own distinctive charm, Orkney is home to boundless history and natural beauty. Based in Kirkwall, on the mainland, we will discover the landmarks and landscapes of the North and South Isles. On Westray, we relive Orkney's Viking past; on Mainland, we discover Neolithic Orkney; and on Hoy, we enjoy dramatic scenery as we sail across the Scapa Flow. Over the years we have explored almost every nook and cranny of Orkney, yet these beautiful islands contain many more secrets and hidden gems that demand to be discovered.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel north to Scrabster, where we catch the ferry to **Orkney**. (D)

**Day 2** Today we visit **Westray** and the **Scaun Natural Arch**, where guillemots and fulmars can be spotted. After a visit to the unique **Quoygrew** 10th century Norse site, we visit the **Kirk of St Mary** in Pierowall Village, and then **Castle O'Burrian**. Finally we visit the **Westray Heritage Centre**, and tour **Noltland Castle**. (B, D)

**Day 3** Tour the island of **Hoy**, visiting the **Dwarfie Stane** and **Rackwick Bay**, once home to composer Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. We also visit the **Scapa Flow Museum**, the **Martello Tower** at Hackness and the **Naval Cemetery**. (B, D)

**Day 4** We have a full day excursion of mainland Orkney. Visits include **Maeshowe**, **Skara Brae** and the **Standing Stones of Stenness**, lying to the north side of the Orphir Hills. Later, we continue to Stromness to visit the local Museum and the **Pier Arts Centre**, and then it's on to the **Highland Park Distillery**, which uses the same traditional methods of production as it did 200 years ago. (B, D)

**Day 5** We catch the ferry back to the mainland and visit the **Timespan Museum and Arts Centre** in Helmsdale, which is described as a meeting place between past, present and future. We return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Westray, Orkney islands

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 3-star Kirkwall or Shore Hotel, Orkney
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all ferry crossings
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
28 Jul - 1 Aug		\$2,235	\$2,130

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

## Ancient Stones of the Outer Hebrides

5 DAYS from \$1,320 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Inverness

In about 1800 BC, at around the time that the Middle Kingdom of Ancient Egypt was flourishing, an equally vigorous civilisation was leaving its mark on the far flung islands of the Outer Hebrides. In the company of a specialist guide we will tour a succession of sites, from Lewis in the north to Harris in the south. Highlights include the Bosta Iron Age Village, the Standing Stones of Callanish\* and St Clement's Church at Rodel.

**Day 1** Depart from our designated pick-up points and head north to **Ullapool** to catch the evening ferry to Stornoway and our hotel. (D)

**Day 2** We cross to the island of Great Bernera, where we visit **Bosta Iron Age Village** and the nearby **museum**. We then travel to the 5,000 year old **Standing Stones of Callanish\***, undoubtedly the most remarkable antiquity in the Western Isles. In the afternoon we visit **St Columba's Ui Church**, one of the most important archaeological sites on the Isle of Lewis. (B, D)

**Day 3** Following breakfast we travel south to **Harris**, which in contrast to the rolling moorland of Lewis is more mountainous and fringed by superb white sandy beaches. Here we visit **St Clement's Church** at Rodel, whose tombs are among the most spectacular in Scotland, followed by the **Genealogy Centre** at Northton, a chance to learn how island communities have

evolved over the centuries. We continue to the ancient standing stone known as **Clach Mhic Leoid**, which overlooks the island of Taransay. Finally, we return to Stornoway and visit **Lewis Castle**. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today we discover the stunning scenery of **Lewis** as we take a journey through time from the Bronze and Iron Ages to the days of Norse settlement and the more recent past. Visits include **Carloway Broch**, **Black Houses**, **Norse Mill** and the standing stone **Clach an Trushal**. (B, D)

**Day 5** We take the ferry from Stornoway to **Ullapool** then continue our journey back to our original pick-up points. (B)

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

\*The main Callanish site will be closed Sept 2024 until early 2026 we will visit the nearby smaller circles instead.



Dun Carloway Broch

SAVE \$75 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the Cabarfeidh Hotel, Stornoway
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all ferry crossings
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
22 - 26 Apr		\$1,395	\$1,320
2 - 6 Sep		\$1,595	\$1,520

Single Supplement \$195  
No single supplement in apr

## Up Helly Aa - Shetland's Festival of Fire

7 DAYS from \$2,130

PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Dundee, Forfar, Stonehaven, Aberdeen

A wander through the streets of Lerwick is normally a quiet, peaceful experience, but take a walk there at the end of January and it's quite likely that you will bump into a squad of very large, bearded Vikings, in gleaming chain-mail and winged helmets. Later, the Vikings and their fancy-dressed followers fill the narrow streets, their flaming torches illuminating the winter skies, their boisterous songs filling the air. A 30-foot Viking longship is carried aloft before it is set alight with a thousand blazing brands. As the sky over Lerwick shimmers with heat and light, fireworks explode and the gloom of winter is lifted for another year.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head for Aberdeen where we will join the Serco Northlink ferry overnight sailing to Lerwick. (D)

**Day 2** We arrive early in the morning at Lerwick and enjoy a full day tour which includes visits to **Scalloway**, the original capital of Shetland, the outstanding Prehistoric and Norse Settlement of **Jarlshof** and **Sumburgh Head**. (B, D)

**Day 3** We depart for a full day tour which will take us to the isles of **Yell** and **Unst**. (B, D)

**Day 4** After breakfast this morning we depart for Lerwick, which you are free to explore at leisure and view the various activities associated with the **Up Helly Aa festival** which takes place today. (B, D)

**Day 5** Today we enjoy a scenic excursion to the west mainland of Shetland, which will take us to Walls, terminus for the ferry service to the island of **Foula**, and the headland at **Sandness**, overlooking the island of Papa Stour. (B, D)

**Day 6** This morning we travel to the north mainland of Shetland. Our route will take us over the **Mavis Grind**, an isthmus just 100 yards wide, and through a stark landscape of hills, moors and lochans. We will stop for a walk along the spectacular sea cliffs at **Eshaness**, which offer spectacular views. Back at Lerwick we will re-join our ship, which sails in the evening for Aberdeen. (B, D)

**Day 7** After breakfast, we disembark and return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Up Helly Aa festival

A 4-DAY TOUR BY AIR IS ALSO AVAILABLE DEPARTING ON 27 JAN FROM \$2,375PP (\$2,270PP IF BOOKED BY 15/10) - PLEASE SEE WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS.

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed and full breakfast at the Sumburgh Hotel, Sumburgh
- ▶ Two nights' accommodation in two-berth cabins on Serco Northlink Ferries Hrossey or Hjalntland with dinner and full breakfast
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all ferry crossings
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
25 - 31 Jan		\$2,235	\$2,130

Single Supplement On request  
Outside cabin supplement \$80  
Busta House Hotel supplement \$340

## In the Footsteps of the Picts

4 DAYS from \$1,115 | LOW SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh

Living beyond the northern frontier of the Roman Empire, the people of northern Scotland in the Dark Ages were known as the Picts – a name given by the Romans meaning the 'painted, tattooed ones'. They were renowned as one of the most warlike of the Celtic barbarian tribes of Europe, successfully attacking the Roman army, and yet few of their homes or forts have ever been found. They did, however, leave behind some of the finest carved stones and jewellery from early medieval Europe.

**Day 1** We depart from our pick-up points and head to the **National Museum of Scotland**. Here we view their collection of Pictish jewellery and sculptures held here, which includes the **St Ninian's Isle Treasure**, which was discovered in Shetland in 1958 and is the only Scottish hoard of fine metalwork of this date to survive in its entirety. (D)

**Day 2** We enjoy a sculptural high-point with a visit to **Aberlemno**, with its four magnificent Pictish stones. We then visit a professional stone-carver, **David McGovern**, who will give us an exclusive Pictish stone carving demonstration. Then we travel the short distance to **St Vigean's Museum of Pictish Sculpture**, which houses one of the most important collections of early medieval sculpture in Western Europe. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today begins with a visit to the symbol-inscribed cross-slab depicting angels and a striding cloaked figure at **Eassie**. From here we continue to **Perth Museum**, which has recently re-opened following a \$27 million re-development programme. Our final visit is to Dundee's **McManus Museum** to meet a digital reconstruction of a Pictish woman. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning we drive to **St Andrews**, where we see the decorated stone sarcophagus of a great Pictish king, featuring biblical royal imagery along with artistic influences showing their European connections. Our final visit is to the **East Lothian Hillfort**, for a specially-arranged tour led by the leader of the current archaeological investigations. We return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Aberlemno Pictish Stone

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 4-star Links Hotel, Montrose
- ▶ Coach travel and all visits as outlined
- ▶ Services of an archaeological expert as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
1 - 4 Aug		\$1,185	\$1,115

Single Supplement \$85

# Knitting in the Shetland Isles

6 DAYS from \$2,410

**PICK-UP POINTS:** Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen

Even those who think they know all there is to know about the art of knitting can pick up a thing or two in the scenic Shetland Isles, and we're not just talking about those pesky dropped stitches! There are workshops aplenty, both starting off our mornings and rounding off our afternoons. These present the perfect opportunity to hone our skills - and perhaps even learn some new ones - under the watchful eye of experienced local tutors.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel to Aberdeen for our overnight sailing to **Shetland**. Dinner is served on board. *(D)*

**Day 2** Disembark in Lerwick, before travelling to the Prehistoric and Norse Settlement of **Jarlishof**. We stop at **Sumburgh Head**, the award-winning **Textile Gallery of the Shetland Museum and Archives** for a guided tour, and finally the **Shetland Textile Museum**. *(B, L, D)*

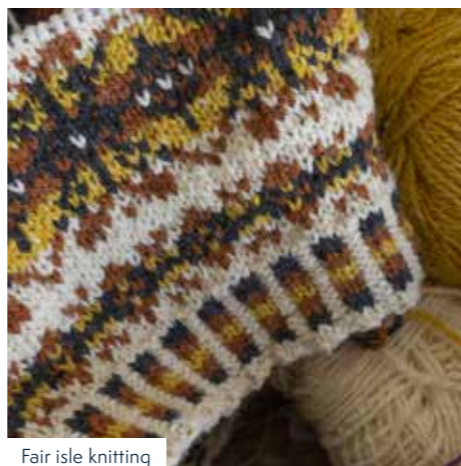
**Day 3** Today is the first of our **interactive workshops** to learn the basics of Shetland hand knitting. After lunch, we visit the **Nielanell Design Studio at Sandwick** and **Hoswick Visitor Centre**, housed in a former woollen mill. We will also visit the Laurence Odie Knitwear outlet at **Hoswick Woollen Mill**. *(B, L, D)*

**Day 4** We depart on a tour of the western mainland of Shetland with visits to **Walls**, terminus for the ferry service to the island of Foula, and the headland at **Sandness**, overlooking the island of Papa Stour. We return to our hotel in the afternoon for the second of our **knitting workshops**. *(B, L, D)*

**Day 5** Our final **knitting workshop** is followed with some free time in **Scalloway**. The castle built by Earl Patrick Stewart still dominates the skyline. We continue to **Lerwick** where the rest of the afternoon will be at leisure. Later, we board our ferry back to Aberdeen and have dinner in the ship's restaurant. *(B, L, D)*

**Day 6** After our overnight sailing we arrive in Aberdeen this morning and return to our original pick-up points. *(B)*

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



Fair isle knitting

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Five nights' dinner, bed & breakfast: three nights at the Scalloway Hotel and two nights in two-berth inside cabins on ferry
- ▶ Three lunches
- ▶ Three knitting workshops with expert local tutor
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
18 - 23 Sep		<del>\$2,515</del>	\$2,410
Single Supplement			\$525
Outside cabin supplement			\$80

# Arran, Scotland in Miniature

5 DAYS from \$1,850

**PICK-UP POINTS:** Aberdeen, Stonehaven, Forfar, Dundee, Perth, Kinross, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Glasgow

Often described as "Scotland in Miniature", Arran has a blend of Highland and Island scenery with granite peaks and deep glens to the north of the island, contrasting with its rolling and lush farmlands to the south. From our base in Blackwaterfoot, we visit Brodick Castle and its wonderful gardens, we enjoy a circular tour of Arran that passes through Whiting Bay, Lamash, Corrie and Sannox, and we can look forward to both a tour and a tasting at the Isle of Arran Distillery.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head to Ardrossan for our ferry to Arran and transfer to our hotel in **Blackwaterfoot**. *(D)*

**Day 2** Today we have a **circular tour** visiting **Whiting Bay, Lamash, Brodick, Corrie, Sannox, Catacol, Pirnmill** and **Isle of Arran Distillery**. Only 56 miles around its coastline, the small villages are compared to 'jewels on a necklace' strung out like pearls around the island. *(B, D)*

**Day 3** Explore at your leisure or take an optional excursion to the little Hebridean **island of Gigha** including a visit to **Achamore Gardens**. Nestling close to the mainland just off the Kintyre peninsula, this is a gem of an island often

overlooked by the island-hopper. Sir James Horlick came here in 1944 and created a woodland garden. The mild climate combined with high levels of rainfall means that there is always something in bloom. *(B, D)*

**Day 4** This morning we visit **Brodick Castle and Gardens**, looking east across the Firth of Clyde. The present garden dates from 1932 when the Duchess of Montrose started an ambitious woodland garden with a collection of rhododendrons. *(B, D)*

**Day 5** After breakfast we depart on the morning ferry to Ardrossan and return to our original pick-up points. *(B)*

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



Blackwaterfoot

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 3-star Best Western Kinloch Hotel, Blackwaterfoot
- ▶ Return ferry crossings
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
19 - 23 May		<del>\$1,955</del>	\$1,850
8 - 12 Jun		<del>\$1,955</del>	\$1,850
11 - 15 Aug		<del>\$1,955</del>	\$1,850
13 - 17 Sep		<del>\$1,955</del>	\$1,850
Single Supplement			\$455
Optional excursion Gigha:			\$120

# Mull, Staffa and Iona

4 DAYS from \$2,130

**PICK-UP POINTS:** Aberdeen, Stonehaven, Forfar, Dundee, Perth, Kinross, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Glasgow

The Isle of Mull is a place of tumbling burns, high peaks, dramatic views, and a silent, lonely beauty. We will explore some of the highlights of the island including the multi-coloured buildings that line the waterfront of the island's principal town, Tobermory. We sail on a wildlife cruise that takes us to the Treshnish Isles, and the little island of Staffa, whose natural cathedral of basalt columns is one of the wonders of the west coast. We also visit Duart Castle, the 13th century home of the Chief of Clan MacLean and the sacred isle of Iona.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head for **Oban**, where we board the late afternoon ferry to **Mull**. *(D)*

**Day 2** Today we will drive through the spectacular scenery of the Ross of Mull to Fionnphort, from where we cross as foot passengers to the 'sacred isle' of **Iona**. Here you have the opportunity to visit the **Abbey** and wander over the island, taking in the atmosphere of calm and contemplation which attracts visitors from all over the world. *(B, D)*

**Day 3** Today we depart for **Tobermory**, the island's 'capital', and the starting point for our wildlife cruise to the **Treshnish Isles** and **Staffa**. We will land on the idyllic Isle of **Lunga**, the largest of the Treshnish Isles which is surrounded by wildflowers and stunning scenery. The main

attraction that can be seen close up (*June departure only*) is the large puffin colony nesting in burrows on the grassy hillside. Next, we take the short crossing to the geological wonder of **Staffa**, which was formed by volcanic eruptions over 50 million years ago. We have a chance to explore the island and the massive natural cathedral known as **Fingal's Cave**. *(B, PL, D)*

**Day 4** Today we visit **Duart Castle**, the 13th century home of the Chief of Clan MacLean. We can explore the dungeons, the state rooms and appreciate the strategic position of the castle from the top of the keep before our ferry crossing back to the mainland and our original pick-up points. *(B)*

**Inc. meals:** B: Breakfast, PL: Packed lunch, D: Dinner



Duart Castle

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at a comfortable hotel on the Isle of Mull
- ▶ One packed lunch
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all ferry crossings
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
28 Jun - 1 Jul		<del>\$2,235</del>	\$2,130
6 - 9 Sep		<del>\$2,235</del>	\$2,130
Single Supplement			\$590

# Highland Wildlife Safari

4 DAYS from \$1,325 | LOW SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

**PICK-UP POINTS:** Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth

Scotland's natural environment is second to none with a more diverse range of habitats than almost any other country of comparable size. This tour of the Highlands aims to provide close encounters with a wide range of wildlife, all set against a backdrop of magnificent scenery.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points for the **Loch of the Lowes Wildlife Reserve**, where the star attraction is a pair of breeding ospreys. We continue to the **Highland Wildlife Park**, near Aviemore, which has an extensive collection of both native and exotic animals. *(D)*

**Day 2** We make our way to **Inverness**, capital of the Highlands, where we will leave for our **Dolphin Cruise** and head out onto the Moray Firth. We hope to see a variety of bird life such as terns, gannets, fulmars, razorbills, kittiwakes, red kites and ospreys, and a variety of wading birds on the shoreline. We later visit the **House of Aigas Field Centre** near Beauly. Here we will enjoy **lunch using produce from the estate** before embarking on a guided walk around the estate to view the beaver dam, Scottish Wildcat project and other native wildlife such as red squirrels. *(B, L, D)*

**Day 3** After breakfast we travel through some glorious mountain scenery to Loch Maree, where we enjoy a gentle woodland walk at the **Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve**. It is the oldest nature reserve in Britain comprising 10,500 acres and it was established in 1951. In the afternoon, we visit **Inverewe Gardens**, unquestionably recognised as one of the most outstanding gardens in the country with a host of botanical specimens, both native and exotic. *(B, D)*

**Day 4** We visit the **Abernethy National Nature Reserve** at Loch Garten, where we hope to see a number of different birds, including the crested tit, crossbills and ospreys. Our final stop is at **Pitlochry Dam and Fish Ladder**, an opportunity to see salmon passing upstream on the River Tummel. An interesting new visitor centre tells the story of the construction of the dam. We then return to our original pick-up points. *(B)*

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



Dolphins, Moray Firth

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES


- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the Carrbridge Hotel, Carrbridge *(or similar)*
- ▶ One lunch
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
25 - 28 Jun		<del>\$1,395</del>	\$1,325
Single Supplement			\$170

# Glasgow's Art Treasures featuring the Burrell Collection

4 DAYS from \$905 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

 PICK-UP POINTS: Aberdeen, Stonehaven, Forfar, Dundee, Perth, Edinburgh, Glasgow

Re-opened in March 2022 after an ambitious refurbishment, Glasgow's Burrell Collection allows visitors for the first time to explore all three floors in the building, set out as galleries, visible stores and special exhibition spaces. This incredible collection holds treasures from all over the world, including 5,000-year-old porcelain from China, paintings by renowned French artists including Manet, Cézanne and Degas, and medieval artefacts such as stained glass, armour and tapestries. Our tour includes visits to the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, where notable works of art from across Britain and Europe are featured alongside a diverse collection of exhibits; the Hunterian, Scotland's oldest public museum, the Gallery of Modern Art located in the centre of Glasgow, Holmwood House and the House for an Art Lover, built in the 1990s to a design by Charles Rennie Mackintosh from 1901.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points to visit the **Gallery of Modern Art** housed in an impressive neo-classical building in Royal Exchange Square. Outside is one of Glasgow's iconic landmarks, the cheekily crowned equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington. (D)

**Day 2** Today we explore the **Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum** and the **Hunterian Museum**, part of the University of Glasgow, which was founded in 1807, making it Scotland's oldest public museum. You may be interested in viewing the **Mackintosh Collection** here. (B, D)

**Day 3** We start our day at the **Burrell Collection** which, following an ambitious and far-reaching refurbishment programme, was voted **Art Fund Museum of the Year** in 2023. This afternoon we head to **Holmwood House**, the finest and most elaborate residential villa designed by Alexander 'Greek' Thomson. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today we visit the **House for an Art Lover**, whose origins lie in drawings prepared by Charles Rennie Mackintosh in 1901 as his entry to a competition. We later return to our original pick-up points. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Gallery of Modern Art

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the Best Western Garfield House Hotel, Glasgow
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
21 - 24 Mar		\$975	\$905
5 - 8 Sep		\$975	\$905

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

# Historic Houses of Aberdeenshire

4 DAYS from \$1,325

 PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Dundee

Aberdeenshire is dotted with historic houses and castles, many of them outstanding examples of Scots Baronial architecture. Each one has a fascinating story to tell with countless legends and several royal connections including Balmoral, sadly now remembered as the place where Her Majesty The Queen passed away.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head to **Drum Castle and Gardens**. The sweep of 700 years of history is stamped into Drum's stalwart battlements, medieval square tower and sprawling extensions. The beautiful Garden of Historic Roses is divided into quadrants that show how roses have been cultivated from the 17th to the 20th century and an ancient oak forest adjoins the castle. (D)

**Day 2** Our first visit of the day is to **Haddo House**. Unusual for Aberdeenshire in that it is not a castle, the house elegantly blends Georgian architecture with late Victorian interiors. We'll also see its terrace garden with geometric rosebeds, a lavish herbaceous border and secluded glades. Later we visit the magnificent fortress of **Fyvie Castle** with ghosts, legends and folklore woven into its 800-year history. Outside we find an 18th century walled garden for fruit and veg. (B, D)

**Day 3** We start at **Castle Fraser**, one of the grandest of the Scottish baronial tower houses, with a strikingly simple Great Hall. Next is **Craigievar Castle**, another fine example of Scots Baronial architecture, which seems to have grown naturally out of the rolling hills. We round off the day at **Balmoral**, which needs little introduction as a favourite royal residence. Built around 1854 for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, it is relatively modern though clearly in the style of a 'Scottish' castle. (B, D)

**Day 4** We conclude at **Crathes Castle**, set against a backdrop of rolling hills and within its own glorious gardens. Crathes is every inch the classic Scottish tower house, with a labyrinth of cultural and family history. We then return to our original pick-up points. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Balmoral

SAVE \$50 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the 4-star Ardoe House Hotel, Aberdeen
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
9 - 12 Jun		\$1,395	\$1,325
Single Supplement			\$210



Glasgow

# The Architecture of Glasgow and Edinburgh

4 DAYS from \$1,185 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

 PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh

Lying just 45 miles apart, Scotland's two largest cities enjoy a healthy rivalry and are often contrasted with each other. In terms of their architecture, Glasgow's city centre is predominantly Victorian, with vast edifices built on a grand scale to reflect its status as the 'Second City of the Empire'. In contrast, Edinburgh is most noted for its Georgian architecture, in particular the elegant terraces and wide streets of the New Town, though it also boasts a historic Old Town. Visits in Edinburgh include the 500-year-old Gladstone's Land, the controversial Scottish Parliament building and the fascinating Georgian House, while in Glasgow we have a private guided tour of the impressive City Chambers, visit the humble Tenement House and discover the city's social history at the People's Palace.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel to **Edinburgh**, where we begin with a tour of the **Old Town**, the historic area either side of the Royal Mile that runs from Edinburgh Castle down to the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Included is a visit to **Gladstone's Land**, which has been a commercial and social hub for over 500 years. Continuing down the High Street, we will visit **St Giles' Cathedral**, the scene of Her Majesty The Queen's lying-in-state and later the 'Scottish Coronation' of His Majesty The King. (D)

**Day 2** We return to Edinburgh for a tour of the **Scottish Parliament** building, which was built to a bold design by the Spanish architect Enric Miralles. We then walk a short distance to the official royal residence of The King when in Edinburgh, the **Palace of Holyroodhouse**, where we explore the 14 historic and state apartments and the manicured gardens. Later, our attention turns to the **New Town**, actually over 250 years old. After a panoramic tour taking in the principal buildings and elegant terraces we visit **The Georgian House**, restored to reflect the lives of those who lived and worked here in the late 18th and early 19th century. We continue to the **Royal Scottish Academy** and the **National Gallery of Scotland**, whose neo-classical design helped to transform Edinburgh into the so-called 'Athens of the North'. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning we head for **Glasgow**, which has a look and feel that is altogether different from Edinburgh. We begin with a walking tour of the **Merchant City**, one of Glasgow's oldest quarters, dating back to the 1750s. We then have a **private guided tour** of the **Glasgow City Chambers**, a grand edifice completed in 1888 as a symbol of Glasgow's wealth. We continue with a panoramic tour of the city, picking out some architectural highlights both old and new, followed by **afternoon tea at Mackintosh at the Willow**, the famous tea rooms on Sauchiehall Street. We conclude today at **The Tenement House**, a rare glimpse into life in Glasgow in the early 20th century. (B, AT, D)

**Day 4** Returning to Glasgow once more, we begin with a look at **Templeton on the Green**, one of Glasgow's best-known landmarks and the adjacent **People's Palace**, Glasgow's social history museum. Our final visit is to the **Riverside Museum**, built to a striking design by internationally renowned architect, Dame Zaha Hadid. We later return to our original pick-up points. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, AT: Afternoon Tea, D: Dinner



Edinburgh

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the Best Western Garfield House Hotel, Glasgow
- ▶ One afternoon tea
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
28 - 31 Mar		\$1,255	\$1,185
10 - 13 Oct		\$1,255	\$1,185

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT



NEW  
TOUR



Stirling Castle



Falkland Palace

## Castles, Palaces and Abbeys of Eastern Scotland

4 DAYS from \$1,325 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

 PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh

The East of Scotland is home to a fine collection of Royal Palaces and historical castles. Our tour begins at the birthplace of Mary, Queen of Scots – Linlithgow Palace, which was also used as a rest stop between Edinburgh and Stirling Castle, the latter of which is also on our agenda. Heading north into Angus, we visit Glamis Castle, said to be the setting for Shakespeare’s Macbeth. The Royal connection continues as this was the birthplace of Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother. Scone Palace, set in the heart of Perthshire countryside is the ancestral home of the Earls of Mansfield and is most famous as the crowning place of Scottish Kings. Built in red sandstone with a castellated roof, it is a great example of Gothic Revival style in Scotland. Continuing with connections to Mary, Queen of Scots we visit one of her places of refuge - Falkland Palace and also the site of her imprisonment, Loch Leven Castle. Our final visits include Culross Palace with its maze of passageways and painted ceilings and Dunfermline Abbey and Palace, resting place of many Scottish royals but possibly most notably Robert the Bruce.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel to our first visit - **Linlithgow Palace**. Situated on the shore of Linlithgow Loch the Palace was once one of the principal residences of the monarchs of Scotland during the 15th and 16th centuries. We spend some time here exploring the ruins of the birthplace of Mary, Queen of Scots where highlights include the Great Hall and an intricate fountain found in the central courtyard. There is also a chance to climb up to the roof for panoramic views. Later we head

to the heart of the city of Stirling where we find **Stirling Castle**, a magnificent castle set in an imposing position with impressive architecture overlooking the city and with breathtaking views over the surrounding countryside. We step back in time as we explore Scotland’s past, her Renaissance Kings and Queens as well as the collection of colourful and exquisitely crafted rooms. There is much to explore including the Great Hall dating back to 1503, the graceful Chapel room built by King James VI and the delightful Queen Anne



Dunfermline Abbey

Gardens. Following our visit we continue to our comfortable hotel. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast, we venture into the heart of Angus to the birthplace of Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, **Glamis Castle**. The inspiration for William Shakespeare’s Macbeth, the castle has been the ancestral home of the Earls of Strathmore and Kinghorne since the 14th century. During our visit we enjoy a tour of the castle and learn about over 1000 years of history and its

famous visitors who include Mary, Queen of Scots. Glamis Castle also boasts an impressive collection of ghosts. This afternoon we head to **Scone Palace**, perched above the River Tay in Perthshire. Its enviable location overlooks the routes heading northwards to the Highlands and eastwards through Strathmore to the coast. The Grampian Mountains make a dramatic backdrop and across the river you can gaze upon the city of Perth. Scone Palace throughout its history has been the seat of Parliaments as well as the crowning place of the Kings of Scots including both Macbeth and Robert the Bruce. We can explore the palace which is home to a fine collection of antiques, paintings and extraordinary artefacts. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning our first visit is to **Falkland Palace and Gardens** where Mary, Queen of Scots often took refuge during the tumultuous political and religious upheavals of the 16th century. We spend some time exploring this fine renaissance



Scone Palace

Palace, its formal gardens and the surrounding wildflower meadow. Inside the castle there is detailed panelling in the drawing room and fascinating painted walls in the library to look out for. Other highlights include the elaborately embellished Falkland Bed and the royal apartments, where we find the Queen’s Room which has been arranged as Mary, Queen of Scots may have used it. This afternoon we make our way to **Loch Leven Castle**. We cross the loch to the ruins of the Castle where Mary, Queen of Scots was imprisoned in 1567. After spending a year at the castle as a prisoner, Mary was forced to abdicate before dramatically escaping using May Day celebrations as a cover. We spend some time surrounded by beautiful scenery soaking up the tranquility of the Castle’s setting before exploring the Tower House rooms and Glassin Tower. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today we visit **Culross Palace** which was constructed between 1597 and 1611 by Sir George Bruce, Laird of Carnock. We spend the morning exploring the tiny Palace rooms, connecting passageways and painted ceilings. We then head outside to the restored gardens which incorporate many features which would have been found in the 17th century. Located on a slope behind the Palace the garden offers dramatic views across the Firth of Forth. The small garden is full of vegetables, herbs and aromatic plants and don’t forget to look out for the freely roaming

‘Scott’s Dumpty’ hens! In the early afternoon we will make our way to **Dunfermline Abbey and Palace** which was originally founded as a Priory before becoming a Royal resting place, serving this role for over 250 years. Here you are able to see the hugely impressive nave, its Romanesque architecture is very similar to the Cathedral in Durham. We can also search for fossilised crustaceans in the marble plinth of St Margaret’s shrine, admire the James Ballantine Window in the Nave showing portraits of Queen Margaret, Malcolm Canmore, William Wallace and Robert the Bruce. We can also visit the final resting place of Robert the Bruce and see a reconstruction of his original tomb although his heart is interred in Melrose Abbey, in the Scottish Borders. We later return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights’ dinner, bed breakfast at the Salutation Hotel, Perth
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
15 - 18 Jun	\$1,395		\$1,325

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

NEW  
TOUR



Grossherzogin Elisabeth ©Sail Training International

## Tall Ships in Aberdeen

4 DAYS from \$1,045

 **PICK-UP POINTS:** Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen

The Tall Ships Race is a great sporting event which offers youngsters a fantastic opportunity to challenge themselves and learn new skills, but for those of on dry land it also offers a wonderful spectacle. Whether it's having a good look at the ships while in harbour or watching as they leave harbour and hundreds of square yards of snowy white sails are unfurled. It is a truly uplifting sight!

Our tour is timed to coincide with the arrival of the Tall Ships in Aberdeen and the first of our opportunities to view the ships at close quarters. A visit to the fascinating Maritime Museum adjacent to the harbour where the ships will be berthed is followed by another chance to move from ship to ship and enjoy the various activities associated with the event.

We then take the opportunity to explore the surrounding countryside, characterised by rich farmland and rolling hills, with visits to Castle Fraser, the most elaborate Z-plan castle in Scotland, and the late Queen's summer residence Balmoral Castle, now most poignantly associated with the last days of Her Majesty's life and reign.



Balmoral Castle



Castle Fraser

**Day 1** We depart by coach from our pick-up points and head for **Aberdeen**, where today the **Tall Ships fleet** will begin arriving, following the first leg of the race in Dunkerque. On arrival at Aberdeen Harbour we will have our first chance to view the ships, which are open to the public and perhaps chat with members of the crews. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast, we return to Aberdeen for a visit to the **Maritime Museum**, situated close to the harbour on historic Shiprow, which tells the story of the city's long and often dramatic relationship with the sea. Rich and varied displays of objects and artworks tell the extraordinary story of Aberdeen's maritime heritage. Highlights include beautifully detailed ship models from 1689 to the present day, including the Aberdeen-built tea clipper Thermopylae, the celebrated rival of the Cutty Sark. Marvel at a complete lighthouse lens assembly, admire the lost figurehead of the Star of Tasmania, see the impressive propeller from the steam yacht Fox, which set sail from Aberdeen in 1857 to discover the fate of Sir John Franklin's 1845 expedition to find a route through the Northwest Passage. Outside the Museum, stop to admire the **Aberdeen Fishing Memorial**. Made by sculptor David Williams-Ellis and unveiled in 2018, the bronze figures commemorate the contribution fishing and fishing folk have made to the city.

Following our visit here we have the rest of the day to continue viewing the Tall Ships in harbour. Events today include the Crew Sports, Crew Parade and a Prize Giving Ceremony. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today we take the opportunity to explore the surrounding Aberdeenshire countryside and take a tour of Royal Deeside. We begin at **Castle Fraser**, one of the grandest of the Scottish baronial tower houses. Built between 1575 and 1636 by the 6th laird, Michael Fraser, Castle Fraser is the most elaborate Z-plan castle in Scotland. One of the castle's most evocative rooms is the strikingly simple Great Hall. The castle contains many Fraser family portraits, including one by Raeburn, and fine 18th- and 19th-century carpets, curtains and bed hangings, and even Charles Mackenzie Fraser's wooden leg! The estate contains a flight pond, mixed woodland and open farmland, with two waymarked walks giving magnificent views of the local hills. The historic walled garden features shrubs, flowers, wall-trained fruit and vegetables. There is also a shop selling exclusive gifts. We continue to Royal Deeside and **Balmoral Castle**. Built around 1854 for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert the image of the castle is recognised world-wide. Though relatively modern it is clearly in the style of a 'Scottish' castle. It is a private home of the Royal family and each autumn the family spend up to two months holidaying there. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning, we depart for Aberdeen's Esplanade and Beach, our vantage point for the Tall Ships **Parade of Sail** as they leave harbour and make their passage under full sail to the start of the next stage of the race, which will take them to Kristiansand in Norway. The ships will provide a thrilling spectacle as their young crews help to unfurl the sails and take up their positions for the start of the race. Once the ships have sailed and the tops of their masts disappear over the horizon we will begin our journey back to our original pick-up points. (B)

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

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed breakfast at the 4-star Mercure Aberdeen Caledonian
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
19 - 22 Jul		\$1,115	\$1,045
Single Supplement			\$315

# Lord of the Glens - Voyage Through the Heart of Scotland

7 DAYS from \$3,250

 DEPARTURE POINT: Inverness

This six-night aboard the Lord of the Glens sails from Oban to the Isle of Mull, featuring some of the remote and breathtakingly beautiful scenery of Scotland's west coast, and then through the Caledonian Canal to Inverness. Highlights include Loch Ness, Loch Oich and Loch Lochy and Thomas Telford's engineering masterpiece Neptune's Staircase, a series of eight interconnected locks that raises vessels from sea-level to the canal. In between our cruising, there is also a full programme of shore excursions including visits to the tranquil little island of Iona, colourful Tobermory on the Isle of Mull and the Glenfinnan Viaduct.

- Day 1** Travel under our own arrangement to Inverness then transfer by coach to Oban, where we embark the **MV Lord of the Glens**. Alternatively, make your own way to Oban. Later, we join the crew for a welcome drinks reception. (D)
- Day 2** Enjoy a walk up to **McCaigs Tower** for sweeping views over **Oban Bay**. In the afternoon we sail to **Craignure** on the **Isle of Mull** and visit 13th century **Duart Castle**. (FB)
- Day 3** We depart by coach and ferry for a visit to the **Isle of Iona** and then it's on to **Tobermory**. (FB)
- Day 4** We sail the sheltered waters of the fjord-like **Loch Linnhe** with spectacular views all around. On arrival at the village of Corpach at the entrance to the Caledonian Canal, we depart by

- train along part of the **West Highland Railway**, travelling over the **Glenfinnan Viaduct**. (FB)
- Day 5** The vessel ascends **Neptune's Staircase** and cruises along the **Caledonian Canal** and connecting lochs as far as **Fort Augustus**. (FB)
- Day 6** We descend the locks at Fort Augustus and sail out into famous **Loch Ness**, pausing for photos by the ruins of **Urquhart Castle**. On arrival in Inverness we enjoy an excursion to the National Trust of Scotland's Visitor Centre at **Culloden** and the **Clava Cairns**. (FB)
- Day 7** Transfer by coach to Inverness. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, FB: Full Board, D: Dinner



Lord of the Glens

SAVE UP TO **\$105** PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Six nights' accommodation in a lower, middle or upper deck twin en-suite cabin on a full board basis
- ▶ Shore excursions as described in the itinerary
- ▶ Return coach transfers from Inverness

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
Oban to Inverness		
17 Apr & 12 Oct		
Lower Deck	\$3,355	\$3,250
Middle Deck	\$4,195	\$4,090
Middle Deck Superior	\$4,895	\$4,790
Upper Deck	\$4,895	\$4,790
Single Supplement		from \$1,960

# Scenic Journeys of the Highlands and Islands

7 DAYS from \$2,690

 DEPARTURE POINT: Glasgow

The Highlands and Islands of Scotland provide such a wealth of scenic journeys that it can be a daunting prospect to work out how best to take them all in. This tour aims to provide the answer to this Caledonian conundrum with an itinerary that ticks off a whole host of visual gems. At the same time it provides a series of relaxing, undemanding journeys driving through Glen Coe, travelling by train along the West Highland Line, a round trip on the historic Jacobite steam train and cruise along Loch Linnhe, in the shadow of Ben Nevis.

- Day 1** Assembling at Glasgow Queen Street Station where our tour begins, we depart on a rail journey for **Fort William**, with views of mountains, lochs and glens. (D)
- Day 2** Today we drive down to Oban and take the ferry to **Mull** to visit **Duart Castle** and **Tobermory** before crossing by ferry to Morvern before returning to our hotel. (B, D)
- Day 3** After a look at the canal locks known as **Neptune's Staircase**, we cruise on **Loch Linnhe** and take a scenic drive through the magnificent mountain scenery of **Glen Coe**, an ancient volcanic caldera. (B, D)
- Day 4** A treat lies in store as we ride aboard the **Jacobite steam train** forging over the **Glenfinnan Viaduct** to **Mallaig**, following 'The Road to the Isles'. (B, D)
- Day 5** We cruise on **Loch Ness**, with views of the ruins of **Urquhart Castle**, and travel to the shores of the **Moray Firth** where we hope to spot the resident pod of dolphins. (B, D)
- Day 6** Using the scheduled diesel train service from Inverness, our route takes us through **Strath Bran** and the isolated little station at **Achnasheen**, on into **Strath Carron** to the head of Loch Carron, passing **Stromeferry**, the one-time terminus of the line, before we reach the current terminus at **Kyle of Lochalsh**. This afternoon, we visit the iconic **Eilean Donan Castle**. (B, D)
- Day 7** Board the **Cairngorm funicular railway** for sweeping views. Later, we'll catch the train from Aviemore to Glasgow, where the group will disperse or make onward connections. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Glen Coe

SAVE **\$105** PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Six nights' dinner, bed & breakfast: three nights in the Fort William area and three nights at the Carrbridge Hotel, Carrbridge (or similar)
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel, ferry crossings and standard class rail travel
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
15 - 21 Jun	\$2,795	\$2,690
7 - 13 Sep	\$2,795	\$2,690
Single Supplement		\$275

# Lord of the Glens - Secrets of the Highlands & Islands

8 DAYS from \$4,930

 DEPARTURE POINT: Inverness

This seven-night cruise also combines both fresh and saltwater cruising, as the Lord of the Glens sails through the Caledonian Canal from Inverness to the islands of Skye and Mull and the bustling harbour of Oban and onwards to the Isle of Skye, before concluding in Kyle of Lochalsh. Once again there is a full programme of shore excursions including visits to Armadale on the Isle of Skye, the little islands of Eigg and Iona, colourful Tobermory and the 13th century Duart Castle on the Isle of Mull; the romantic and much-photographed Eilean Donan Castle, the iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct, the Culloden Battlefield visitor centre and the prehistoric Clava Cairns.

- Day 1** Travel under our own arrangement to Inverness, where we embark the **MV Lord of the Glens**. Later, we join the crew for a welcome drinks reception. (D)
- Day 2** Enjoy an excursion to the National Trust of Scotland's Visitor Centre at **Culloden** and the **Clava Cairns**. Later we set sail on the Caledonian Canal built between 1803 and 1822 to connect with the four lochs of the **Great Glen**. En route we pass **Urquhart Castle** before arriving at **Fort Augustus**. (FB)
- Day 3** The vessel descends **Neptune's Staircase** before we arrive in **Corpach**. Later, we depart by train along part of the **West Highland Railway**, travelling over the **Glenfinnan Viaduct**. (FB)
- Day 4** We journey to **Oban** and upon arrival, we walk up to **McCaigs Tower**. (FB)
- Day 5** We sail to Craignure, pausing for photographs in front of **Duart Castle**. We head to the **Isle of Iona** and then it's on to **Tobermory**. (FB)
- Day 6** Visit the tiny island of **Eigg** and then the village of **Inverie** on Loch Nevis. (FB)
- Day 7** Sail across the **Sound of Sleat** to **Armadale** on the Isle of Skye. Here we visit the **Clan Donald Centre**, before we sail to Kyle of Lochalsh to visit **Eilean Donan Castle**. (FB)
- Day 8** Transfer by coach to Inverness. (B)

Inc. meals: FB: Full Board, D: Dinner



Urquhart Castle

SAVE UP TO **\$140** PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' accommodation in a lower, middle or upper deck twin en-suite cabin on a full board basis
- ▶ Shore excursions as described in the itinerary
- ▶ Return coach transfers from Inverness

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh		
19 May & 22 Sep		
Lower Deck	\$5,035	\$4,930
Middle Deck	\$5,875	\$5,735
Middle Deck Superior	\$6,715	\$6,575
Upper Deck	\$6,715	\$6,575
Single Supplement		from \$2,800

# Scenic Scottish Railways

4 DAYS from \$1,185

 DEPARTURE POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth

The north of Scotland is blessed with some wonderfully scenic railway lines. The challenge of building railways through difficult terrain was taken up by the great engineers of the Victorian age. Their legacy is in the sweeping curves and majestic viaducts of the single track lines which cross wild moors and lonely glens. Highlights on this short break include a visit to the much-photographed Eilean Donan Castle, a ride aboard the Jacobite steam train that takes us over the iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct and a visit to Boat of Garten on the Strathspey Line, which you may recognise from the BBC series, Monarch of the Glen.

- Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel by coach to Aviemore for a return trip on the **Strathspey Railway**. Our train of maroon-liveried coaches will be hauled by a lovingly restored steam locomotive as we travel to Boat of Garten and Broomhill, with the Cairngorm Mountains providing a scenic backdrop. We continue our journey by coach to our hotel. (D)
- Day 2** We transfer to **Inverness** and board the morning diesel train service to **Wick**. The line takes us along the shores of the **Cromarty** and **Dornoch Firths** and follows the spectacular coastline as far as **Helmsdale**, where it turns inland before reaching the terminus at **Wick**. We re-join our coach and return to our hotel by the more direct but equally scenic coastal route. (B, D)
- Day 3** We depart by diesel train from Inverness, this time heading for **Kyle of Lochalsh**, travelling over what is often considered to be the most scenic of all Scotland's railway lines. In the afternoon we explore the iconic 13th century castle of **Eilean Donan**, with its impossibly romantic setting on Loch Duich. (B, D)
- Day 4** Today we travel to Fort William, where we join 'The Jacobite' steam train and experience one of the most memorable and spectacular railway journeys in the world, crossing the famous **Glenfinnan Viaduct** as we steam on a return trip to **Mallaig**. After some free time and an opportunity for lunch (not included) in Mallaig, we return on the train to Fort William. We then return by coach to our original pick-up points. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Ardvreck Castle

SAVE **\$70** PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the Carrbridge Hotel, Carrbridge (or similar)
- ▶ Comfortable coach and standard class rail travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
7 - 10 May	\$1,325	\$1,255
27 - 30 Aug	\$1,395	\$1,325
24 - 27 Sep	\$1,365	\$1,295
15 - 18 Oct	\$1,255	\$1,185
Single Supplement		\$190

## Scotland's Extreme North West

4 DAYS from \$905 | LOW SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

 PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Inverness

The rugged and remote north-west coast of Scotland takes on a majestic character in the early spring and autumn months as Mother Nature lays on a spectacular display of beauty. The coastal views and landscapes are breathtaking and the warmth of our highland hotel is very welcoming at these times of year.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head north for **Kinlochberrie** on the tip of the north west coastline and our accommodation, which overlooks the fishing harbour and the open sea beyond. (D)

**Day 2** Today we travel south into **Assynt**, an extraordinary landscape of vast, undulating moorland studded with hundreds of freshwater lochans. We will spend some time in **Lochinver**, a large village with a busy harbour, set on the shores of Loch Inver with superb views inland to the famous mountain of **Suilven**. Though relatively small in Scottish terms at 2,389ft, Suilven presents a fearsome sight with its seemingly unconquerable summit, which we can expect to be flecked with snow. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning we will have a walk along the beach at **Oldshoremore**, one of the most beautiful in Scotland, before travelling up the single

track road and through spectacular scenery to **Durness**, where we will visit the beautiful old church graveyard of Balnakeil. We will also visit the wonderful chocolatier at **Cocoa Mountain** where you have the opportunity to buy the finest hot chocolate drink anywhere in the world (official!). We also visit the impressive **Smoo Cave** and travel by Loch Eribol and the old Norse settlement of **Tongue**. (B, D)

**Day 4** We begin our homeward journey, which takes us through more splendid scenery as we travel via **Laxford Bridge**, **Loch More**, **Loch Shin** and **Laigr**, crossing high moorland and secluded straths. We continue via **Bonar Bridge** and **Tain** and return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Smoo Cave

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 3-star Kinlochberrie Hotel
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
13 - 16 Mar	\$975	\$905
18 - 21 Mar	\$975	\$905
8 - 11 Apr	\$1,015	\$945
18 - 21 Apr	\$1,015	\$945
7 - 10 Oct	\$975	\$905
Single Supplement		\$170

NEW TOUR

## Autumn Tints of Dumfries and Galloway

4 DAYS from \$1,045 | TOUR MANAGER: Colin Crosbie | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

 PICK-UP POINTS: Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth, Kinross, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Glasgow

As the summer fades, autumn colours begin to blaze in high definition in the south-western corner of Scotland. As the warm yellows, rusty oranges and fiery reds consume the foliage we explore the region's most delightful gardens. Highlights of the tour include Dumfries House home to the Queen Elizabeth Walled Garden; Glenwhan Gardens, Logan Botanic and a visit to Brightwater tour manager Colin Crosbie's own garden of Dalswinton Mill.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head for **Dumfries House**. We are able to make the most of those interiors on our grand tour of the house, followed by tea and shortbread. We will also visit the **Queen Elizabeth Walled Garden**, which is one of the best examples of its kind in Scotland. Later, we visit the private garden of **Burnside**, a constantly changing 6 1/2 acre garden, home to a wide range of plants from trees to alpines, giving colour and variety all year. (D)

**Day 2** Today we visit **Glenwhan Gardens**, spread out over a windy hilltop with views of Luce Bay and the Mull of Galloway. We then continue to the world-famous **Logan Botanic Garden** beautifully laid out, particularly in the walled garden with its fine terraces and well-planned borders under an avenue of cabbage palms. The climate here is exceptionally mild and several different habitats provide conditions for a huge range of plants. (B, D)

**Day 3** After breakfast, we head for the private garden at **Millhall** before we head to the gardens of the **Threave Estate**. The gardens have been largely created by students at the School of Horticulture which started here in 1960. Our final visit today is **Corsock House**, where a large variety of acid-loving trees and shrubs which enhance the natural glades which run down from the loch to the ornamental water garden. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning we are privileged to see Colin Crosbie's own garden, **Dalswinton Mill**. As one would expect, this is very much a plantsman's garden, set around an 18th-century watermill with the Pennyland Burn running through it. The final stop on our tour are the gardens at **Drumlanrig Castle**. Following our visit we return to our original departure points. (B)

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



Drumlanrig Castle

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed breakfast at the 3-star Holiday Inn Dumfries
- ▶ 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
26 - 29 Oct	\$1,115	\$1,045
<b>NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT</b>		

## Scotland's Northern Edge featuring the North Coast 500

5 DAYS from \$1,570 | LOW SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

 PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth, Inverness

On the northern edge of Scotland, where ancient rock meets restless sea, the views are among the most spectacular to be found in the British Isles. Dunnet Head in particular, the most northerly point on the mainland, offers extensive sea views, as do the cliffs at Duncansby Head. Following much of the North Coast 500, one of the world's most scenic road trips, along this iconic route you can experience an array of stunning beaches, historic castles the breath-taking landscapes of the wild Northern Highlands. Highlights of the tour include the Castle of Mey, the impressive Smoo Cave and the NW Highlands Geo Park.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head to our hotel in Thurso. (D)

**Day 2** We visit **Duncansby Head**, which offers stunning views from the cliff top. After a brief stop at **John O' Groats**, the landmark at the "end of the road", we continue to the **Castle of Mey**, former holiday home of the late Queen Mother, and **Dunnet Head**, which boasts some of the most extensive views in northern Scotland. (B, D)

**Day 3** We travel to **Tongue**, where we have some free time for lunch before we visit the impressive **Smoo Cave** then continue to our hotel in Kinlochberrie. (B, D)

**Day 4** We travel to **Knockan Crag**, an open air visitor centre within the **NW Highlands Geo Park** with information panels describing the

history and geology of the local landscape, which also enjoys stunning views across the Sutherland hills. We continue with a look around the ruins of **Ardreck Castle** and then on to **Lochinver** for some free time and an opportunity for lunch (not included). After a visit to **Highland Stoneware**, which produces beautiful hand-painted pottery, we continue over the highly scenic road via **Drumbeg** and **Eddrachillis Bay** back to Kinlochberrie. (B, D)

**Day 5** We journey home today, travelling via **Laxford Bridge**, **Loch More**, **Loch Shin**, **Laigr**, **Bonar Bridge** and finally **Tain**. We return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Ardreck Castle

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES


- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast: two nights at the Station Hotel, Thurso (or similar) and two nights at the 3-star Kinlochberrie Hotel
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
6 - 10 May	\$1,675	\$1,570
9 - 13 Jun	\$1,675	\$1,570
8 - 12 Sep	\$1,675	\$1,570
Single Supplement		\$170

## Autumn Tints of Arran

4 DAYS from \$1,325

 PICK-UP POINTS: Aberdeen, Stonehaven, Forfar, Dundee, Perth, Kinross, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Glasgow

Often described as "Scotland in Miniature", Arran has a blend of Highland and Island scenery with granite peaks and deep glens to the north of the island, contrasting with its rolling and lush farmlands to the south. Only 56 miles around its coastline, the small villages are compared to 'jewels on a necklace' strung out like pearls around the island. We will visit Whiting Bay, Lamlash, Brodick, the pretty village of Corrie under the shadow of Goat Fell and Sannox before passing the '12 Apostles' at Lochranza.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head for Ardrossan in time to catch the afternoon ferry to **Brodick**. On arrival we transfer to our hotel in **Blackwaterfoot**. (D)

**Day 2** Today following breakfast we have a **tour of the island of Arran**. From Blackwaterfoot we will visit **Whiting Bay**, **Lamlash**, **Brodick** - the capital of Arran; **Corrie** and **Sannox** under the shadow of Goat Fell and other mountains, and then down the west coast to **Catcol** and **Pirnmill** with its '12 Apostles'. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning we have included a visit to the **Gardens of Brodick Castle** which occupies a splendid position, well protected from westerly winds and looking east across the Firth of Clyde. The present garden dates from 1932 when

the Duchess of Montrose started an ambitious woodland garden with a collection of rhododendrons. From the castle, paths wind downhill towards the seashore, and in a shady place there is a fernery and a delightful Bavarian summer house embellished with rustic work and lovely inlaid panels of pinecones. A walled garden, dating from 1710, has been restored and mixed borders on three sides retain the gardener's interest throughout the year. (B, D)

**Day 4** We will travel to the ferry port in time for the crossing to **Ardrossan**, where we expect to arrive early afternoon. Thereafter we will return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Brodick Castle

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the Kinloch Hotel, Blackwaterfoot
- ▶ Comfortable coach and all ferry crossings
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
15 - 18 Oct	\$1,395	\$1,325
Single Supplement		\$350

NEW TOUR



Inverewe gardens

## Gardens of Wester Ross

5 DAYS from \$1,500 | TOUR MANAGER: David Hurrion

 PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth

Join us on our tour which strings together some of the best gardens in one of the most beautiful and scenic parts of the country.

An undoubted highlight of our tour will be our visit to Attadale Gardens, a true gem of a garden which was voted RHS Partner Garden of the Year for Scotland in 2023. Here we will have an exclusive private visit and will enjoy a light lunch in the dining room of the main house, which is not normally open to the public.

Other visits include a three acre private garden on the outskirts of Inverness, a trip to Skye where we enjoy the award-winning formal garden of Dunvegan Castle and Inverewe, unquestionably one of the most outstanding gardens in the country – this tour is a real treasure trove of treats for anyone who enjoys beautiful gardens and wonderful scenery.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel northwards, stopping for lunch in Pitlochry (*not included*). We continue with a visit to the private garden of the **Oldtown of Leys**. Established in 2003, on the outskirts of Inverness, this large garden of three acres has year-round interest. Spring rhododendrons and azaleas, summer herbaceous plantings, autumn trees and shrubs and winter appeal from the conifers, evergreens and structures. Features include a rockery, ponds, musical instruments, a stumpery

and a new area of late summer colour. Later we will continue to our accommodation in Gairloch, pausing on the way for a brief visit to the spectacular **Corrieshalloch Gorge**. We are based at The Old Inn, a historic hotel sitting on the shores of Loch Gairloch, close to the harbour. (*D*)

**Day 2** After breakfast we have a long but most rewarding day as we drive across the north of Scotland to visit **Dundonnell House Garden**. The house was completed in 1769 by the



Corrieshalloch Gorge

Mackenzies of Dundonnell, who lived in it until the 1940s. Since then it has had a number of owners, including the late Alan Roger – rumoured to be in M15, but known locally simply as a plantsman and bonsai expert. The current owner has added delightful new borders for year-round colour, centred on an enormous and ancient yew tree over 300 years old. The main part of the garden lies within very old walls and is divided into distinctive compartments, adding greatly to the interest here; other highlights include riverside walks in the fine



Attadale Gardens

arboretum and a restored Victorian glasshouse. Our second visit of the day is to **Inverewe gardens**, unquestionably one of the most outstanding gardens in the country. The northern road into Inverewe is spectacular – towering mountains and breathtaking vistas – and the view from above Gruinard Bay has to be seen to be believed. Famous gardens do not always live up to their reputations but it would be hard to imagine anyone failing to be excited by Inverewe, when at this time of year it will be at its most colourful. The balmy Gulf Stream Drift Climate promotes luxuriant growth and today it is a jungle of mature exotic trees and shrubs laced with winding walks, rising and falling, giving sudden glimpses of shimmering water through the foliage. (*B, D*)

**Day 3** Today we travel south through the spectacular scenery of **Torriford** and cross the graceful arching bridge at Kyle of Lochalsh to the **Isle of Skye**. Here we visit the award-winning formal gardens at **Dunvegan Castle**, which began life in the 18th century. In stark contrast to the barren moorland and mountains which dominate Skye's landscape, the castle's Water Garden, Rose Garden, Walled Garden and woodland walks provide a hidden oasis for an eclectic mix of flowers, exotic plants, specimen trees and shimmering pools fed by waterfalls and streams flowing down to the sea. In the afternoon we take the ferry (*as foot passengers*) from Sconser to **Raasay**, the 'Roe Isle'. A pleasant ten-minute walk takes us to the **Raasay Walled Garden**. This community-owned project has breathed new life into the old walled garden

attached to Raasay House, with a productive fruit and vegetable garden as well as a rose garden and herbaceous borders. We then return by ferry to Skye and over the bridge to the mainland and arrive back at the hotel in time for dinner, after a long but most rewarding day. (*B, D*)

**Day 4** After breakfast we will travel south again, this time via Achnasheen and Achnashellach Forest, to **Attadale Gardens**. Voted RHS Partner Garden of the Year for Scotland in 2023, Attadale is a gem of a garden on the shores of Loch Carron, where the Gulf Stream influenced micro-climate nurtures 20 acres of outstanding water gardens, old rhododendrons, unusual trees and a fern collection in a geodesic dome. There is also a sunken fern garden developed on the site of an early 19th-century drain, a waterfall into a pool with dwarf rhododendrons, a sunken garden, a peace garden and a kitchen garden. Other features include a conservatory, Japanese garden, sculpture collection and giant sundial. On our **exclusive private visit** we will be welcomed and personally guided round the garden by a member of the family and the gardening staff, followed by a light lunch served in the dining room of the main house, which is not normally open to the public. We return to Gairloch, where there will be an opportunity to visit the **Gairloch Museum**, housed (*though you wouldn't know it!*) in a former nuclear bunker. Displays include the original lens from Rubh Re lighthouse, a replica croft house showing how people used to live and an interactive gallery about our magnificent natural world, midges and all! (*B, L, D*)

**Day 5** This morning after breakfast we head for home but we have one more treat in store. After a but very scenic journey via Invergarry and Forth William, we reach the **Kinlochlaich Garden and Plant Centre** in Appin. Since it was begun in 1975, it has evolved to become one of the leading Garden Plant Centres in Scotland with some wonderful plants for sale, and the perfect souvenir of your holiday. We then return via Glencoe to our original departure points. (*B*)

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

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER DAVID HURRION

Join David as he discovers the wonderful gardens of this picturesque corner of Scotland.



SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed and full breakfast at the Old Inn, Gairloch
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist David Hurrion as tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
30 May - 3 Jun		\$1,605	\$1,500
Single Supplement			\$275



Logan Botanic Garden

## Gardens of Dumfries and Galloway

4 DAYS from \$1,255 | TOUR MANAGER: Colin Crosbie\*

PICK-UP POINTS: Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth, Kinross, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Glasgow

In the south-western corner of Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway is home to some of the country's most attractive gardens. The artistic highlight of our tour is undoubtedly Dumfries House, actually in Ayrshire and which King Charles helped to save. One of the Adam Brothers' finest achievements, the stunning interiors showcase a unique collection of Chippendale furniture, while the walled garden is one of the most exciting new garden developments in all of Scotland.

We see something rather different at Broughton House – an artist's garden at the restored former home of 'Glasgow Boy' E. A. Hornel, which shows the influence of his time in Japan and is always full of colour. Further highlights include Drumlanrig Castle, one of the most important Renaissance buildings in Scotland, and Crawick Multiverse, a gem hidden among the rolling hills of Dumfriesshire.

Former Head Curator of RHS Garden Wisley Colin Crosbie will lead our July and September departures.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head for **Dumfries House**, whose stunning interiors are home to a world class collection of furniture, and explore the **Queen Elizabeth Walled Garden**, one of the best examples of its kind in Scotland. (D)

**Day 2** We begin with a visit to the lavishly planted **Glenwhan Garden**, with marvellous views over Luce Bay. At its heart is an extensive pool, divided by a grassy causeway and fed by a tumbling stream. This afternoon we explore the world-famous **Logan Botanic Gardens**. The gardens are beautifully laid out, particularly in the walled garden with its fine terraces and well-planned borders under an avenue of cabbage palms. The climate here is exceptionally mild and several different habitats provide conditions for a huge range of plants. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning sees us at the former artist's studio of **Broughton House**, whose compact but colourful garden displays Japanese influences. Next we spend some more time in **Kirkcudbright**, a haven for artists, as paid

testament to by its abundance of art galleries. We visit one such gallery and browse the work of local artists. Following this we visit the wonderful plantsman's nursery of **Ellenbank**. This wonderful nursery is full of cottage garden perennials such as violas, clematis and penstemons. Our last visit of the day will be to the gardens of the **Threave Estate**, whose extensive gardens have been largely created by students at the School of Horticulture which started here in 1960. (B, D)

**Day 4** Art and horticulture are beautifully combined at **Drumlanrig Castle**. Surrounded by the 120,000 acre Queensberry Estate, Country Park and grand Victorian gardens, Drumlanrig Castle was completed in 1691 by William Douglas, 1st Duke of Queensberry and is one of the first and most important Renaissance buildings in the grand manner in Scotland. Our final visit is to the **Crawick Multiverse**, a hidden gem nestled among rolling hills. We return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Dumfries House



Drumlanrig Castle

**SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\***

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the 4-star Cairndale Hotel
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager (\*Colin Crosbie in July and September)

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
1 - 4 Jun		\$1,325	\$1,255
20 - 23 Jul*		\$1,325	\$1,255
14 - 17 Sep*		\$1,325	\$1,255
Single Supplement			\$275



Castle Kennedy - Rhododendrons

## The Best Rhododendron Gardens in the World?

4 DAYS from \$1,255 | LOW SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

PICK-UP POINTS: Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth, Kinross, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Glasgow

Visit the gardens of Galloway in May and one plant species catches the eye ahead of all others – the Rhododendron. Though of course native to eastern Asia and the Himalayas, rhododendrons seem to thrive particularly well in the mild climate of south-western Scotland. With over 1,000 species to choose from they have long attracted gardeners for their extravagant show of blossom in the spring, in myriad shades of red, pink and purple. We will see some magnificent specimens as we tour the gardens specially selected for their rhododendron displays, along with azaleas, magnolias, pieris and other flowering shrubs.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head for the private garden at **Millhall**. This impressive five-acre garden has a large collection of mature shrubs, including over 200 rhododendron species which should be in full bloom. (D)

**Day 2** Today we visit **Glenwhan Gardens**, spread out over a windy hilltop with marvellous views of Luce Bay and the Mull of Galloway. At its heart is an extensive pool, divided by a grassy causeway and fed by a tumbling stream. The slopes above are lavishly planted with trees and shrubs and at this time of year we can expect the rhododendrons to be at their peak. The garden is also dotted with interesting sculptures and statuary – look out for the fearsome boar next to a frothy azalea! In the afternoon we travel a short distance to the spectacular garden at **Castle Kennedy**. This is a vast and historic piece of landscaping with the garden lying between two castles - the 15th century Castle Kennedy and the 19th century Lochinch Castle. (B, D)

**Day 3** We visit the world-famous **Logan Botanic Gardens**. The garden was started by the McDougall family who lived here for 800 years, and since 1969 it has been in the care of the Royal

Botanic Garden at Edinburgh. The garden is beautifully laid out, particularly in the walled garden with its fine terraces and well planned borders under an avenue of cabbage palms. Next door are the gardens of **Logan House** which feature seven United Kingdom and fourteen Scottish champion trees. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today we visit gardens of the **Threave Estate**. The gardens have been largely created by students at the School of Horticulture and now feature a mature woodland of beech, conifers and oaks which is the backdrop for a variety of shrub roses, sweeping mixed borders, dwarf heathers, peat and rock gardens, a walled kitchen garden and superbly maintained glasshouses. Later, we visit the gardens at **Corsock House**, where a large variety of acid-loving trees and shrubs, including many varieties of rhododendron, enhance the natural glades which run down from the loch to the ornamental water garden. We later return to our pick-up points. (B)

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



Castle Kennedy



Glenwhan

**SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\***

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed, and breakfast at the 3-star Fernhill Hotel, Portpatrick
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
7 - 10 May		\$1,325	\$1,255
Single Supplement			\$130

NEW TOUR



Scone Palace



Dunrobin Castle

## Gardens of Perthshire and the Scone Palace Fair

4 DAYS from \$1,255 | LOW SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth

Join us as we visit some of the most notable gardens in Perthshire from the formal gardens of Drummond Castle to the oriental inspired Japanese Garden at Cowden, near Dollar. Each garden brings a sense of tranquillity set in some of the most picturesque countryside in Scotland. The highlight of our tour is a day spent at the marvellous Scone Palace Garden Fair, where we can not only enjoy some informative talks from guest speakers as well as TV presenter and Scone Palace's very own Brian Cunningham we can enjoy a wander through the vast gardens and the magnificent palace itself.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head for our first visit to **Branklyn Garden**, a haven of peace and colour on the outskirts of Perth. Begun in 1922, on a south-facing slope with acid soil, the garden represents a wonderful collection of woodland plants along the winding paths. (D)

**Day 2** We depart this morning for a full day at the **Scone Palace Garden Fair**. This annual event has established itself as one of the most popular fixtures in the Scottish gardening calendar, with a host of exhibitors. In the Speakers Tent there will be a series of talks on gardening topics, including a Question and Answer session with the Beechgrove Garden team. Talking of which, Beechgrove presenter and Scone Palace **Head Gardener Brian Cunningham** hopes to give us a welcome and introduction to the wonderful woodland gardens, which you are free to explore at leisure. Look out for some of the magnificent specimens of trees that plant hunter David Douglas brought back from North America, one species of which bears his name to this day. In the afternoon be sure to join **Viscount Stormont**, the heir to Scone, on one of the tours of the family's private garden taking place, which is usually closed to the public. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today we will visit the splendid formal gardens of **Drummond Castle**. They were first laid out in the early 17th century and re-designed and terraced in the early 19th century. The gardens we see today were replanted during the 1950s preserving such features as the ancient yew hedges and the copper beech trees planted by Queen Victoria to commemorate her visit in 1842. The garden was principally the work of Lewis Kennedy of Vineyard Nursery in Hammersmith, who supplied plants to many of Britain's finest gardens. We continue to **Cluny House Gardens**, near Aberfeldy. Wandering through this wonderful wild woodland garden we will discover rare and exotic plants from around the world. The gardens feature trees and shrubs from America, New Zealand, Japan, China and Tibet, creating the unique atmosphere of a Himalayan woodland paradise. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning, we depart for our final visit to the **Japanese Garden**, at Cowden, near Dollar. In the early 20th century Scottish adventurer Ella Christie returned from a trip to Japan and was inspired to build her very own Japanese Garden. With the assistance of Taki Handa they created the seven acre site within the grounds of Cowden Castle. We later continue to our original pick-up points. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Drummond Castle



Japanese Gardens of Cowden

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 3-star Pitlochry Hydro Hotel
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
29 May - 1 Jun		\$1,325	\$1,255
Single Supplement			\$170

## Castles and Palaces of the Highlands

4 DAYS from \$1,185

PICK-UP POINTS: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kinross, Perth

This tour takes us through some of the most stunning and dramatic landscapes of Scotland. We head north to the village of Blair Atholl, where we find Blair Castle nestled in the Perthshire countryside. The castle is the ancestral home to Clan Murray and the historical seat of the Dukes of Atholl. We then skirt around the western edge of the Cairngorms National Park to our hotel in Carrbridge. From here we visit Cawdor Castle, immortalised in William Shakespeare's Macbeth as the scene of Duncan's murder. Another highlight will be our trip to the chateau-style Dunrobin Castle with its magnificent example of a 19th century garden laid out on terraces descending to the sea. Our final visit is to Scone Palace, which has been the seat of parliaments as well as the crowning place of the Kings of Scots.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel northwards to the village of Blair Atholl at the gateway to the Cairngorms National Park. Nestled in the hills and surrounded by tranquil countryside, **Blair Castle** is home to some of the finest views in Scotland. Throughout the ages the castle has been transformed from its cold and austere beginnings in the Middle Ages to a delightful Georgian mansion and then to a Baronial Victorian castle. Each of these influences can still be seen in the Castle as it appears today. (D)

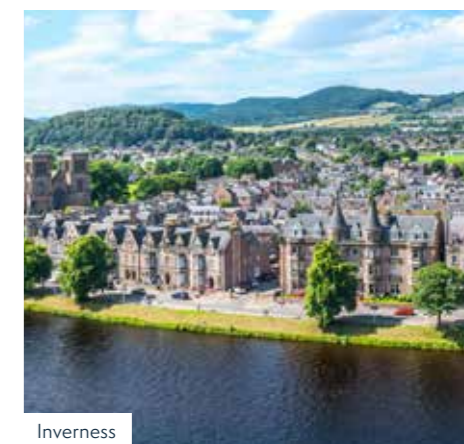
**Day 2** This morning we head into the centre of **Inverness**, the capital of the Highlands where we enjoy some free time. This afternoon we head to **Cawdor Castle**, near Nairn. William Shakespeare immortalised Cawdor in Macbeth as the scene of Duncan's murder, however, both the castle and its history are colourful enough without the aid of myth. A turreted 14th century tower, protected on one side by a gully and on the other by a dry moat, rises majestically from the woods of the Nairn Valley. The magnificent gardens include vast herbaceous borders, a rose garden, a peony walk and a kitchen garden - there is also a fascinating holly maze. (B, D)

**Day 3** After breakfast we travel north and visit **Dunrobin Castle** - the chateau-style ancestral home of the Dukes of Sutherland. The

Castle is a wonderful early 19th-century fantasy Castle with a touch of the Loire and a dash of Bavaria. Below the castle is a magnificent example of a formal nineteenth century garden. The gardens are laid out on terraces which descend to the sea. We have a full day to explore all the highlights of the estate as well as time to enjoy a display of falconry which is included here, offering some excellent photo opportunities of superb birds of prey. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning we depart the Highlands, returning south to **Scone Palace**, perched above the River Tay in Perthshire. Its enviable location overlooks the routes northwards to the Highlands and eastwards through Strathmore to the coast. The Grampian Mountains make a dramatic backdrop and across the river you can gaze upon the city of Perth. Scone Palace throughout its history has been the seat of parliaments as well as the crowning place of the Kings of Scots including both Macbeth and Robert the Bruce. Here we can spend time in the gardens as well as exploring the palace that is home to a fine collection of antiques, painting and extraordinary artefacts. We later continue to our original departure points. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Inverness



Cawdor Castle

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the Carrbridge Hotel, Carrbridge (or similar)
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
20 - 23 Jul		\$1,255	\$1,185
Single Supplement			\$210

NEW TOUR



Lindisfarne Castle

## Highlights of Northumberland

5 DAYS from \$1,570 | TOUR MANAGER: Alan Appleton

 DEPARTURE POINT: London Kings Cross

A visit to the low-lying coast and wide-open spaces of Northumberland is always a treat but when it includes a host of historic houses, castles and Roman ruins the pleasure is magnified greatly. Perhaps the most impressive of these is Bamburgh Castle, which sprawls over a rocky plateau on the coast, close to the Farne Islands.

Further highlights include a trip to the holy island of Lindisfarne and visits to both the castle and priory; Belsay Hall, built in 19th century Greek revival style from stone carved from its own quarry which was later transformed into a unique garden; and Wallington House, which dates back to 1688 and also boasts a fine garden. Then there is Alnwick Castle, which has been described as the 'Windsor of the North' and is the second largest inhabited castle in England. We will spend some time in the castle and in the neighbouring garden. Not to be missed is one of Britain's most significant Roman sites - Hadrian's Wall - as well as one of the best-preserved Roman cavalry forts - Chester's Fort.



Alnwick Castle Garden



Hadrian's Wall



Wallington House

**Day 1** We depart from London Kings Cross by train to **Newcastle**. On arrival, we join our coach and travel to our first visit, the house and gardens of **Belsay Hall**, a classical brown stone mansion, built in the 19th Century in Greek revival style to the design of its owner, Sir Charles Monck. Inspired by a honeymoon trip to Athens, the unfurnished Pillar Hall is at the centre of the house, with closely spaced Ionic columns and a beautifully light atrium. Enjoying spectacular views of the magnolia terrace, the family bedrooms retain their original fireplace grates and floral wallpaper from the 1800s. The hall was built from rock carved from Belsay's very own quarry, which was later transformed into a dramatic garden - creepers twist up sheer rockfaces while rare trees grow in the meadows in the ravines. *[D]*

**Day 2** Following breakfast, we travel north along the dramatic Northumberland coast to **Bamburgh Castle**, an impressive fortress that has stood guard here for over 1400 years. Sprawling over nine acres of land on its rocky plateau, Bamburgh is one of the largest inhabited castles in the country. The 150 feet high escarpment and natural harbour made Bamburgh the obvious choice for the sixth century Kings of Northumbria to build their royal capital, Din Guaydri. Throughout its colourful history Bamburgh has been home to a succession of kings from Henry IV to James I and it was the first castle in the world to fall to gunpowder in the War of the Roses. A few miles along the coast lies the Holy Island of **Lindisfarne**, which we will visit in the afternoon, as the island is accessed by a causeway that is covered at high tide. Perched atop a rocky crag, the 16th century **Lindisfarne Castle** presents an exciting and alluring aspect. Originally a

Tudor fort, it was converted into a private house in 1903 by the young Edwin Lutyens. The small rooms are full of intimate decoration and design, with windows looking down upon the charming walled garden planned by Gertrude Jekyll. After the castle, we will also visit **Lindisfarne Priory**. The famous Benedictine Priory built during the late 11th century was one of the most important centres of early Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England. *[B, D]*

**Day 3** After breakfast we depart for a full day at **Alnwick Castle and Gardens**, the historic home of the Duke of Northumberland, which has been described as the Windsor of the North and is the second largest inhabited castle in England. It has been in the possession of the Percy family since 1309 and the castle houses an exquisite collection of art treasures, including the finest examples of Italian paintings in the north of England. Lunch *(not included)* is available in the adjoining Alnwick Garden, accessed by a pleasant walk through the grounds. This unique garden project was inspired by the Duchess of Northumberland and has established itself as one of the most notable gardens in England. *[B, D]*

**Day 4** Today is spent discovering the Roman heritage of the area. We begin at **Hadrian's wall** built as a fortification across northern Britain some 2,000 years ago before heading **Chester's Fort**, the most complete Roman cavalry fort in Britain where you can wander through the well-preserved baths, steam rooms and officers' quarters. *[B, D]*

**Day 5** After breakfast we check out of the hotel and travel into the Northumbrian

countryside to visit **Wallington House**. Dating back to 1688 Wallington House was home to many generations of the Blackett and Trevelyn families, who all have left their legacy behind. The house is set in magnificent grounds with lawns, lakes and woodlands, and a stroll here will be the perfect finale to our short break. We then return to Newcastle for our afternoon train journey back to London Kings Cross. *[B]*

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

Please note: The order of the itinerary may change due to Lindisfarne tides.

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed breakfast at the 4-star Maldron Hotel, Newcastle
- ▶ Return standard class rail travel between London and Newcastle *(regional rail connections and upgrades can also be arranged at a supplement; \$100pp discount for no rail travel)*
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of local expert Alan Appleton as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
7 - 11 Jun		\$1,675	\$1,570
14 - 18 Sep		\$1,675	\$1,570
Single Supplement			\$275



# Gardens of Jersey

5 DAYS from \$2,040

Situated within touching distance of France, the island of Jersey is blessed with wonderfully mild and sunny weather and is home to some splendid gardens which make the most of this favourable climate to produce stunning displays, not to mention the profusion of wildflowers that thrive in the lush green meadows. Creux Baillet Cottage Garden is set in a tranquil valley and packed full of unusual plants and elegant features. At the Domain des Vaux, fine trees and shrubs are set around a traditional Jersey farmhouse and at Les Aix we find nut and camellia trees, and borders with old English roses. We also visit the excellent Samarès Botanical Gardens and the Eric Young Orchid Foundation.

**Day 1** Upon arrival our local guide will host a pre-dinner welcome meeting to introduce us to this wonderful island. (D)

Three private gardens await this morning, starting **Day 2** with **Domain des Vaux**, whose attractive gardens and woodland are set around a traditional Jersey farmhouse. We continue to **Les Aix** with its borders of old English roses and on to **Creux Baillet**, where we will meet the enthusiastic owner of this, one of the most established gardens on the island, filled with many rare and unusual plants. (B, D)

Today is free for us to explore all that **Jersey** has to offer. Alternatively, join our optional **Day 3** excursion to neighbouring **Guernsey**, which includes a guided tour of historic **Sausmarez Manor**

followed by time to explore its lush sub-tropical gardens. (B, D)

This morning we visit the privately owned **Samarès Botanic Gardens**, a development of **Day 4** gardens created in the 1920s by Sir James Knott. After some free time in Gorey, we head to the **Eric Young Orchid Foundation** which has an outstanding collection of orchids, followed by **Ransoms Garden Centre**, where we enjoy a cream tea and a chance to pick up some souvenirs. (B, CT, D)

After breakfast our tour concludes. (B)

**Day 5** **Inc. meals:** B: Breakfast, CT: Cream Tea, D: Dinner



Mont Orgueil

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the Pomme d'Or Hotel, St Helier
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
14 - 18 May	\$2,145	\$2,040
3 - 7 Sep	\$2,285	\$2,180
Single Supplement		\$415

# Somerset's Secret Gardens

4 DAYS from \$1,155

PICK-UP POINTS: London, Reading, Swindon, Bristol

One of England's most scenic counties is Somerset, whose lush green pastures, orchards and little villages provide a wonderful backdrop to a most colourful and varied collection of private gardens. Highlights include **Watcombe Garden**, an Edwardian style garden, **Batcombe House**, an outstanding plantswoman's garden, the **Walled Gardens of Cannington** and **Bradon Farm**, a classic formal garden.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel to the privately-owned **Watcombe Garden**. A 3/4 acre garden which was created between 1937 and 1975, in an Edwardian style of formal and informal planting. (D)

**Day 2** Today we visit the privately-owned garden at **Batcombe House** near Shepton Mallet. This is a plantswoman's and designer's garden. We then visit the beautiful cathedral city of **Wells** for some free time before continuing to the garden at **Stoberry Garden**, which provides a stunning combination of vistas accented with wildlife ponds, water features and sculpture. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today with a visit to **Bradon Farm**, a classic formal garden demonstrating the effective use of structure, featuring a parterre, a knot garden, a pleached lime walk, a formal pond, herbaceous borders and an orchard. We continue our day with a visit to **Iford Manor**, near Bradford on Avon. This romantic award-winning Italian garden designed by

Harold Peto contains a formal garden on old terraces embellished with his collection of classical statuary and architectural fragments, which we will discover during our visit. (B, D)

**Day 4** We enjoy a scenic drive through the **Quantock Hills** on the way to our final visit, the **Walled Gardens of Cannington**. Classic and contemporary features include a hot herbaceous border, a blue garden, a sub-tropical walk and a Victorian style fernery. There is also a botanical glasshouse where tropical plants can be seen. Following this we continue to our original departure points. (B)

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



Quantock Hills

SAVE \$50 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the Walnut Tree Hotel, North Petherton
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
5 - 8 Jul	\$1,225	\$1,155
Single Supplement		\$275

# The Gardens of Kent and Sussex

4 DAYS from \$1,430

PICK-UP POINTS: London, Gatwick

If there's one tour that epitomises the joy of strolling around a perfect English country garden, it is this one – with one shining example after another to be savoured and enjoyed. Even if you have visited some of these properties before, such is their allure that you can return again, just as you would re-read your favourite novel. Highlights include **Great Comp** filled with rare and beautiful shrubs, **Lullingstone Castle**, **Nymans Garden** offering outstanding plants in a theatrical setting, the **Sussex Prairie Garden** and **Sissinghurst**, surely the most-copied flower garden in the world,

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head to **Great Comp Garden**, home to rare shrubs, perennials and hardy plants. We continue to **Lullingstone Castle**, with its unique World Garden of Plants. (D)

**Day 2** Today, we set off for **Sussex Prairie Garden** at Henfield. Surrounded by mature oak trees, this eight-acre garden consists of a series of interlocking arcs of large, planted borders in a naturalistic style, reminiscent of the work of the great Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf. We continue to **Nymans Garden**, an outstanding plant collection in an inspirational setting. This theatrical garden design, created by the Messel family, is one of the finest gardens in Sussex. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning, we are privileged to have an 'early bird' visit to the manicured gardens of

**Sissinghurst**. This famous garden was created by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson from 1930 onwards and became the most admired English Garden of its time. We continue to another classic English Country Garden, namely Christopher Lloyd's **Great Dixter**. (B, D)

**Day 4** Our first visit is to **Scotney Castle**, which boasts a picturesque garden and a 14th century moated castle. We conclude in the distinguished surroundings of **RHS Garden Wisley**. Lunch and a guided tour are included here, rounding off our tour in style. We return to our original pick-up points. (B, L)

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



Lullingstone Castle

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 4-star Donnington Manor Hotel, Sevenoaks
- ▶ One lunch
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
20 - 23 Jun	\$1,535	\$1,430
15 - 18 Aug	\$1,535	\$1,430
Single Supplement		\$275

# Gardens of Rutland, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire

4 DAYS from \$1,185

PICK-UP POINTS: London, Luton, Milton Keynes

The late Geoff Hamilton is remembered as a long-serving presenter of the BBC's **Gardeners' World**, often broadcasting from his garden at **Barnsdale**, which for many will be the highlight of this East Midlands experience. But there are many other gems to be enjoyed here, such as **Belton House**, often described as the perfect English country estate, and the 400-year old **Easton Walled Garden**. We also have visits to **Stowe Landscape Gardens**, one of 'Capability' Brown's most notable works, and the extensive **Coton Manor Gardens**. Aside from gardens we also enjoy a relaxing cruise on **Rutland Water**.

**Day 1** We depart from our pick-up points and head to **Stowe Landscape Garden**, where Lancelot 'Capability' Brown joined the gardening staff as Head Gardener in 1741. Over the next few years Brown created one of the finest Georgian landscaped gardens, comprising valleys and vistas, narrow lakes and rivers. (D)

**Day 2** Today, we begin with **Barnsdale Gardens**, near Oakham. These gardens were designed and made famous by Geoff Hamilton, who presented BBC **Gardeners' World** from 1979 until his death in 1996. Following our visit here we transfer to **Rutland Water**, England's largest reservoir by surface area, where we will enjoy an hour-long cruise. We conclude today with a visit to a private garden, the **Old Vicarage** at Burley. (B, D)

**Day 3** Our first visit is to **Belton House**, often cited as the perfect example of an English country house estate. Later we visit **Easton Walled Gardens**, since 2001 the 12 acres of forgotten gardens have undergone extensive renovation and today the 16th century garden with its Victorian embellishments can be enjoyed once again. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today we will call in at the **King Richard III Visitor Centre**, which tells the remarkable story of the amazing evidence gathering that led to the discovery of the long-lost remains of Richard III under a car park. We break our journey back to London with a visit to **Coton Manor Gardens**. We then continue our journey back to our original departure points. (B)

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



Barnsdale ©Steve Hamilton

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the 4-star Holiday Inn, Leicester
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
30 May - 2 Jun	\$1,255	\$1,185
Single Supplement		\$380



Laugharne

## Gardens of South and West Wales

5 DAYS from \$1,710 | TOUR MANAGER: Tony Russell

PICK-UP POINTS: London, Reading, Swindon, Bristol

Tucked away in the rolling countryside of Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire are some fine parks and gardens, both large and small; ancient and modern. The centrepiece of our tour is the National Botanic Garden of Wales, the first garden of its type to be created in the United Kingdom for 200 years. This spectacular re-interpretation of the historical garden blends the careful restoration of the historic, double-walled garden with Norman Foster's Great Greenhouse, the largest single span glasshouse in the world, where mere panes of glass separate the familiar green hills of Wales from a panoramic sweep of warm, Mediterranean scenery. By contrast Aberglasney is a superb 16th/17th century garden, which was discovered after 50 years of neglect and has been restored to produce a garden with immense appeal. We visit superb woodland gardens at Upton and Picton Castle along with some interesting private gardens, including Dyffryn Fernant, built from scratch.

**Day 1** We depart from our pick-up points and travel to Cardiff, near which lies the magnificent **Dyffryn Botanic Gardens**, a Grade 1 listed Edwardian garden designed by landscape architect Thomas Mawson, displaying a series of garden 'rooms' enclosed within clipped Yew hedges. Our tour manager **Tony Russell** will join us here and conduct a guided tour of the garden. We continue our journey to Pembrokeshire and our accommodation at the **Beggars Reach Hotel**, Burton. Prior to dinner, Tony will give us an introductory talk on the gardens of the region. (D)

**Day 2** Following breakfast we will travel to the exquisite location of a 568 acre estate in the heart of Carmarthenshire. Among the innovative and informative features here are the Great Greenhouses, the oval walled garden and the herbaceous boardwalk. We continue to **Aberglasney**, set in the beautiful Towy valley. This is a superb 16th/17th century garden, which was rediscovered after 50 years of neglect and has been meticulously restored. Set within nine acres are six different spaces with a rich and diverse collection of plants, including three walled gardens and the unique Elizabethan/Jacobean cloister. (B, D)

**Day 3** We depart for **Dyffryn Fernant Garden**, a plantsman's garden, created from scratch by the owners, with a number of 'rooms' including an azalea bank, a bog garden and a fernery and camellia walk. This afternoon we will visit **Picton Castle**, home to some of the most beautiful woodland gardens in West Wales. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning we visit the gardens of **Upton Castle**, 35 acres of listed historic gardens, surrounded by ancient woodlands. We then transfer to the village of **Laugharne** where the poet **Dylan Thomas** lived and worked in his later years. Our final visit today is to the private garden of **Llwyngarreg**, which makes the most of the local climate. (B, D)

**Day 5** We travel to **Tredegar House** and explore the gardens, which comprise a wild and colourful orchard garden, a formal garden framed by herbaceous borders and an intricate parterre filled with colourful minerals, reflecting how this garden might have looked over 200 years ago. (B)

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



Aberglasney



Protea

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER TONY RUSSELL

As 'Our Man in Wales' Tony designed this itinerary which features some of the best gardens in the south and west of the Principality.



SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the Beggars Reach Hotel, Burton
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Tony Russell as tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
11 - 15 Apr		\$1,015	\$1,710
Single Supplement			\$415



Italian Gardens, Trentham Estate

## RHS Garden Bridgewater and Gardens of the North West

4 DAYS from \$975 | LOW SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

PICK-UP POINTS: London, Luton, Northampton, Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent

Currently the largest gardening project in Europe, RHS Garden Bridgewater opened to the public in 2021 and we are delighted to be able to visit it as it develops and matures. This once-in-a-generation project saw the Royal Horticultural Society take inspiration from the heritage of the site and transform it into a world-class garden, while also delivering a programme of community outreach and education activities, volunteering and training. Based on an overall design by leading landscape architect and Chelsea Gold Medal winner Tom Stuart-Smith, highlights include one of the largest walled gardens in the UK, beautifully landscaped grounds, living plant collections and horticultural trials. We also take the opportunity to visit some of the best gardens in the North West, beginning at Trentham Estate in Staffordshire, where the contemporary revival of the famous Italian Gardens was also led by Tom Stuart-Smith. At Dunham Massey we discover a great plantsman's garden full of native favourites and exotic treasures. Tatton Park's gardens have developed over 200 years yet retain much of their Edwardian character whilst Arley Hall showcases a pair of herbaceous borders that is one of the greatest garden sights of England.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head to the gardens of **Trentham Estate** in Staffordshire, where the contemporary revival of the famous Italian Gardens was led by renowned designer and serial Chelsea gold-medal winner Tom Stuart-Smith. We continue to our hotel in Cheshire. (D)

**Day 2** This morning we travel to the **RHS Garden Bridgewater**. Based on an overall design by leading landscape architect Tom Stuart-Smith, highlights include one of the largest walled gardens in the UK, beautifully landscaped grounds, living plant collections and horticultural trials. In the afternoon we visit a nearby **private garden** which in contrast to Bridgewater is much smaller but no less intriguing. (B, D)

**Day 3** After breakfast, we visit **Dunham Massey**, a great plantsman's garden full of native favourites and exotic treasures set around an elegant Georgian mansion. After being pressed into service to help the war effort in both world wars, Dunham Massey was taken over by the National Trust in 1976 and work began to transform

the garden to its former glory. It was decided that the garden would have an Edwardian pleasure ground feel with the freedom to choose from a range of planting options, with native favourites alongside exotic treasures. The garden continues to evolve today - modern additions include the Rose Garden and the Winter Garden. Next, we explore **Tatton Park**, whose gardens have developed over 200 years yet retain much of their Edwardian character. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today we visit **Arley Hall**, which preserves the atmosphere of a garden kept for its own delight. A pair of herbaceous borders were laid out here in 1846 and they survive to this day, beautifully maintained - one of the great garden sights of England. Following this, we return to our original departure points. (B)

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



The Paradise Garden, RHS Bridgewater © RHS Neil Hepworth

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 4-star BW Pinewood Hotel in Wilmslow
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
24 - 27 May		\$1,045	\$975
2 - 5 Aug		\$1,045	\$975
Single Supplement			\$170



RHS Chelsea Flower Show



Tresco

## The RHS Chelsea Flower Show and Classic English Gardens

7 DAYS from \$2,690

PICK-UP POINT: Bristol, Reading, Swindon, Heathrow, London

This tour combines the colour, prestige and excitement of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show with some of the south of England's finest gardens, affording the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of horticultural excellence. Our two centre holiday includes visits to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and the unmissable gardens of RHS Garden Wisley, Sissinghurst in Kent and Great Dixter. We then head west, breaking our journey at the beautiful gardens of Wilton House near Salisbury and 'Capability' Brown's famous landscape garden of Stourhead. From our hotel in the West Country we visit the ancient Bishop's Palace in Wells, the Cannington Walled garden and Hestercombe, one of Gertrude Jekyll and Sir Edwin Lutyens' greatest masterpieces. We also have some time in the town of Bath, famous for its Roman baths and elegant Georgian terraces. We also explore The Courts Garden a delightful English country garden.

**Day 1** We depart from our pick-up points and travel to our first visit **RHS Garden Wisley**, which is where the Royal Horticultural Society shows the gardening public how it should be done. Here the highest standards of practical horticulture are employed in the setting of a splendid old site,

**Day 2** rich in fine trees against a backdrop of other plants, all impeccably labelled. (D)

We enjoy a full-day visit to the **RHS Chelsea Flower Show**, which holds a rare position as a great British tradition and an exciting source of inspiration and advice. One of the highlights of the show is the collection of over 20 full-sized show gardens. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today we have an early bird visit to for the manicured gardens of **Sissinghurst**. This famous garden was created by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson from 1930 onwards and became the most admired English Garden of its time. In the afternoon we head for **Great Dixter**, where we are treated to an exclusive guided tour. (B, D)

**Day 4** We make our way to the gardens of **Wilton House**, an impressive Palladian mansion near Salisbury. (B, D)

**Day 5** This morning we head to **The Courts**, a charming garden showing English style. Peaceful water gardens and herbaceous borders with topiary exhibit creative use of colour and planting. In the afternoon we transfer to the historic city of **Bath** for some free time. (B, D)

**Day 6** Today after breakfast we depart for the village of Cannington where we will visit the **Cannington Walled Gardens** which lie in the grounds of a medieval priory, much of which remains today. Later, we visit the **Bishop's Palace** in Wells, a stunning medieval palace which has been home to the Bishops of Bath and Wells for 800 years. (B, D)

**Day 7** After breakfast, we visit **Hestercombe**, one of Gertrude Jekyll and Sir Edwin Lutyens' greatest masterpieces. Later we visit the garden at **Stourhead**. Temples, urns, a grotto and a wealth of trees all contribute to the special atmosphere of this celebrated landscape garden. We later return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



RHS Garden Wisley



Sissinghurst

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner bed and breakfast at the Holiday Inn, Guildford and three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the Walnut Tree, North Petherton (or similar)
- ▶ Full-day ticket for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
22 - 28 May	\$2,795	\$2,690
Single Supplement		\$555

## Great Gardens of Cornwall in the Company of Mike Nelhams

5 DAYS from \$2,830 | TOUR MANAGER: Mike Nelhams

DEPARTURE POINT: London Paddington

With the help of Mike Nelhams, Curator of Tresco's Abbey Gardens and a long-standing friend of Brightwater Holidays, we have created this very special tour of Cornwall, featuring not only the gardens but the personalities behind them. These include Sir Tim Smit, the driving force behind both the Lost Gardens of Heligan and the Eden Project, and Charles Williams of Caerhays Castle. At our base in the comfortable Alverton Hotel, Truro, our tour begins with a presentation from Mike Nelhams on the great Gardens of Cornwall.

Over the following three days we will see the gardens for ourselves, beginning with a tour of the Lost Gardens of Heligan with Head of Gardens Alasdair Moore, where we also hope to have a personal introduction from Sir Tim Smit, and a visit to the wonderful gardens of Caerhays Castle, which includes lunch and a welcome from the owner Charles Williams. After an exciting day on Tresco and a tour of the outstanding Abbey Gardens led by Mike himself, our tour concludes with a visit to the private garden of Lamorran House and a tour of the unique Tregothnan Tea Plantation.

**Day 1** We depart by train from London Paddington for Truro and continue by coach to our hotel. Before dinner, our guide **Mike Nelhams** will give a presentation on his favourite Cornish gardens. (D)

**Day 2** We begin with a visit to the **Lost Gardens of Heligan**, where we hope to be welcomed by Sir Tim Smit who 'discovered' and restored the gardens to their former glory. We will then be joined by Alasdair Moore, Head of Gardens and a former assistant to Mike Nelhams on Tresco, for a tour of the gardens. Following this we transfer to **Caerhays Castle**, where we will be welcomed by Charles Williams, whose family have owned Caerhays since the mid-19th century. After **lunch in the castle** we will enjoy a guided tour of the garden with a member of the family. (B, L, D)

**Day 3** We transfer to Penzance and take a helicopter flight to **Tresco**, where Mike will take us on a personal guided tour of the **Abbey Garden**, without doubt one of the most stunning gardens in the British Isles. Caressed by the Gulf Stream, the exceptionally mild climate allows a wide range of exotic, sub-tropical plants to thrive here. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning we depart for a visit to the privately-owned garden of **Lamorran House**, which has been designed by the owner in an Italianate style, although there are also Japanese influences here. Many features are included to divide the garden into intimate compartments which the visitor can explore. We continue to **Tregothnan Estate**. After **lunch** here we will be joined by Managing Director Jonathon Jones for a tour of the unique **Tregothnan Tea Plantation**, which has expanded greatly since the first bushes were planted in 1999. Blessed with the optimum microclimate for growing tea, Tregothnan produces some of the world's rarest and highest rated teas and new varieties are tested all the time. There will of course be an opportunity to taste and buy some of the teas produced here. (B, L, D)

**Day 5** Following breakfast, the morning is free to explore **Truro** and perhaps visit the Cathedral. Later, we return by train to London. (B)

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



Tregothnan

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER MIKE NELHAMS

Mike Nelhams is the Curator of Tresco's Abbey Gardens and one of Brightwater Holidays' longest-serving, most popular and well-travelled garden experts.



SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 4-star Alverton Hotel, Truro
- ▶ Two lunches
- ▶ Return standard class rail travel between London and Truro (regional rail connections and upgrades can also be arranged at a supplement; \$100pp discount for no rail travel)
- ▶ Return helicopter flight to the Scilly Isles
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Mike Nelhams as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
17 - 21 Mar	\$2,935	\$2,830
24 - 28 Mar	\$2,935	\$2,830
15 - 19 Apr	\$3,005	\$2,900
Single Supplement		\$415



RHS Garden Rosemoor

## Summer Gardens of Cornwall

7 DAYS from \$3,215

PICK-UP POINTS: London, Reading, Swindon, Bristol

A visit to Cornwall in early summer is a rewarding experience and there is an abundance of gardens to choose from - thanks to the benign climate a wide range of plants can be grown here, from the great Asiatic shrubs to tender exotics. Among the outstanding visits is a specially arranged guided tour of the garden at Tregrehan with owner Tom Hudson, who will give us his personal insight into the pleasures and pitfalls of gardening here in the Duchy of Cornwall. Other highlights include the garden at Marsh Villa, the result of years of hard labour by the enthusiastic owner, and the Tremeneheere Sculpture Garden near Penzance, which has established itself as a major attraction over the last decade. We also offer the option to visit one of the wonders of the garden world, the unique Abbey Gardens on the island of Tresco, and take the opportunity to visit RHS Garden Rosemoor in neighbouring Devon, where the huge collection of roses will be at their peak of flowering.

**Day 1** We depart by coach from our pick-up points and head for Cornwall, breaking our journey with a visit to **Hestercombe**, one of Gertrude Jekyll and Sir Edwin Lutyens' greatest masterpieces. (D)

**Day 2** Today we visit **Tregrehan**, where we will be privileged to have a guided tour with owner **Tom Hudson**. Tregrehan is now an important green gene bank of known source plants including camellias bred by the late owner. We continue today with a visit to **Marsh Villa**, situated in a former tidal creek made famous by Daphne du Maurier's book 'The House on the Strand'. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning we visit **Tremeneheere Sculpture Gardens**, near Penzance. The garden is set in a beautiful sheltered valley, surrounded by woods, a stream and dramatic vistas, and is filled with high quality contemporary art installations. We continue to the gardens at **Trengwainton**, which contain many rare and unusual species, which are difficult to grow in the open anywhere else in the country. (B, D)

**Day 4** We begin today with a visit to the **Lost Gardens of Heligan**. The award-winning gardens, asleep for more than seventy years, are the scene of the largest garden restoration project

in Europe and we will discover the story as well as enjoy a guided tour of the garden by a member of staff. We then transfer to the remarkable **Pinetum Park and Pine Lodge Gardens**, which has consistently received rave reviews over the years. (B, D)

**Day 5** We begin today with a trip on the **River Fal** to visit **Trelissick**, a modern garden which is constantly evolving, with new planting and fresh ideas. We transfer to the garden of **Lamorran House**, where we will have an introductory talk before viewing the garden, which has both Italianate and Japanese styles. (B, D)

**Day 6** A free day to relax in the hotel or explore the surrounding area. Alternatively we offer an optional excursion by helicopter to **Tresco** and the fabulous **Abbey Gardens**, famously described as 'Eden with the lid off'. (B, D)

**Day 7** We break our return journey with a detour into north Devon as we visit **RHS Garden Rosemoor**. At this time of year the roses which grow in abundance here will be at their peak, providing a kaleidoscope of colour, as we will discover in the course of our guided tour. We then return to our original pick-up points. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Lost Gardens of Heligan

### OPTIONAL EXCURSION - \$470PP

After an early breakfast we transfer to Land's End Airport from where we will fly to St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly. On arrival you will be taken to the quayside for a short boat transfer to Tresco, where we visit the unique **Abbey Gardens**, home to more than 3,000 species and magnificent vistas, colours and scents. The head gardener will be on hand to answer any questions.

PLEASE SEE WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS

### SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Six nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 3-star Hotel Vara, Truro
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
23 - 29 Jun	\$3,215	\$3,110
Single Supplement		\$555
Optional Excursion - Tresco		\$470



Highgrove ©Robert Smith

## Highgrove and the Cotswolds

4 DAYS from \$1,255 | TOUR MANAGER: Tony Russell\*

PICK-UP POINTS: London, Reading, Swindon, Bristol

Our tour of the Cotswolds features an exclusive visit to Highgrove House, the country home of His Majesty The King. This will be a rare opportunity to see these fascinating gardens, which, of course, are cultivated using wholly organic methods.

Some of the finest gardens in England are to be found nestled among the green and rolling hills of Gloucestershire. Our tour begins at the Arts and Crafts house of Rodmarton Manor, whose fine garden comprises a series of 'outdoor rooms'. Hidcote Manor's contrasting garden rooms are one of the most impressive sights in England and Kiftsgate's splendid views are justly famous. We also visit Painswick Rococo Garden, a recreation of a pleasure ground from the early 18th century and finally Westonbirt, the National Arboretum.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head for **Rodmarton Manor**, an 'Arts and Crafts' house with a fine eight-acre garden comprising a series of 'outdoor rooms', each with its own distinctive character. The architect Ernest Barnsley started Rodmarton in 1909 and it became a shrine to the Cotswolds crafts movement. The grey gabled house has an intricate garden of lively atmosphere, formal in spirit but with a cottage-garden feel to it. There are superb vistas throughout and plenty of places to sit and admire the surroundings. (D)

**Day 2** More garden rooms feature today as we visit **Hidcote Manor**, an outstanding garden of dramatic contrasts and carefully framed vistas. It was started before World War I by an American, Major Lawrence Johnston, who devised a type of garden that many think of as quintessentially English. Although among the best-known gardens in Britain, Hidcote Manor still has the power to startle. We continue to **Kiftsgate Court**, which offers an admirable selection of plants and flowers, not least of which is the well-known rambling rose *R. filipes* 'Kiftsgate'. The house is surrounded by a series of enclosed gardens, whose formality is blurred by generous planting. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning we explore **Highgrove**, the country home of His Majesty The King. This will be a rare opportunity to see these fascinating gardens which of course are cultivated using wholly organic methods. Following our tour we enjoy **lunch in The Orchard Room**, an elegant dining room overlooking the Orchard Terrace. In the afternoon we visit **Painswick Rococo Garden**. This is a pleasure ground created in the decadent and fun loving early 18th century, where follies nestle in a hidden valley surrounded by magnificent Cotswolds views. Using a painting, by Thomas Robins in 1748, the garden is being fully restored to its eighteenth century character. Its main features are rococo buildings, woodland walks and well-planned vistas. (B, L, D)

**Day 4** We conclude among the sylvan delights of **Westonbirt**, the **National Arboretum**, which is perhaps the most important and widely known arboretum in the United Kingdom. It comprises some 18,000 trees and shrubs, over an area of approximately 600 acres. We will see numerous 'champion' trees including rare magnolias, tree rhododendrons and maples as well as a wide variety of smaller trees and shrubs. We then return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Hidcote Manor

### SAVE \$50 PER PERSON\*

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at a comfortable hotel in the Cotswolds
- ▶ Lunch at Highgrove
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager (\*Tony Russell in May & June)

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
30 May - 2 Jun*	\$1,325	\$1,255
27 - 30 Jun*	\$1,325	\$1,255
1 - 4 Aug	\$1,325	\$1,255
Single Supplement		\$275

Please note, by the very nature of this holiday we are dependent on a successful application for admittance to Highgrove. Departures are expected to be confirmed in February 2025.

NEW TOUR



Harewood House



RHS Harlow Carr - © RHS / Jason Ingram

## Gardens of Yorkshire

4 DAYS from \$1,325 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

 PICK-UP POINTS: London, Luton, Northampton, Leicester, Nottingham

Uncover the delights of Yorkshire with us as we discover some of the best houses and gardens in England's largest county. We begin at Harewood House, a Grade I listed building which is home to an art collection that is one of the finest in Britain. We enjoy a tour at the classic walled garden of Littlethorpe Manor, which features the impressive apothecaries garden and Newby Hall with its impressive double herbaceous borders. Other visits include York Gate, a magical one-acre garden tucked behind the ancient church at Adel and Harlow Carr, the RHS's northern flagship. Here we will enjoy a guided tour, giving us a personal insight into the continued development of this landmark garden.



Harrogate

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel to our first visit, **Harewood House**. Sitting in the heart of Yorkshire the house was built in the 18th century, designed by architects John Carr and Robert Adam for the 1st Baron of Harewood. A Grade I listed building, the house is home to an art collection that is one of the finest in Britain. We have the chance to explore this impressive collection as well as time to explore over 100 acres of gardens, with a variety of plants from around the world in the setting of a wonderful landscape designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. (D)

**Day 2** Following breakfast, we depart for a visit to the garden of **Littlethorpe Manor**, which features a walled garden based on the cycle of the seasons, a sunken garden with white rose parterre and herbs, and a brick pergola which at this time of year features Agapanthus, Aster frikartii 'Monch', Echinops, while a second flush of Anthemis fills the borders. The gardens also feature terraces with ornamental pots, formal lawns with a fountain pool, hornbeam towers and yew hedging and parkland with a lake and water feature. It was recently extended and now additionally boasts a stunning apothecary's garden. A guided tour is included here. This afternoon we will visit the house and gardens of **Newby Hall**, near Ripon. Set around a beautiful late 17th century house, the gardens slope gently down to the River Ure and feature an outstanding collection of plants. The present design, dating from

the 1920s (little remains of the original formal gardens), is influenced by Lawrence Johnston's Hidcote Manor in Gloucestershire and is based around a huge central axis of double herbaceous borders flanked by yew hedges. Newby Hall itself is one of Britain's finest Adam houses and an exceptional example of 18th-century interior design. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning after breakfast, there is free time to enjoy the spa town of **Harrogate**. Known for its elegant architecture, gardens and rich cultural heritage the town is full of charm and has something to interest every visitor. This afternoon we visit **Harlow Carr**, the Royal Horticultural Society's northern flagship, which continues to set the highest possible standards in the gardening world. Within this handsome and well-wooded site there are sections devoted to particular groups of plants, a rose garden, a bulb garden and an arboretum, along with three different kinds of rockeries. We enjoy a guided tour here followed by some time to explore at leisure. You may choose to visit Betty's Tearoom, which enjoys an elevated position with sweeping views over the garden below. (B, D)

**Day 4** After breakfast, we leave our hotel for our final visit to **York Gate**, a one-acre garden tucked behind the ancient church at Adel on the northern outskirts of Leeds. Created by the Spencer family during the second half of the twentieth century, this is a garden of immense style and craftsmanship, widely recognised as one of the most innovative small gardens of the period. The garden is

divided by yew and beech hedges into a series of smaller gardens each with its own theme and style. The formal Herb Garden with its topiary leads to the Dell with its half hidden pathways and stream. Evergreens clipped into strong architectural shapes are used to spectacular effect throughout the garden. By visiting the York Gate Garden we are also supporting Perennial, the Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society, who have owned and cared for the garden since 1994. Following our visit we continue to our original pick-up points. (B)

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

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed breakfast at the 4-star Bridge Hotel & Spa, Wetherby
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
30 Jun - 3 Jul		\$1,395	\$1,325

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT



Oxburgh Hall



Mary Rose ©

## Stately Homes and Seaside Castles of Norfolk

5 DAYS from \$1,990 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

PICK-UP POINTS: London, Colchester

Our historical tour of Norfolk takes us through verdant rolling countryside to many fine stately homes, including Sandringham, the much-loved retreat of the Royal Family, where we enjoy an afternoon tea followed by a private guided tour. Other highlights include the 500-year-old Oxburgh Hall; Blickling Estate, a stunning Jacobean mansion; a trip on the North Norfolk Heritage Railway; Wolterton Hall with its sculptured parkland, and the charming, moated manor of Mannington Hall. We round off the tour with a visit with Lady Walpole at her ancestral family home, where we enjoy a guided tour and lunch.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head to **Oxburgh Hall**, a stunning moated countryhouse built in 1482 at the peak of the War of the Roses by the Bedingfield family, which today remains the ancestral family home. Having endured much over the last 500 years, Oxburgh has managed to survive religious persecution, the ravages of Civil War and threats of demolition. Later we continue to **Castle Rising**, one of the largest, best preserved and most extravagantly decorated keeps to be found in England. (D)

**Day 2** We begin at **Blickling Estate**, a Jacobean mansion surrounded by magnificent gardens, historic parklands and delightful meadows before enjoying a nostalgic trip aboard a heritage train on the **North Norfolk Railway**. From here, we pay a visit to **Sandringham**, the private home to five generations of British monarch. Sandringham House was originally built in 1870 by the Prince and Princess of Wales, who later became King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, and has been passed down through subsequent generations. Here we will enjoy **afternoon tea** and a **private guided tour**. (B, AT, D)

**Day 3** We tour the grand Palladian-style mansion **Holkham Hall**, the home of the Earls of Leicester with a vast collection of art. Nearby is **Hindringham Hall**, a delectable little moated

manor house that looks as though it has been plucked straight from a storybook. Surrounded by a medieval moat, fishponds, walled vegetable garden and delightful flowering borders this Tudor manor is a true picture of perfect country living. Here we enjoy a private tour of the lovely gardens. (B, D)

**Day 4** We depart for **Hoveton Hall**, which has been in the Buxton family since 1946 and is a much-loved family home. We have a tour of the house with the owner followed by some free time to explore the gardens. This afternoon we head to **Wolterton Hall**, set in over 150 acres of sculptured parkland. We have in depth tour of the house and the garden followed by some light refreshments in the Saloon. (B, D)

**Day 5** We depart for **Mannington Hall**, a charming moated medieval manor house and home to the Walpole family where we join **Lady Walpole** for a tour of her estate. After our tour and some time to enjoy the gardens featuring themed borders, Victorian follies, a wildflower meadow and even a ruined church we enjoy a light lunch before we take to the road to return to our original pick-up points. (B, L)

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



Sandringham



Holkham Hall

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner (with wine), bed & breakfast at the 4-star Knights Hill Hotel, King's Lynn
- ▶ One lunch and one afternoon tea
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
1 - 5 Jun		\$2,095	\$1,990

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

## The Mary Rose: A Tudor Tale

4 DAYS from \$1,185 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

PICK-UP POINT: London

The raising of Henry VIII's flagship the Mary Rose was one of the most complex and expensive maritime salvage projects in history and the surviving section of the ship and thousands of recovered artefacts are of great value as a Tudor period time capsule. Today the museum which houses her, rebuilt in 2013, is one of the foremost visitor attractions on the south coast and forms the centrepiece of this new tour which takes in a series of properties associated with the great Tudor age.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head for a visit to **Hampton Court Palace**. The building of the palace began in 1514 for Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, the chief minister of Henry VIII. In 1529, as Wolsey fell from favour, the cardinal gave the palace to the king to check his disgrace. The palace went on to become one of Henry's most favoured residences; soon after acquiring the property, he arranged for it to be enlarged so it could accommodate his sizeable retinue of courtiers. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast we head for Portsmouth to visit the **Historic Dockyard**, home to the **Mary Rose**. Built between 1510-1511 she was for many years Henry VIII's favourite warship, fast, well-armed and successful. The raising of the Mary Rose and her subsequent restoration was a remarkable achievement, while the collection of some 19,700 genuine Tudor artefacts is unparalleled and provides an invaluable insight into 16th century life. Our visit begins with an **exclusive one-hour talk** on the relationship between Henry VIII and the Mary Rose. We then enjoy a **live tour** of the museum by a knowledgeable member of the Mary Rose team. Later we visit the **Tudor House and Garden**. This Grade 1 listed half-timbered building dates to Norman times and was established as Southampton's first museum in 1912. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning we head along the south coast to the Sussex town of Lewes where we find **Anne of Cleve's House**. This stunning timber framed medieval house was given to Anne, the fourth wife of Henry VIII, at the end of her short-lived marriage, although she never lived there. Nevertheless, it provides great insight into the Tudor period with well-preserved interiors including a Tudor kitchen, a light and airy parlour and a beautiful bedroom complete with four poster bed. Next we visit **Arundel Castle**. It has been home to the Dukes of Norfolk and their ancestors since its founding in the 11th century. In the Tudor period these included Lord Howard of Effingham, the Earl of Surrey and the 3rd Duke of Norfolk, uncle of Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard. Later this afternoon we visit the **Weald & Downland Open Air Museum** which is set in 50 acres of Sussex countryside. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning we still have time for one final visit, **The Wyne**. Originally built as a great Tudor 'power house', The Wyne was visited by Henry VIII on at least three occasions and was later home to the Chute family for more than 350 years. Following our visit we continue to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Hampton Court Palace



Arundel Castle

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed breakfast at the 4-star Norton Park Hotel, Spa and Manor House, Winchester
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
28 - 31 Mar		\$1,255	\$1,185
10 - 13 Oct		\$1,325	\$1,255

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

NEW TOUR



Tresco Abbey Gardens

## The Isles of Scilly

6 DAYS from \$3,250 | TOUR MANAGER: Mike Nelhams

 DEPARTURE POINT: Land's End Airport

Truly a sub-tropical paradise, this tiny corner of England has remained unpolluted, unspoilt and unchanged for decades. The Isles of Scilly have been described as 'the most fortunate of all the islands around Britain's coasts with clean seas and beaches, wonderful scenery, welcoming inhabitants, and temperate climates'. They lie just 28 miles from the Cornish coast yet bask in a balmy climate where spring comes early, autumn stays late and winter hardly exists at all.

The wonderful Abbey Gardens on the island of Tresco are home to more than 3,000 species and magnificent vistas, colours and scents. There is certainly no other garden like this in the world. Even in winter there are 300 plants in flower in the Abbey Gardens and as each day lengthens more and more exotic flowers appear. In the spring you will see flowers here that are weeks ahead of those on the mainland, the perfect way to lift your spirits after a cold, dark winter.

Other highlights include a Pelagic boat excursion to the Western Rocks and Bishop Rock Lighthouse with local bird expert Will Wagstaff; a guided tour at a local flower farm on the island of St Martins, who were the first to pioneer sending flowers by first class post and a relaxing lunch at the 3AA Rosette restaurant at the Hell Bay hotel, the only restaurant of this caliber in the Scilly Isles.



Manx shearwater



Tresco



Great Bay on the Island of St Martin's

**Day 1** Travel independently to Penzance. *(Overnight accommodation and rail travel from mainline stations can be arranged at a supplement on request, please contact us for assistance).* We will meet at Land's End airport in time for your flight to the Scillies, which only takes 15 minutes. On arrival you will be met and transferred to the **St Mary's Hall Hotel**. After being shown to your room you are free to relax and enjoy the surroundings or take a stroll before that well-earned drink in the bar. Dinner will be served in the evening after which we will have a **special talk from our tour manager Mike Nelhams, Curator of the Abbey Gardens**. This will be followed by a Q&A session with Mike, an opportunity to find out about growing tender sub-tropical plants such as those found in the Abbey Gardens. *(D)*

**Day 2** After breakfast this morning we take a boat over to the island of **Tresco** and have a **guided tour of the Abbey Gardens**. There will also be an opportunity to view the Valhalla collection of ship's figureheads, a legacy of the days when shipwrecks were all too common on these rocky shores. This afternoon you are then free to explore Tresco at leisure - the ancient castles, beautiful beaches and headland walks. You are also free to return to the Abbey Gardens should you wish. At an agreed time we will re-assemble and take the boat back to St Mary's and return to our hotel. *(B, D)*

**Day 3** After breakfast today we head out for a **Pelagic boat excursion** to the **Western Rocks** and **Bishop Rock Lighthouse**. We will be joined by **bird expert Will Wagstaff** as we explore this mecca for birdwatchers in search of Manx shearwaters, puffins, razorbills, kittiwakes and storm petrels. We will stop in St Agnes for some free time for lunch *(not included)* before we return to the sea and head back to St Mary's. *(B, D)*

**Day 4** This morning, we depart for **St Martins**. On arrival we make our way to **Scilly Flowers Farm** for a **guided tour**. Here we learn about this small family run farm that was among the first to pioneer sending flowers by first class post. Over 30 years later the small farm is thriving and now sends over 100,000 beautiful boxes to doorsteps throughout the UK every year. After our tour we have lunch at the Karma Hotel before having some free time to explore at leisure. At an agreed time, we will meet and return by boat to St Mary's. *(B, L, D)*

**Day 5** Today after breakfast, we depart for **Bryher**. Here we will be joined by **Graham Eggs**, owner of **Hillside Farm** for a **guided tour**. The farm is a working mixed farm situated to the southern end of Bryher. In spring and summer, they sell vegetables, salad crops, soft fruit, cut flowers and free-range eggs. They are also the producers of 'Scilly Chilli', tasty handmade chilli products using their own home-grown chillies. In addition they also have a small herd of North Devon cattle as conservation grazers, adding to the farm's biodiversity. We have a lunch at the 3AA Rosette restaurant at the **Hell Bay Hotel** before having some free time to explore the rest of this tiny island at leisure. At an agreed time, we will meet and return by boat to St Mary's. *(B, L, D)*

**Day 6** Today it is time to say goodbye to the Scilly Isles as we transfer to the airport for our return flight to Land's End Airport. Our tour will conclude here. *(Overnight accommodation in Penzance, extended stays in the Scillies and rail travel to mainline stations can be arranged at a supplement on request - please contact us for assistance).* *(B)*

### Please note - Walking Fitness

Due to the limited public transport, we believe it fair to remind passengers that a degree of mobility is required to get the most out of your visit to the Scilly Islands as most of the tour will be on foot.

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

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER MIKE NELHAMS

Mike Nelhams has lived and worked in the Scilly Isles for many years and is the Curator of Tresco's Abbey Garden - so no one knows it better!



SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Five nights' dinner, bed and full breakfast at the St Mary's Hall Hotel, St Mary's in a standard room - upgrades available on request at a supplement
- ▶ Two lunches
- ▶ Return Skybus flight from Land's End to St Mary's *(Exeter or Newquay flights available at a supplement)*
- ▶ Boat transfers between islands
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of a Mike Nelhams as tour manager
- ▶ Presentation and Q&A session with Mike Nelhams on Abbey Gardens

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
7 - 12 May		\$3,335	\$3,250
Single Supplement			\$735

# Snowdrop Gardens of the Cotswolds

4 DAYS from \$975 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

 PICK-UP POINTS: London, Reading, Swindon, Bristol

The Cotswolds are home to some of the best gardens for snowdrops in the British Isles, so this winter break will be of great appeal not just to ardent galanthophiles but to anyone who enjoys the uplifting sight that says spring is not too far away. Colesbourne is considered to be the greatest snowdrop garden of them all and for many will be the highlight of the tour, but there are many other outstanding displays to be enjoyed. These include Newark Park, Cerney House, Painswick Rococo Garden and the famous 'Arts and Crafts' house of Rodmarton Manor, where we find a staggering 150 different varieties of snowdrop.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head to **Newark Park**, a secluded country estate upon the Cotswolds escarpment. Carpets of snowdrops cover the gardens and estate at this time of year. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast, we visit **Colesbourne Gardens**, considered to be England's greatest snowdrop garden. The collection is probably the most varied of any garden on display, with over three hundred varieties of this spectacular harbinger of spring on show during the short season. Later, we head to the gardens at **Cerney House**, where there are swathes of snowdrops to be discovered in this romantic garden. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today we head to the town of Stroud and visit the **Museum in the Park**, in whose

gorgeous walled garden there is an impressive display of snowdrops. Later we head for **Painswick Rococo Garden**, which is home to one of the country's largest naturalistic plantings of snowdrops, with 15 different species. It is said to be the spiritual home of the tall, honey-scented Galanthus 'Atkinsii' variety. (B, D)

**Day 4** We travel to the 'Arts and Crafts' house of **Rodmarton Manor**, where over 150 different species and varieties of snowdrops provide a spectacular conclusion to our celebration of this most charming and uplifting of flowers. We then return to our original pick-up points. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Snowdrops

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the 4-star Holiday Inn Gloucester-Cheltenham
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
7 - 10 Feb		\$1,045	\$975

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

# Spring Gardens of Cornwall

4 DAYS from \$975

 PICK-UP POINTS: London, Reading, Swindon, Bristol

Spring comes early in Cornwall, as trees, shrubs and bulbs bring life and colour back to the gardens. The near neighbours of Trebah and Glendurgan illustrate this perfectly, with the great Asiatic shrubs of rhododendron, magnolia and camellia all featuring rich blossom. The award-winning Lost Gardens of Heligan continue to fascinate, while over at the Eden Project things have come a long way since that disused chalk pit was transformed into a futuristic microcosm of botanical diversity. Our tour is bookended with visits to two top-class National Trust properties at Knightshayes Court and Killerton.

**Day 1** We depart from our pick-up points and travel to **Knightshayes Court**, whose celebrated garden features a water lily pool, topiary, specimen trees, rare shrubs, seasonal colour and an impressive Victorian kitchen garden. We continue to our hotel in Newquay with views over the Atlantic. (D)

**Day 2** We visit the **Eden Project**, which since its opening in 2001 has become one of Cornwall's star attractions, with its huge controlled-environment plant conservatories. Our next visit is to the **Lost Gardens of Heligan**, the scene of the largest garden restoration project in Europe. This time of year sees the reawakening of Heligan's fabulous collection of historic shrubs, including their notable camellias and rhododendrons. (B, D)

**Day 3** Following breakfast we depart for a visit to **Trebah**, a wild and colourful Cornish garden with something for everyone. We then continue to **Glendurgan**, a place of great beauty and tranquillity. At this time of year we can expect outstanding spring displays of magnolias and camellias. Look out too for the hedge maze, originally built by the owners in the 1830s to entertain their 12 children. (B, D)

**Day 4** We head for home and call in at the house and gardens of **Killerton**, set on a steep wooded hillside with the remains of an Iron Age Hill fort on top of it. Countless trees and shrubs thrive in the gardens including rhododendrons and magnolias which should be coming into full bloom. We later return to our original pick-up points. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Lost Gardens of Heligan

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the comfortable Pentire Hotel, Newquay
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
17 - 20 Mar		\$1,045	\$975

Single Supplement			\$210
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# In the Footsteps of Gertrude Jekyll

6 DAYS from \$2,830

 PICK-UP POINTS: London, Basingstoke

Over the last hundred years, few would doubt the great influence Gertrude Jekyll had on garden design. In her lifetime Jekyll was a prolific garden designer creating over 400 gardens; she was a plantswoman extraordinaire, painter and writer, however she is perhaps best remembered for her association with the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head to the gardens of **Barrington Court**. These enchanting, formal gardens, inspired by the designs of Gertrude Jekyll, are laid out in a series of walled rooms and include the White, Rose, Iris and Lily Gardens. (D)

**Day 2** This morning we visit **Hestercombe**, one of Jekyll and Lutyens' greatest masterpieces, where we enjoy a tour with the **Head Gardener**. Later, we proceed to **Knightshayes Court**, a Grade I listed Victorian country house designed by William Burgess. (B, D)

**Day 3** We visit **East Lambrook**, recognised throughout the world as the 'Home of English Cottage Gardening', having been created in the 1940s, 50s and 60s by the late gardening icon, Margery Fish. Her informal style of planting was unique and her work as an outstanding plantswoman, writer and journalist has made her one of the most important influences on gardening in the 20th century. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today, we visit the garden at **Upton Grey Manor House**, which is believed to be the most comprehensive and authentic Jekyll Garden in existence - a living museum of the Jekyll design. (B, D)

**Day 5** We visit the **Phillips Memorial and Cloister** followed by **Hatchlands**. Later, we visit the gardens at **Gravetye Manor**, home to William Robinson, one of the greatest gardeners of all time. After a look around the garden we have an **exclusive private dinner** experience. (B, D)

**Day 6** After breakfast, we visit the garden at **Vann**, which incorporates Gertrude Jekyll's 1911 water garden. Later, we visit **Loseley Park**, a highlight of which is the Walled Garden. We return to our original pick-up points. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



The grapevine arch in Loseley Park

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Five nights' bed and breakfast: two nights at the boutique Lanes Hotel, Yeovil and three nights at the 4-star Frensham Pond Hotel, Farnham (or similar)
- ▶ Four dinners at the hotels and one at Gravetye Manor
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
3 - 8 Jun		\$2,935	\$2,830

Single Supplement			\$695
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# Gardens of Guernsey & Sark

5 DAYS from \$2,375 | TOUR MANAGER: Rachel Dovey

The island of Guernsey, just 20 miles off the coast of France, flourishes in the warmth of summer and is home to some wonderful gardens. Visits include the Guernsey Millennium Tapestry which provides a colourful introduction to the island's history; Castle Cornet where a profusion of plants nestles within the walls; Saumarez Park; the Guernsey Folk and Costume Museum and Candie Gardens, a Victorian gem with sweeping views over St Peter Port. Local resident Rachel Dovey will be our expert guide on the island.

**Day 1** Upon arrive we begin with a visit to the **Guernsey Millennium Tapestry**, illustrating 1,000 years of local history. We continue with visits to the gardens at **Castle Cornet**, where there is a profusion of plants both ancient and modern, followed by **Hauteville House**. (D)

Today we explore the walled garden at **Saumarez Park** and the **Guernsey Folk & Costume Museum**, followed by a visit to a **private garden** set in a very old estate. We continue to the workshop of jewellers **Bruce Russell & Son** before concluding today with a visit to **Candie Gardens** with panoramic views over St Peter Port. (B, D)

A **private garden** awaits us this morning with its wide variety of unusual and tender plants and shrubs. We continue with a visit to a **Craft and Farmers Market**, followed by **Le Friquet Garden Centre**, which is the largest on the island

and offers a huge array of plants, seeds and bulbs, together with a relaxed covered shopping area and lively eateries. Later we enjoy a **scenic guided coach tour** of the island, stopping off at points of interest along the way. (B, D)

Today is free to explore Guernsey at leisure, or alternatively join our optional excursion to neighbouring **Sark**, where we visit the lovely gardens of **La Seigneurie** and enjoy a ride on a pony and trap on this traffic-free little island. (B, D)

After breakfast, we have free time for shopping. **Day 5** There's time to visit a **private garden** before we transfer to the airport where our tour concludes (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



La Seigneurie Gardens

SAVE \$70 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 3-star La Barbare Hotel, St Peter Port, Guernsey
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of local expert Rachel Dovey as tour manager

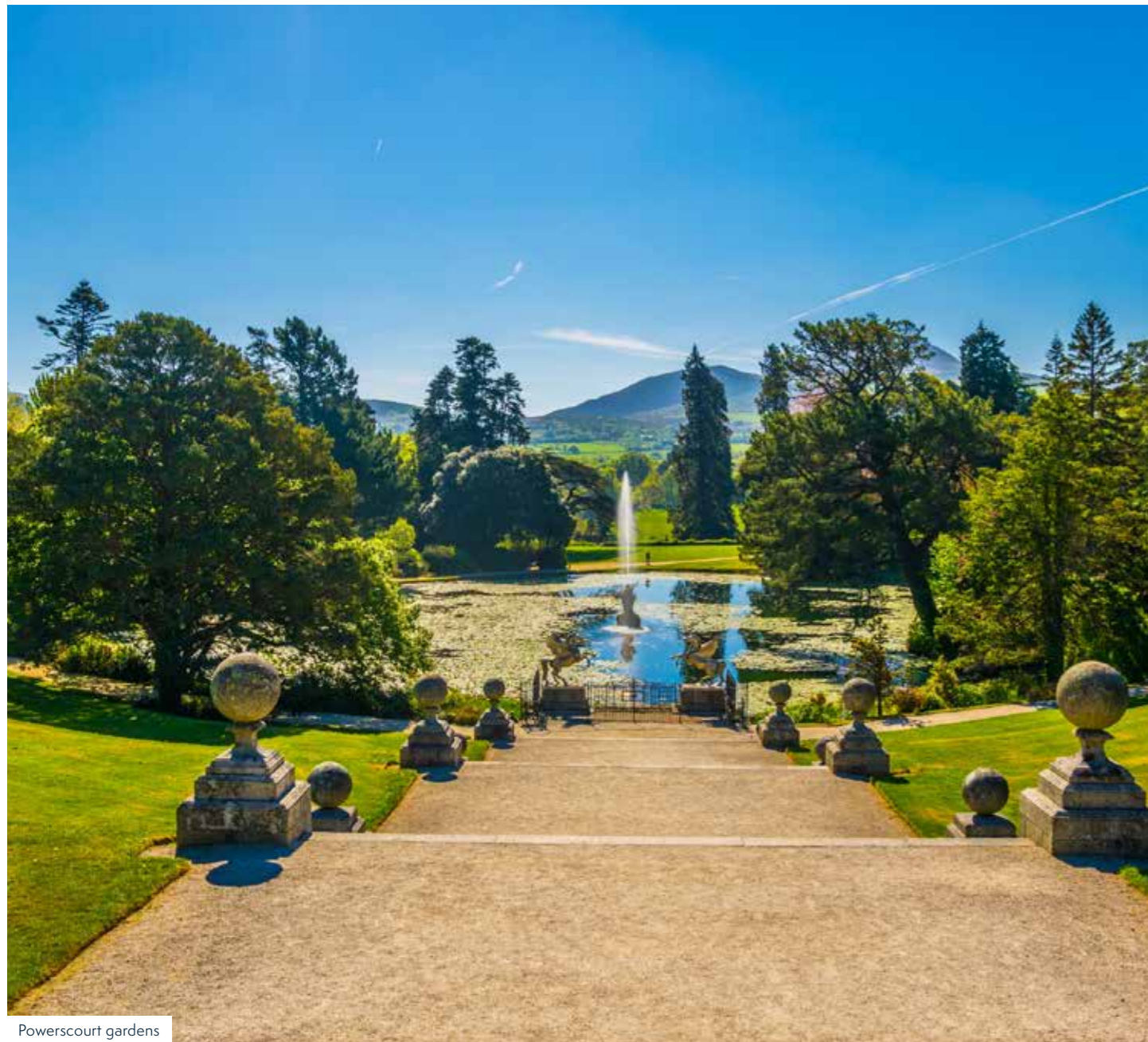
### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
12 - 16 Sep		\$2,445	\$2,375

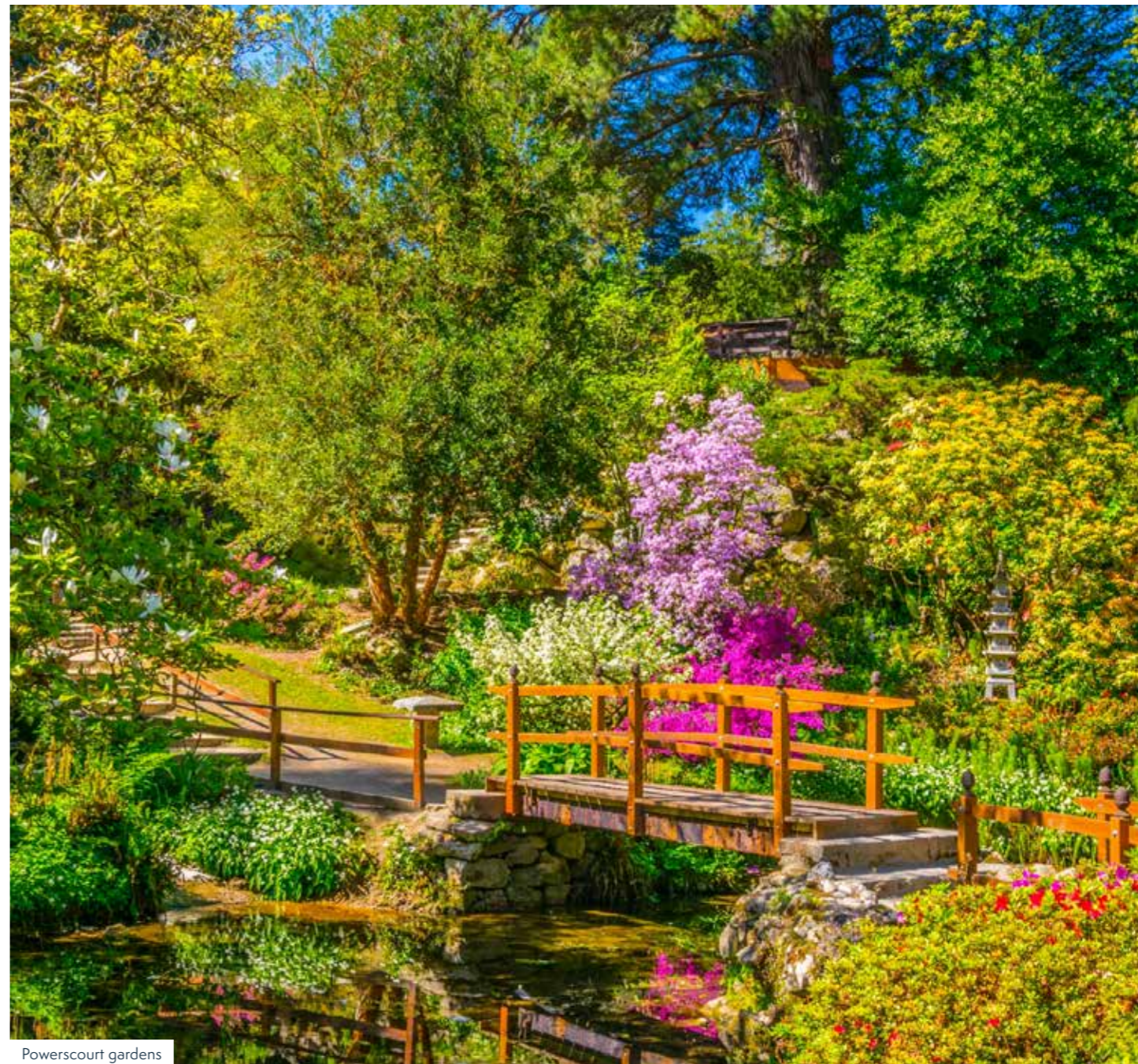
Single Supplement			\$555
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Optional Excursions: Sark			\$135
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Powerscourt gardens



Powerscourt gardens

## The Irish Rover

8 DAYS from \$3,110 | TOUR MANAGER: Trevor Edwards

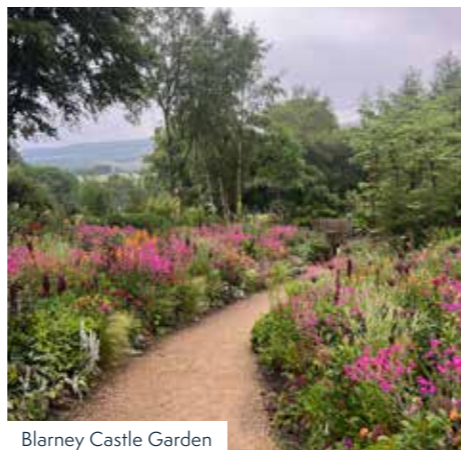
Just like the Van Morrison song, this Irish Rover is wrapped up in glory – the glory of some of Ireland’s finest gardens. A rich feast of horticultural excellence awaits, with memorable and beguiling gardens, enthusiastic and skilful owners and an ever-changing backdrop of lush green hills, fertile fields and glittering seascapes. Our north to south journey is packed full of gems yet relaxed and unhurried, taking in the very best that the Emerald Isle has to offer.

We begin in Northern Ireland at the dazzling and idiosyncratic garden of Mount Stewart, truly one of the great gardens of the world. We also visit romantic Rowallane and atmospheric Castle Ward, with its unique mix of contrasting architectural styles.

We move on to Dublin where we meet June Blake, a passionate plantswoman who grows a unique mix of bamboos, ornamental grasses and perennials, and her brother Jimi Blake at Hunting Brook, with its fusion of prairie and tropical planting. We also visit the Airfield Estate, which came to prominence under Jimi Blake; Malahide, one of the oldest and most historic castles in Ireland, with its own splendid botanic garden and Powerscourt, one of Ireland’s most famous gardens with magnificent vistas over the surrounding countryside.

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER TREVOR EDWARDS

Award-winning Garden Designer, Writer and Broadcaster Trevor Edwards is once again leading this exploration of some of Ireland’s most spectacular gardens.



Blarney Castle Garden

**Day 1** Upon arrival in Belfast and continue to **Mount Stewart**, the dazzling and idiosyncratic gardens that bask in the micro-climate that exists here. (D)

**Day 2** We visit **Rowallane Garden**, filled with dazzling borders, shrubs and trees, and **Castle Ward**, adorned with exotic planting. (B, D)

**Day 3** Travelling south into the Republic, we call in at **Malahide Castle**, one of the oldest and most historic castles in Ireland, with an exceptional botanic garden. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today we visit plantsman Jimi Blake’s garden **Hunting Brook**, which is home to Ireland’s largest collection of ornamental grasses with over 200 different species and cultivars. We continue to Jimi’s sister’s garden at **June Blake’s Nursery**, in which she grows a unique mix of bamboos, ornamental grasses and perennials. Later, we visit **Russborough**, featuring both a woodland and a walled garden, which has been restored in recent years. (B)

**Day 5** This morning we visit the gardens of **Kilruddery**, among the oldest in Ireland and the perfect destination for leisurely walks, along with **Powerscourt**, Ireland’s most famous historic garden. (B)

**Day 6** On our way to Cork we call in at **Mount Usher**, a lovely informal garden which dates back to 1850, and **Mount Congreve**, home to one of the largest collections of plants in the world. The majestic gardens comprise seventy acres of intensively planted woodland, a four-acre walled garden and ten miles of walkways. (B, D)

**Day 7** This morning we take the ferry to Garinish Island to visit **Ilnacullin**, surely one of the highlights of our visit to Ireland, with its Italianate folly overlooking a sunken garden. We continue to **Blarney Castle and Gardens**, perhaps most famous for its eloquence-conferring stone but which also has a lovely garden. (B, D)

**Day 8** We transfer to Cork airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights’ bed & breakfast: two nights at the 4-star Dunadry Hotel, Co Antrim; three nights at a 3-star hotel in Dublin; and two nights at the 3-star Maritime Hotel, Bantry (hotels subject to change)
- ▶ Five dinners
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Trevor Edwards as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
12 - 19 Jun		\$3,215	\$3,110
7 - 14 Aug		\$3,215	\$3,110
Single Supplement			\$835

NEW TOUR



Burren

## Gardens and Wildflowers of the Burren

5 DAYS from \$1,885 | TOUR MANAGER: Trevor Edwards

The Burren, from the Irish bhoireann - a stony place - lies in the northwestern corner of Co. Clare. Over 300 square kilometres in extent, it is the largest area of karstic limestone in western Europe. At first glance it presents a bleak appearance, but closer examination reveals the beautiful diversity of flora for which the whole region has become justly famous. The colourful exuberance and profusion of the wild flowers is simply captivating and, subject to the prevailing conditions, we can expect to see many interesting different species.

We begin with a visit to a local private garden at Knockpatrick, which contains many unusual varieties of magnolias, azaleas and rhododendrons. Next we visit the tiny island of Inis Oírr, whose geological features, coastal setting and traditional agricultural practices contribute to the richness of its flora and fauna, and cruise by the Cliffs of Moher, perhaps Ireland's most dramatically impressive natural attraction. We then have a full day exploring The Burren in the company of a local expert guide, where we can expect to see a good selection of plants typical of the area, with 'textbook' examples of pavement, flower-rich grasslands and associated limestone features such as disappearing lakes. We conclude at Bunnally Castle and Folk Park, set in 26 acres of unspoilt Co. Clare countryside.



Aran Islands

**Day 1** On arrival in **Shannon** where on arrival we are met by our coach and tour manager and transfer to Knockpatrick to the **private garden** of Helen and Tim O'Brian. The three acres garden overlooks the Shannon estuary and is almost 100 years old. Helen and Tim are the fourth generation of the family to tend this 1930s garden with dedication and enthusiasm. The garden is endowed with running water and nourishment from the family farm. It contains many unusual varieties of magnolias, azaleas and rhododendrons. Other plants of note are calicanthus, clianthus, drymis,



Moher Coastline

echium and dicksonia. Following our visit we cross the Shannon by the Tarbert to Killimer ferry and continue to the Old Ground Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare. Formerly an eighteenth-century manor house, it blends the warmth of a country home with the style and comfort of a modern hotel. (D)

**Day 2** Following breakfast we drive to **Doolin** where we take a ferry to **Inis Oírr**, the smallest of the Aran Islands. The combination of the island's geological features, coastal setting and traditional agricultural practices contribute to the richness of its flora and fauna, making Inis Oírr a unique and picturesque destination. On the plant side we can expect to find wildflowers, coastal species such as sea thrift and sea campion, ferns and mosses and, as the island is part of the Burren habitat, species such as bloody cranesbill, spring gentian and mountain avens. Wildlife may include seals and seabirds such as puffins, guillemots and razorbills as well as butterflies and dragonflies. After exploring the island (*just three square kilometres in area*) we depart on a **50-minute cruise** beneath the **Cliffs of Moher**, perhaps Ireland's most dramatically impressive natural attraction, especially when viewed from the water. (B, D)

**Day 3** Following breakfast we drive into the beautiful **valley of the River Caher**, where from dense hazel and blackthorn scrub the owner has created a wonderfully varied plantsman's limestone garden, **Caher Bridge Garden**, in the true "cottage" style. The limestone river flows through the one acre garden of many very unusual

plants; "Irish" cultivars and collections of daylilies, hostas and geraniums. The beds are all easily viewed and photographed from the pathways. Next we visit **Doreen Drennan's Garden** near the Cliffs of Moher. As an award-winning gardener with two previous gardens behind her, this third garden was to be Doreen's most challenging to date and it is still evolving. Presently there is a walled garden with raised beds and a water feature. Planted rolling lawns give way to a wild river walk that evokes a feeling of serenity and calm. Doreen is also a talented artist, specialising in impressionist paintings of the Wild Atlantic Way and the Burren. We will have an opportunity to visit her studio/gallery, and perhaps buy a unique souvenir of our holiday. On our way back to the hotel we will briefly visit the **Poulnabrone Dolmen**, an impressive megalithic tomb which, when it was excavated in 1986, was found to contain the bodies of 16 people and various artefacts which dated the tomb to 3600 BC. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning after breakfast we will explore **the Burren** with a local expert. In the course of our full day excursion we can expect to see a good selection of plants typical of the area, with 'textbook' examples of pavement, flower-rich grasslands and associated limestone features such as disappearing lakes. There are some intriguing aspects to the flora of the Burren, such as the curious juxtaposition of species from differing habitats, such as Arctic, Alpine and Mediterranean, and hopefully we will see examples of these. **Please note we will be walking for around five hours so a**

**good degree of mobility is required, along with good walking boots and waterproofs.** (B, D)

**Day 5** After breakfast we transfer back to Shannon Airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER TREVOR EDWARDS

Join Trevor Edwards one of our most popular garden tour managers, discovering the scenic west coast of Ireland.



SAVE \$105 PER PERSON\*

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed breakfast at the Old Ground Hotel, Ennis
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Trevor Edwards as tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
3 - 7 Jun		\$1,990	\$1,885
Single Supplement			\$225

# 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 of Ninfa in Italy.

- 70 **NEW** History and Horticulture in Corsica
- 72 Seine River Cruise featuring Monet's Garden and the Gardens of Normandy
- 74 Glorious Gardens of the Canary Islands
- 75 Dutch Bulbfields in Spring
- 76 Gardens of the French Riviera - Menton Lemon Festival and International Rose Festival
- 77 Iceland Northern Lights & Cultural Malta
- 78 Portugal - Route of the Almond Blossom
- 79 Galicia's Camellia Route
- 80 Gardens and Villas of Sicily
- 81 Villas and Gardens of the Italian Lakes
- 82 **NEW** Gardens of the Neapolitan Riviera
- 84 **NEW** White Cities of Puglia
- 86 Palladian Villas of Veneto & Rome, Ninfa and Castel Gandolfo
- 87 Gardens and Architecture of Andalucia & Gardens and Architecture of Mallorca
- 88 Gardens of Marrakech
- 89 Discover The Durrells' Corfu with Lee Durrell
- 90 **NEW** The Azores: its Gardens and Natural Wonders
- 92 Gardens of Madeira
- 93 The Genius of Monet
- 94 **NEW** History and Culture of the Czech Republic
- 96 Archaeology of Denmark & Sweden
- 97 The Archaeology of Ancient Cyprus
- 98 Albanian Archaeology & Crete Archaeology
- 99 The Art & Architecture of Antwerp & Malta's Archaeological Heritage



Amalfi Coast

NEW TOUR



Bonifacio

## History and Horticulture in Corsica

8 DAYS from \$6,085

The French Island of Corsica is notable for its unusually lush vegetation compared to other islands in the Mediterranean, thanks to its acid soils and wide range of climatic variations. The luxuriant growth – forest, scrub (maquis), olive-trees, orange groves, vineyards and an abundance of flowers – led Napoleon Bonaparte, the island’s most famous son, to say “I would recognise Corsica with my eyes closed from its perfume alone.” This delightful cruise combines some of the Island’s gardens and areas of outstanding natural beauty. No trip to Corsica would be complete without delving into some of the history surrounding the famous military man himself.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Nice** we transfer to our ship ‘**MV La Belle Des Océans**’. The remainder of the afternoon is spent at leisure. (D)

**Day 2** Today as La Belle Des Océans arrive in **Ajaccio**, we gather on the deck for a tasting of traditional myrtle liqueur and a pastry. In the afternoon, we explore the sights and scents of Corsica. We will cross the maquis—the Corsican underbrush exploding with a potpourri of flowers and plants—for a visit to **Corsica PAM** in Ocana. Paul and Jean-Pierre Caux built their essential oil

business from scratch. The lovely surroundings and the panoramic view from the terrace are a great place to discover the secrets of their famous oils. We’ll then visit the honey farm **Jardin des Abeilles** to learn more about beekeeping. An informative walk in the forest and along the Prunelli River brings you to the centre of the maquis, where you’ll be able to breathe in the earthy scents emanating from the heather, arbutus, fig, box, holly, and alder trees. At the end of our tour, you’ll enjoy tasting a selection of honey from the farm. Enjoy an evening



MV La Belle des Océans

of Corsican music on board - a great opportunity to get to know the island through its songs. (B, L, D)

**Day 3** Today, we will visit the **Maison Bonaparte**, a national museum. Napoleon Bonaparte, the French military leader and emperor, was born in this house on August 15, 1769. The museum retraces the history of the Bonaparte family in Corsica as well as the series of exiles they experienced. This is a great opportunity to learn about the former emperor’s life. We return to the ship where the afternoon is at leisure. (B, L, D)

**Day 4** Today is free spend at leisure in **Bonifacio**. Alternatively, you may wish to join today’s optional excursions. This morning offers a chance to join a **guided tour of Bonifacio**, rich with a history told along its small streets and paths, the thousand year old fortress, and the sturdy stone homes perched high above the sea waves. The descent



Saleccia park

(and subsequent ascent) of the King of Aragon’s Stairway will provide some of the best views on the trip – up some 187 steps! This afternoon’s optional excursion will take us to explore the **Lavezzi Islands nature reserve** where we discover this archipelago of islets and granite reefs, as well as the sea caves and cliffs of Bonifacio. In the evening, we enjoy a **dinner at a traditional inn** situated in the heart of the Corsican countryside. As we sit by the fireplace or under the immense cork oak trees, we are welcomed by the owners who will explain their history and their love for this island. Corsican music and songs will accompany our dinner featuring dishes made using seasonal local produce. (B, L, D)

**Day 5** After arriving in **Porto Vecchio**, we depart for a visit to **U Giardinu di l’Isuli**. Here we find a collection of around 1400 plant species essentially of subtropical or tropical origin and around 4000 plants in total. Included in the collection are around 170 species of palm trees, 85 species of Aloe and 35 species of cycads. The garden is separated into geographical regions which highlight the plants found in each area. We return to the ship where the remainder of the day is at leisure. For those interested in history there will be the opportunity to attend an **on board lecture: Pascal Paoli - Island Patriot**. (B, L, D)



Lavezzi Islands nature reserve

**Day 6** This morning after breakfast, we will join a local guide for a **walking tour of Bastia Old Town**. As we wander through the 18th century narrow streets and alleyways our guide will explain the town’s history and highlight key places and buildings of interest such as the ‘Terra Vecchia’ home to the morning market and the large Saint-Jean-Baptiste church. During our tour we will also visit the **Romieu Garden**, a haven of greenery located between the citadel district and the old port. Overlooking the quays, the Romieu Garden was designed in the late 19th century by local architect Paul-Augustin Viale. The Romieu staircase with wrought iron railings winds its way between standing vases, statues and a fountain beneath shady palms leading to spectacular views across the sea. We return to the ship where the remainder of the day is at leisure. This afternoon’s lecture in the lounge for those who wish to attend: **The Bonapartes – A Corsican Family**. (B, L, D)

**Day 7** Today after arriving in **L’Île Rousse**, we head to **Saleccia Park**, a unique seven-hectare estate at the gateway to L’Île Rousse. Here we can explore Corsica through its landscapes and the various aspects of the flora and fauna thanks to local preservation efforts. We have the chance to discover the ‘Art of gardening in the heart of the Corsican maquis’ as we take a leisurely walk amongst olive trees, cypresses and oleanders. The garden was first opened to the public in 2005 and has since been classified as a ‘Remarkable Garden’. We later return to the ship for lunch on board with the afternoon at leisure. As we bid goodbye to Corsica, we gather on the Sun Deck for a cocktail and take in one last glimpse of the beauty of the island before our gala dinner. (B, L, D)

**Day 8** Arriving back in **Nice** this morning, we disembark after breakfast and return to the airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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

SAVE \$210 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights’ full board on board 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)
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits as detailed in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
11 - 18 Jul		
Deck 3	<del>\$6,295</del>	\$6,085
Deck 4	<del>\$6,545</del>	\$6,335
Deck 5	<del>\$7,135</del>	\$6,925
Panorama	<del>\$7,695</del>	\$7,485
Riviera	<del>\$8,115</del>	\$7,905
Ocean	<del>\$8,255</del>	\$8,045
<i>Optional Excursion:</i>		
Bonifacio		\$65
Lavezzi Islands		\$120
Single Supplement		from \$2,095



MS Botticelli ©CroisiEurope

# Seine River Cruise featuring Monet's Garden and the Gardens of Normandy

8 DAYS from \$4,055 | TOUR MANAGER: Trevor Edwards

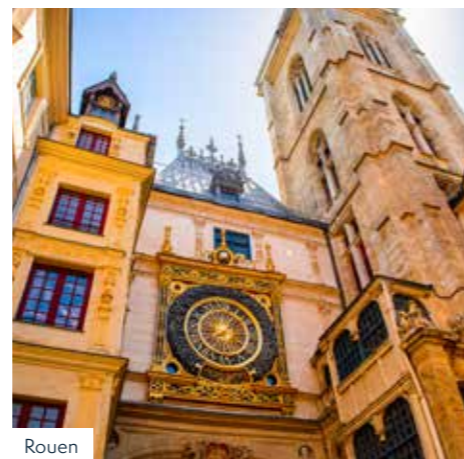
DEPARTURE POINT: London St Pancras International

Join us on a relaxing cruise on the sinuous River Seine, into which we have woven a series of visits to the outstanding gardens of Normandy, including Monet's garden at Giverny, which continues to enthrall countless visitors almost 100 years after his death.

Other garden highlights include Château de Miromesnil, which represents four centuries of harmonious architectural styles, and Le Vasterival, one of the finest gardens of its type and a lasting legacy of its creator, the Princess Sturdza. At the Jardin de Plume we will discover a natural yet structured contemporary garden in a typical Normandy orchard and at the Jardins d'Angélique we explore a romantic and delightfully old-fashioned garden. A visit to the interesting garden at Château de Canon is combined with a heart-warming taste of Normandy at the cellars of Calvados Père Magloire. Waking up to a new view every day (without having to pack and unpack) is always a lovely experience and combined with these wonderful gardens this promises to be an unforgettable cruise holiday.

**Day 1** We depart from London St Pancras International on the morning Eurostar service through the Channel Tunnel to Paris Gare du Nord. (First Class upgrades and regional connections also available on request). On arrival we will be met by our comfortable local coach and transfer to our ship on the banks of the River Seine. In the evening once you have settled into your cabin we will be introduced to the crew and enjoy a **welcome cocktail** before dinner on board. Water levels permitting, we will also enjoy a cruise through **Paris 'by night'**. (D)

**Day 2** Following breakfast we depart for a morning excursion to the **Musée de l'Orangerie des Tuileries**, which is home to the series of 2-metre high murals entitled **Les Nymphéas**, a sequence of impressions such as clouds, reflections and sunsets which Claude Monet installed between 1914 and 1918, when he was at the height of his extraordinary powers. We return to the ship for lunch with the afternoon free to go ashore to shop and sightsee at your leisure. Paris is, of course, the most romantic city in the world with wonderful art galleries, churches and shops. (B, L, D)



Rouen

**Day 3** This morning is spent cruising to **Vernon**. After lunch on board we depart for nearby Giverny and the world famous house and gardens of **Claude Monet**. Both the house and gardens have been lovingly and accurately restored - one would believe that the family have just gone out to walk in the garden. You will have plenty of time to explore this marvellous garden at your leisure, followed by an opportunity to visit the little church where Monet is buried. We return to our ship in time for dinner followed by entertainment as we cruise through Rouen to our overnight berth in **Duclair**. (B, L, D)

**Day 4** After breakfast we depart by coach for the first of two garden visits today, **Château de Miromesnil**, which represents four centuries of harmonious architectural styles including a rare example of Louis XIII monumental style. Of particular interest will be the kitchen garden which



Château de Canon

was restored forty years ago by the Comtesse de Vogüé, grandmother of the present owners. We continue to the nearby garden of **Le Vasterival**. In 1957 Princess Sturdza, a talented plantswoman, started to create this magnificent garden in a natural style covering 7 hectares of acid soil, a kilometre from the sea. Princess Sturdza died in 2009 but the garden continues to thrive, with a huge range of plants which grow to perfection in its composted earth. A guided tour is included here. We will rejoin the ship at **Honfleur**, our overnight stop at the mouth of the Seine. A packed lunch is included today. (B, PL, D)

**Day 5** After breakfast this morning we drive along the Côte Fleurie from Honfleur to **Caen**, pausing for a visit to the **Pegasus Bridge Memorial Museum**. In the afternoon we visit the garden at **Château de Canon at Mezidon-Canon**, which was redesigned by a barrister who knew Horace Walpole. The layout is best understood as a French



Les Andelys

interpretation of the Augustan Style. We conclude today in Pont L'Evêque at the famous **Calvados house of Père Magloire**. We will be guided by the Cellar Master with the aid of the audio-visual presentation, and have a visit to the cellars followed by a tasting in the shop. A packed lunch is included today. (B, PL, D)

**Day 6** As we sit down to breakfast this morning the ship will sail back upstream towards Paris, arriving in the city of **Rouen** around midday. After lunch on board we depart for a visit to the **Jardin de Plume**. Since 1997, Sylvie and Patrick Quibel have been creating this natural yet structured contemporary garden in a typical Normandy orchard. Making generous use of grasses and perennials, the four acre garden includes seasonal plantings, a central square mirror pool and a kitchen garden. We return to the ship in time for dinner and moor in Rouen overnight. (B, L, D)

**Day 7** The morning is spent cruising. After lunch on board we visit the impressive **Jardins d'Angélique** at Montmain. This garden displays intense bursts of flower in a relaxing environment characteristic of Normandy. We rejoin the ship at **Les Andelys**, a little town on a bend in the river which is dominated by a ruined castle, built by Richard the Lionheart in 1196. A **farewell gala dinner** is served tonight on board the ship, a chance to discuss with new-found friends the many sights we have seen along the River Seine. (B, L, D)

**Day 8** After breakfast on board we disembark and transfer to the Gare du Nord for our Eurostar train back to London. (B)

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

## YOUR TOUR MANAGER

### TREVOR EDWARDS

Award-winning Garden Designer, Writer and Broadcaster Trevor Edwards is looking forward to sailing along the Seine and exploring the wonderful gardens of Northern France.



## THREE-DAY PARIS EXTENSION FROM \$495pp

Why not extend your holiday with a two-night stay at a 4-star centrally located hotel including breakfast and station transfers giving you the freedom to explore more of the city at your own pace.

## SAVE \$140 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights in a lower deck cabin on the MS Botticelli on a full board basis
- ▶ Drinks on board with meals and at the bar (excluding premium drinks and spirits)
- ▶ Return standard class rail travel from London St Pancras International to Paris (first class upgrades and regional connections also available on request)
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel in France
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of Trevor Edwards as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
23 - 30 May		
Main deck	\$4,195	\$4,055
Upper Deck Supplement		\$315
Single Supplement		\$835



Jardín de Cactus, Lanzarote

## Glorious Gardens of the Canary Islands

8 DAYS from \$5,455 | TOUR MANAGER: Trevor Edwards

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.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Tenerife** and transfer to **Puerto De La Cruz**. This afternoon is spent at leisure relaxing on board before dinner. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast, we enjoy a trip to **Mt Teide National Park** in central Tenerife - a unique landscape of craters, volcanoes and petrified lava. This afternoon we visit the **Botanical Gardens of Puerto De La Cruz**, with many species of exotic and sub-tropical plants including *Coussapoa dealbata*, a tree with intertwining trunks found in South America. Later, we depart for **The Orchid Gardens** of Sitio Litre, famous for its Dragon Tree which is believed to be nearly 600 years old. (B, L, D)

**Day 3** We arrive in La Palma this morning and have the chance to enjoy an **on board lecture**. After lunch, we head to **Caldera de Taburiente National Park**, home to an enormous crater and a declared UNESCO Biosphere reserve. Next, we visit the island's **Botanical Gardens**, home to over 200 plant species. (B, L, D)

**Day 4** We dock at the island of **La Gomera**, filled with craggy mountains and sprinkled with verdant forests of ferns and moss-covered trees. Enjoy the day at leisure here or join an optional excursion to **Garajonay National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After a traditional

lunch we enjoy a demonstration of the island's unique whistled language **Silbo Gomero**. (B, L, D)

**Day 5** We continue to **Gran Canaria** where this morning's optional excursion is to the **Casa de Colon**, which chronicles the Canaries' history, and the 569m-high **Bandama Caldera**. In the afternoon our optional excursion is to **Teror**, a place of pilgrimage for the islanders, and the garden of **La Marquesa de Arucas**. (B, L, D)

**Day 6** We cruise to **Fuerteventura**, where our optional excursion offers the opportunity to discover an award-winning **goat's cheese**, a cosmetics producer who takes advantage of the abundant **aloe vera** crop, and historic **Betancuria**, the island's first colony. (B, L, D)

**Day 7** Today we reach the last stop of the cruise, **Lanzarote**. We visit the **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. (B, L, D)

**Day 8** After breakfast, we transfer to Lanzarote where our tour concludes (B)

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



MV La Belle Des Océans

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER TREVOR EDWARDS

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



### SAVE \$210 PER PERSON

#### 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)
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of Trevor Edwards as tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
1 - 8 Feb		
Deck 3	\$5,665	\$5,455
Deck 4	\$6,615	\$6,405
Deck 5	\$7,220	\$7,010
Panorama	\$7,820	\$7,610
Riviera	\$8,505	\$8,295
Ocean	\$8,955	\$8,745
Single Supplement		from \$2,095
Optional Excursions:		
La Gomera		\$90
Las Palmas/Bandama		\$80
Teror/Garden		\$90
Fuerteventura		\$70



Keukenhof Gardens

## Dutch Bulbfields in Spring

5 DAYS from \$2,130

**DEPARTURE POINT:** London St Pancras International

Enjoy a riot of colour among the beautiful bulbfields of Holland where nothing quite compares to the sight of not hundreds, not thousands, but millions of flowering bulbs, carpeting the fields in a radiant vision of patterns and patchwork. We begin in the Belgian city of Antwerp with a visit to the newly refurbished reception centre, library and Baroque gardens at Rubens House, before enjoying a visit to the Botanic Gardens. We then embark on our cruise to Rotterdam, via a succession of waterways and sheltered inlets off the North Sea. We enjoy a visit to one of the most famous gardens in the world – Keukenhof, a magnificent display of different tulip, daffodil and hyacinth varieties. We arrive in the Dutch capital of Amsterdam, from where we visit De Haar Castle and Kasteel Museum Sypsteyn, both surrounded by splendid gardens. On this cruise, we'll enjoy four nights on board MS La Bohème. Our comfortable vessel transports us across rivers and sea, ensuring that our journey is just as special as the destinations it brings us to. Think welcome cocktails, lunches and dinners with complimentary wine and beer and, of course, the always convivial company of like-minded travellers.

**Day 1** We depart by rail from London St Pancras International to **Antwerp**, where we visit **Rubens House** and its newly revamped reception building and library, along with the Baroque gardens, filled with over 17,000 plants, followed by a visit to the **Botanic Garden**. We later embark on the MS La Bohème and enjoy a **welcome cocktail reception** before dinner. (D)

**Day 2** This morning we cruise from Antwerp to **Rotterdam**. On arrival we venture ashore and explore at leisure. (B, L, D)

**Day 3** This morning we cruise from Rotterdam to **Utrecht** and in the afternoon we depart for **Keukenhof**, one of the most famous gardens in the world. Over seven million bulbs are planted annually and around one million visitors pass through it from mid-March to mid-May. We rejoin the ship in **Amsterdam** and following dinner you are free to explore ashore, or alternatively join our optional canal cruise, an opportunity to view this spectacular city from the water. (B, L, D)

**Day 4** Today we explore **Kasteel Museum Sypsteyn**, built in the early 20th century in 17th century style. Located beside the Loosdrecht lake and River Vecht, the castle is surrounded by stunning gardens. Later, we visit **De Haar Castle** which has equally splendid grounds including a Roman garden, ponds and canals. As was the fashion when the garden was reconstructed around 1895, the garden closest to the castle was in the French style while the surrounding parkland was in a Romantic English landscape style. (B, L, D)

**Day 5** We disembark in Amsterdam and visit the canal-side private residence from the Dutch 'Golden Age', with a large collection of paintings, fine porcelain and silver, followed by some free time to explore **Amsterdam**. In the afternoon, we catch the train from Amsterdam Centraal railway station to London St Pancras International. (B)

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



Amsterdam

### THREE-DAY AMSTERDAM EXTENSION FROM \$465pp

Why not extend your holiday with a two-night stay at a 4-star centrally located hotel including breakfasts, station transfers and a three-day Amsterdam Travel Card, giving you the freedom to explore the city at your own pace.

### SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' full board accommodation on board the MS La Bohème in a main deck cabin
- ▶ Drinks on board with meals and at the bar (excluding premium drinks and spirits)
- ▶ Standard class rail travel from London to Antwerp, returning from Amsterdam (first class upgrades and regional connections also available on request)
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
14 - 18 Apr	\$2,235	\$2,130
Single Supplement		\$555
Middle Deck Supplement		\$140
Upper Deck Supplement		\$180
Optional Excursion: Amsterdam canal cruise		On request



Menton Lemon Festival parade

## Gardens of the French Riviera - Menton Lemon Festival and International Rose Festival

6 DAYS from \$2,375 | TOUR MANAGER: Trevor Edwards\*

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.

In May the International Rose Festival in Grasse takes the place of the Lemon Festival.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Nice**, we visit the garden of **Serre de la Madone**, created by American Lawrence Johnston, who travelled the world over a 30-year period seeking plants to acclimatise here among the ancient olives. This is a place of luxuriant and exotic beauty, a tropical forest planted on the shores of the Mediterranean. (L, D)

**Day 2** We visit the **Fondation Ephrussi de Rothschild** at St Jean Cap Ferrat, a garden designed as a series of compartments, each reflecting a different architectural style with many interesting tender plants thriving in the favourable climate. We continue to the **Jardin Exotique d'Èze**, on the site of a medieval fortress. In the midst of several hundred species of exotic plants (cacti, aloes, agaves) the visit is an invitation to discover not only plants but art. (B, L)

**Day 3** We begin at the private garden of **Clos du Peyronnet** for a guided tour. To one side of the house is a splendid water garden, where a long canal-like pool runs at right angles to the slope. Exotic flowers and foliage press in from all sides, giving the impression of a jungle only just kept at bay. Next, we go from France to Italy and tour the stunning gardens of La Mortola. **La Mortola** is perhaps the greatest of the Riviera Gardens, in the richness of its collections, the power of its presence

and not least in the impact it has had all over the French Riviera. (B, L, D)

**Day 4** Our day is spent at the **Lemon Festival in Menton** and our ticket includes a grandstand seat for the parade. (B)

**Day 5** We drive to **Cap d'Antibes** for a visit to **Villa Thuret**. A botanist and expert on seaweeds, Gustav Thuret lived here and over a period of twenty years he amassed a collection of rare plants – among them the first eucalyptus to be planted on the Côte d'Azur. We continue to **La Mouissone**, whose gardens reflect the attributes and restrictions presented by the terrain and the Mediterranean climate. We conclude at the village of **St Paul de Vence**, which serves as a creative haven even today. (B, L, D)

**Day 6** We conclude in the glamorous surroundings of **Monte Carlo**, playground of the rich and famous. Here we will enjoy a walk through some of the charming public parks and gardens that bring splashes of colour and open space to the tightly packed urban landscape. Later, we transfer to Nice airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Monte Carlo



Jardin Exotique d'Èze

SAVE \$75 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Five nights' bed & breakfast at the 4-star Hotel Le Grimaldi, Nice (or similar)
- Three dinners and four lunches
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of an expert tour manager (Trevor Edwards 13th Feb\*)

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
<b>Menton Lemon Festival</b>		
13 - 18 Feb*	\$2,550	\$2,445
20 - 25 Feb	\$2,480	\$2,375
Single Supplement		\$455
<b>International Rose Festival</b>		
8 - 13 May	\$3,075	\$2,970
Single Supplement		\$820

## Iceland Northern Lights

5 DAYS from \$2,865 | TOUR MANAGER: Alastair Walker

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...

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Keflavik**, we visit the **Raufarhólshellir Lava Tunnel**, a unique experience exploring the inner workings of a volcanic eruption. From here we head to **Eyrarbakki Village** and then onto the **Urriðafoss waterfall**. We continue to our hotel in Hella. (D)

**Day 2** Our full-day tour of south Iceland includes **Skógafoss waterfall**, a visit to **Skógar Folk Museum** and a unique experience as we walk behind **Seljalandsfoss waterfall**. (B, D)

**Day 3** The remote **Skálholt church** and **Bingvellir 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. (B, L, D)

**Day 4** 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**. (B, D)

**Day 5** We tour the **Reykjanes Peninsula** including the **Gunnhver Hot Springs** before returning to Keflavik where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Aurora borealis, Reykjavik

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast: two nights at the Stracta Hotel, Hella and two nights at the Grand Hotel Reykjavik
- One lunch
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of Alastair Walker as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
9 - 13 Feb	\$2,970	\$2,865
9 - 13 Nov	\$3,250	\$3,145
Single Supplement		\$555

\*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.

## Cultural Malta

5 DAYS from \$1,360 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

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.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in Malta, we transfer to our comfortable 4-star hotel in St Paul's Bay, overlooking the sea. (D)

**Day 2** We spend a full day in **Valletta**, Malta's bustling capital city with its unique combination of architectural styles. We will enjoy views over the Grand Harbour from the **Barrakka Gardens**, admire the art works in **St John's Co-Cathedral**, one of the most spectacular in Europe, and visit the **Casa Rocca Piccola**, which gives an insight to the customs and traditions of the Maltese nobility over the last 400 years. We conclude at the **Malta Experience**, where a state-of-the-art presentation brings 7,000 years of history to life. (B, D)

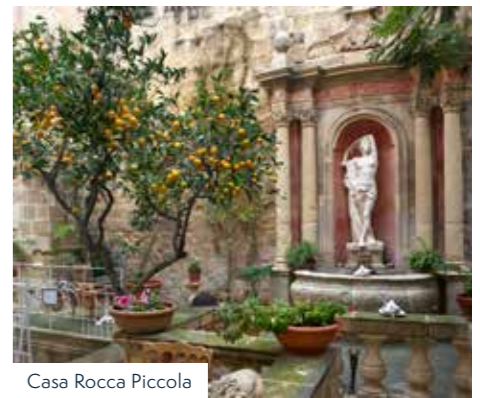
**Day 3** Today is free to explore the island at your leisure, or join one of two optional excursions - a full day on the peaceful

neighbouring island of **Gozo**, including visits to the prehistoric **Ggantija Temples**, the capital city of **Victoria** and the picturesque **Bay of Xlendi**, or a half-day touring the southern half of Malta, with visits to **Vittoriosa**, including a boat trip around the harbour, and the village of **Marsaxlokk**. (B, D)

**Day 4** A full day tour takes us to the **Palazzo Parisio**, where we will have an **exclusive afternoon tea** in the most opulent surroundings. We also visit **Mdina**, Malta's former capital city; **Fağar Qim**, Malta's main historic site; and the **Blue Grotto**, where we enjoy a boat trip. (B, AT, D)

**Day 5** After breakfast, we transfer to Malta airport where our tour concludes. (B)

**Inc. meals:** B: Breakfast, AT: Afternoon Tea, D: Dinner



Casa Rocca Piccola

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Four nights' dinner (with wine), bed & breakfast at the 4-star Doubletree by Hilton, St Paul's Bay
- Afternoon tea at Palazzo Parisio
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
4 - 8 Mar	\$1,465	\$1,360
4 - 8 Nov	\$1,605	\$1,500
No Single Supplement		
Sea View Supplement		\$50
Optional Excursions:		
Gozo		\$205
Southern Malta		\$120



Almond trees, Douro Valley

## Portugal - Route of the Almond Blossom

8 DAYS from \$3,235 | TOUR MANAGER: Trevor Edwards

This tour travels through the Douro Valley taking in the stunning almond blossom vistas which are comparable with the more famous cherry blossoms in Japan - but a lot closer to home. Spend some time exploring the vibrant city of Porto with its UNESCO World Heritage Centre - the Ribeira district is home to colourful houses, narrow cobbled streets and a surfeit of Portuguese charm. Departing from the city we enjoy a scenic train ride through the Douro Valley with its spectacular vistas and ranks of flowering almond trees. Our destination is Vila Nova de Foz Côa, whose almond trees bloom with delicate pink and white flowers, a magnificent sight to behold. We also visit some of the Douro Valley's notable Manor Houses including Casa Mateus and Casa do Campo as well as some of the area's fascinating gardens.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Porto** we enjoy a city tour exploring the city's many landmarks, such as **Porto Cathedral**, the **Clérigos Tower** and the **Lello Bookshop** concluding with a visit to the **Crystal Palace Gardens**. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast we visit the old **Quinta da Arcadia**, the gardens here have several interesting features such as the lake, woodland area, the greenhouse, the Swan Garden and a variety of camellias. This afternoon there is time to spend at leisure or perhaps you may wish to join our optional tile painting experience. (B)

**Day 3** Today, we leave Porto behind, heading in the direction of **Vila Nova de Foz Côa**, 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. After lunch in a local restaurant, we visit **Barca d'Alva** to view the blossom before heading to our hotel. (B, L)

**Day 4** Today we visit **Casa de Mateus**, a time machine that allows us to travel through the last five hundred years of the history of Portugal and the wider world. After lunch, we visit **Casa do Campo**, reputedly home to Portugal's oldest camellia tree, around 250 years old. The garden,

regarded as one of the most artistic in the region, is crossed by a graceful set of paths of boxwood and trimmed camellias. (B, L)

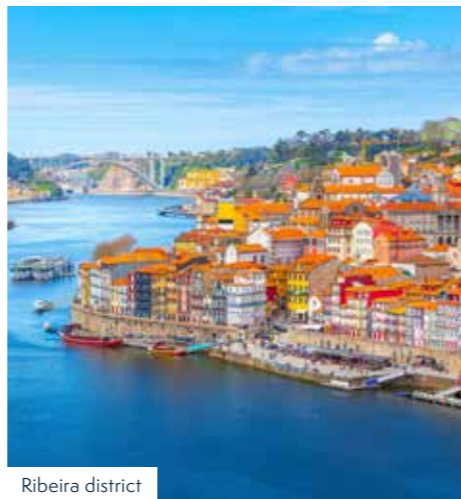
**Day 5** After breakfast we head to the **Bom Jesus do Monte Sanctuary**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its stunning architecture, beautiful gardens and religious significance. In the afternoon we head to the **Biscainhos House Museum** whose gardens were in 2020 awarded the Historic Garden Quality Seal by the Portuguese Historic Gardens Association. (B)

**Day 6** After breakfast, we discover **Quinta da Aveleda**. Among the trees here are rare species of centenary trees, such as the Japanese cedar, the marsh cypress or the American sequoia. We continue to **Guimarães** before our last visit of the day, the **Flavius camellia nursery**, home to more than 2,300 varieties and strains of camellia. (B)

**Day 7** We start our day visiting the **Santa Bárbara Garden** in Braga, one of the oldest gardens in the city. We later return to Porto before we enjoy a farewell dinner. (B, D)

**Day 8** After breakfast, we transfer to Porto airport where our tour concludes (B)

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



Ribeira district

### 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.



SAVE \$140 PER PERSON

#### 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
- ▶ Welcome and farewell dinner
- ▶ Two lunches
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of Trevor Edwards as tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
12 - 19 Mar	\$3,375	\$3,235
19 - 26 Mar	\$3,375	\$3,235
Single Supplement		\$555
Optional Excursion: Tile Painting		\$65



Santiago de Compostela

## Galicia's Camellia Route

6 DAYS from \$1,730 | TOUR MANAGER: Tony Russell

With a milder, wetter climate than the rest of Spain, the gardens in Galicia have a luxuriant air, accentuated by the fact that many belong to grand country mansions (pazos). Another happy feature of the climate is that camellias thrive here, and in the spring sunshine they provide welcome splashes of colour, blooming exuberantly in shades of white, pink and red.

We will follow the length of the camellia route, which extends from La Coruña in the north by way of the historic pilgrimage centre of Santiago de Compostela to Vigo in the south. Along the way, we visit a collection of splendid gardens, including the outstanding Castillo de Soutomaior, while enjoying some spring sunshine and the uplifting sight of one of the garden world's favourite flowering plants in full bloom.

**Day 1** On arrival in **La Coruña** we will be met by our local coach and transfer to our hotel. (D)

**Day 2** This morning we have a **tour of the city** to see its modern parks and the historic city centre. We then visit the garden of **Pazo de Mariñan** overlooking the quiet waters of a river estuary. Amongst the botanical varieties to be found here 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. (B)

**Day 3** We leave La Coruña and head for **Santiago de Compostela** where we will visit the **Monasterio de San Lorenzo de Trasouto**. Its 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. We then visit the great Romanesque **Cathedral** with its Baroque façade and its Cloisters, which is reputed to hold the remains of **St James**. This has made Santiago a centre for pilgrimage and thousands walk the pilgrim's way of El Camino de Santiago each year. (B, D)

**Day 4** We depart for the **Pazo de Oca** at La Estrada, where the practical and the beautiful are united in a network of canals and

ponds in a mainly 18th century garden. Our next visit is to the **Pazo de Santa Cruz de Rivadulla** at Vedra-Ortigueira. Once the home of the canon of Santiago Cathedral, this charming manor house now boasts one of the region's best plant collections, including hundreds of varieties of Camellia. (B)

**Day 5** We visit the **Pazo de Rubianes** at Arousa, where the well-proportioned garden features fountains, pools and camellia walks, which perfectly complement the handsome villa. We then visit the impressive hill top **Castillo de Soutomaior**, which has an important and historic camellia collection and commands views over the wild yet attractive countryside of Galicia. We continue to our hotel in Vigo. (B, D)

**Day 6** We visit the **Pazo de Quiñones de León**, a Baroque mansion, which became a city museum in 1937 and is situated at the top of Castrelos Park, through which the Lagares River flows. We later transfer to La Coruña airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Camellia

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER TONY RUSSELL

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



SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

#### 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)
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ Services of Tony Russell as tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
12 - 17 Mar	\$1,835	\$1,730
Single Supplement		\$275





Villa Giulia

## Gardens and Villas of Sicily

8 DAYS from \$3,090 | TOUR MANAGER: Trevor Edwards\*

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.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Catania** we transfer to our hotel. (D)

**Day 2** Visit **Villa Trinità**, an elegant garden born from lava, which thrives on the slopes of Etna. This afternoon we take an excursion to **Mount Etna**, Europe's highest active volcano. (B, L, D)

**Day 3** Today is ours to 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. (B, D)

**Day 4** We begin at the **Gardens of Princess Maria Carla Borghese**, created out of barren ground almost 50 years ago. Next it's on to **San Giuliano**, where a member of the team gives us an exclusive insight into Sicilian gardening. (B, D)

**Day 5** We discover an extensive collection of herbs and spices with a multisensory tour of **Gli Aromi Sicily**. Lunch here makes for today's biggest highlight: a home-made feast prepared

with an abundance of fresh herbs and devotion. Free time in **Ragusa** follows. (B, L, D)

**Day 6** After lunch at a former **Benedictine monastery**, we transfer to the village of **Monreale** and visit the **Cathedral and Abbey**, with its 70,000 square feet of mosaics, amazing gold leaf and glass interiors. This astounding display echoes the opulence of the Alhambra, and is a sight not to be missed. (B, L, D)

**Day 7** Palermo was once known as Sicily's "garden city". We find out why during our morning visit to the local **Botanical Gardens**, one of the oldest and most significant centres of plant research in the Mediterranean. We also visit the public garden of **Villa Giulia** and the impressive **Norman Palace**. (B, D)

**Day 8** After breakfast, we transfer to Palermo airport where . (B)

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



Monreale Cathedral

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER TREVOR EDWARDS

Join Trevor in May as he explores one of his favourite European destinations. Experience a wide variety of gardens in the company of a world renowned expert.



### SAVE UP TO \$140 PER PERSON

#### 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
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of an expert tour manager (\*Trevor Edwards in May) and a local guide

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
18 - 25 Mar	\$3,195	\$3,090
13 - 20 May*	\$3,475	\$3,335
Single Supplement		\$555



Villa del Balbianello

## Villas and Gardens of the Italian Lakes

8 DAYS from \$3,390 | TOUR MANAGER: Kate Williamson

The fabulous scenery and warming climate of the Northern Italian Lakes have attracted eager aristocrats and the wealthy for years. The beguiling beauty of this unique corner of Europe shows no signs of waning with lush gardens and colourful blooms to be seen throughout the year. Elegant villas and lush gardens complement the natural landscape of the Northern Italian Lakes. We have a real treat when we visit the private garden of the President of the Italian Camellia Society, home to a collection of over 500 plants, where we also enjoy a delightful lunch. Nowhere captures the extravagant spirit of the Lakeland gardens better than the three Borromean islands, Bella, Madre and Pescatori, which feature sumptuous terraced gardens, shaded woodland walks, flowered terraces and elegant statuary. Other highlights during our stay include **Villa Taranto**, with its rare botanical species, and a little-known private garden set on the hillside above Lake Orta. Monumental trees and seasonal blooms put on a dazzling display at **Villa Carlotta** and the impeccably maintained and manicured garden of **Villa Balbianello** completes our memorable tour.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Milan** we transfer to our hotel at **Lake Maggiore** where we enjoy lunch. (L, D)

**Day 2** Visit the gardens of **Villa Taranto**, flourishing with rare botanical examples and a wide range of plants. Later, we visit **Lake Orta** and take a boat trip to the tiny island of **San Giulio**, followed by a visit to a little-known **private garden**. (B, D)

**Day 3** Spend a full day exploring the famous Borromean islands. We start with a cruise from **Stresa** to **Isola Bella** to see the vast baroque palace built from the island's rock and surrounded by terraced gardens. We then continue to **Isola Pescatori**, with its narrow cobbled streets and pretty harbour, and **Isola Madre**, which in contrast to Isola Bella has a simple, unspoilt aspect. (B, D)

**Day 4** Tour the private garden of the **President of the Italian Camellia Society**, home to a remarkable collection of camellias, with over 500 plants and 318 cultivars. The garden is, of course, in full bloom in spring and provides the perfect setting for a delightful and relaxed lunch. (B, L, D)

**Day 5** Explore the perfect example of a formal Italian garden at **Villa Cicogna Mozzoni** situated in what were ancient hunting grounds for the nobility, in the foothills between Varese and Lake Lugano. Here we will be privileged to enjoy a **private guided tour** with the owner. Later we transfer to our hotel in **Como**, where wine is included each night with dinner. (B, D)

**Day 6** Today is free to explore at your own pace. Take a boat trip on the lake or visit the nearby **Villa Melzi d'Eril** (admission not included). (B, D)

**Day 7** Spend the day on **Lake Como**, so similar and yet so different from its larger neighbour, Maggiore. On arrival in **Tremezzo** we will have time to enjoy the elegant 18th century **Villa Carlotta**, where the flowering changes throughout the year. The house itself has its own story to tell, full of neo-classical art treasures including paintings by Hayez and sculptures by Canova. (B, D)

**Day 8** After breakfast, we transfer to **Milan airport** where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Isola Madre

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER KATE WILLIAMSON

Kate enjoys nothing more than showing off the wonderful gardens of her adopted country, and has a fantastic store of local knowledge.



### SAVE \$140 PER PERSON

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Seven nights' dinner, bed & breakfast: four nights at the 4-star Hotel Milan Speranza Au Lac, Lake Maggiore and three nights (with wine) at the 4-star Hotel Barchetta Excelsior, Lake Como
- Two lunches
- Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- Services of officially accredited guide Kate Williamson as tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
26 Mar - 2 Apr	\$3,530	\$3,390
7 - 14 May	\$3,810	\$3,670
Single Supplement		\$695
Lake View Supplement		On request

NEW TOUR



Giardini la Mortella gardens



Villa Cimbrone

## Gardens of the Neapolitan Riviera

7 DAYS from \$3,005

Southern Italy has a beautifully warm climate which, combined with a rich and fertile soil, is ideally suited not only to olives, oranges and lemons but to a wide range of tender exotics. This has led to the creation of some fantastic villas, gardens, vineyards and lemon groves all doused in the ancient culture that surrounds the vibrant city of Naples itself.

The largest island in the Bay of Naples is Ischia and here we will visit La Mortella, a dazzling garden of lush exotics and tender trees, which was started by the composer William Walton. Umbrella pines, groves of ilex and arbutus, Italian cypresses and myrtles thrive here in glorious companionship. In Ravello on the Amalfi coast, we visit the Villa Rufolo, laid out on three terraces within a complex of early buildings. On the upper terrace umbrella pines and cypresses shade a wellhead while on a lower level classical geometric beds edged with box are filled with modern flowers. Nearby is the Villa Cimbrone, whose site on a cliff-top promontory overlooking the sea is beyond compare. Finally there is the opportunity to visit Pompeii, one of the most remarkable sites anywhere in the world, which offers a fascinating yet tragic glimpse into a distant past.

**Day 1** En route to our hotel from Naples we will visit the **Caserta Palace Gardens**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most beautiful gardens in Europe. Designed by Luigi Vanvitelli in the 18th century, the gardens are a masterpiece of Baroque landscape architecture. The gardens are divided into two parts: the Italian Garden and the English Garden. The Italian Garden is a formal garden with fountains, sculptures and flowerbeds. The English Garden is a more natural garden with trees, lakes and meadows. One of the most iconic features of the gardens is the fountain of

Diana and Actaeon and the grand Cascade with its three tiers of fountain cascading down the slope. **We enjoy a guided tour here.** (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast we will travel by boat to the beautiful island of **Capri** which is only 6 kms in length and 2km in width, where we will have our first visit to the gardens of **Villa San Michele**. The Villa San Michele was built on the site of a Roman manor on the mountain face looking across towards Monte Tiberio and the bay. It houses the Swedish author Axel Munthe's collection of Roman sculpture, antique furniture and prints and is now the property



Villa Rufolo

of the Swedish State. The park is of great beauty and botanical interest and affords splendid views of the Gulf of Naples with Vesuvius and the Sorrento peninsula dominating the skyline. Our second visit will be to **Giardini di Augusto** with its fantastic panoramic view of the island's south side. The gardens belonged to the villa of Friedrich Alfred Krupp, son of the founder of the great German steelworks. Built on the ruins of the ancient Roman structures, the gardens were donated by Krupp to Capri. In a corner of the garden a statue of Lenin was erected to commemorate his stay on the island. (B, D)

**Day 3** After breakfast we transfer to the harbour in Naples and take a ferry to **Ischia**, the largest island in the Bay of Naples, to enjoy a visit to the gardens of **La Mortella**. The composer, Sir William Walton, came here with his wife Susana in 1956 who

then started the garden in the sloping gully before building the house in 1962. Russell Page, the garden designer, drew up a plan for the south-sloping valley, allowing the rocky ground to dictate the seemingly naturalistic planting style but imposing his own geometry – an axial line framing the distant peak of Mount Ipomeo. Here you will be dazzled by the array of rare and tender trees, palms, shrubs, ferns and bulbs. La Mortella is not only a garden of lush exotics, but simultaneously indigenous plants cling precariously to the steep terraced hillsides above. Umbrella pines, groves of ilex and arbutus, Italian cypresses and myrtles thrive here in glorious companionship. **A guided tour is included.** This afternoon there will be some free time to explore at leisure before we return by boat to Naples and to our hotel. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning, after breakfast, we visit the gardens of **Villa Rufolo**, which commands picture perfect views over the Amalfi coast. This is one of the oldest surviving palaces in Italy dating from the 13th century – Wagner visited the villa in 1880 and was inspired to write part of his opera



Pompeii

Parisfal here. On the upper terrace umbrella pines and cypresses shade a wellhead while on a lower level classical geometric beds edged with box are filled with modern flowers. Tender plants which thrive in the mild climate are a feature of the lower terrace. In the afternoon we will visit the gardens of **Villa Cimbrone**, a 19th century Moorish/English hybrid by William Beckett, Lord Grimthorpe, who owned the property until 1900. The garden was designed on a cliff-top promontory with magnificent views of the Amalfi coast jutting out 106 metres above the Mediterranean. Trees, flowers and plants grow in profusion. A wisteria clad pergola stretches almost the full length of the central axis, while on either side there are imaginative themed gardens including a stretch of lawn decorated with statues, a sunken teahouse garden, a rose garden and a shady grove of umbrella pines and cypresses which descends down the steep slopes to the valleys below. (B, D)

**Day 5** After breakfast the day is at your leisure, alternatively why not join our optional excursion – **Sorrento Lemon, Olive Oil and Wine tasting tour** with lunch where we will experience some of the wonderfully produced local specialities. We take a walk among olive and lemon trees and visit both an ancient and a modern olive oil mill, before tasting a variety of different types of olive oils, jams, vinegar, limoncello and liqueurs – a truly tantalizing treat for the tastebuds. We also enjoy some wine tasting accompanied by a light lunch. (B, D)

**Day 6** Today, we are joined by a local expert guide for a day to explore the **archaeological wonders of Pompeii**, which was of course the town tragically drowned in lava following the

eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD. The town was buried under 23 feet of ash, which solidified with rain and time, preserving everything as if it was in a time capsule. Hidden for centuries, excavation work revealed an elegant resort with complete streets, beautiful villas and sculptures. Now almost four-fifths of the original city has been unearthed. (B, D)

**Day 7** After breakfast, we transfer to Naples airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Six nights' dinner with wine, bed and breakfast at the 4-star Hotel Scapolatiello
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager & local guides

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
11 - 17 Apr	<del>\$3,110</del>	\$3,005
Single Supplement		\$275
Optional Excursion: Sorrento Lemon, Olive Oil and Wine tasting tour		On request

NEW TOUR



Gallipoli

## White Cities of Puglia

8 DAYS from \$2,865 | TOUR MANAGER: Clive Warsop

Puglia is the long strip of land that makes up the 'heel' of Italy. For centuries it was fought over and conquered by the major powers of the day, from the Greeks and Romans to the Turks and Spanish, all of whom have left their mark.

Today it remains a traditional and relatively undiscovered region, yet with fine architecture, attractive countryside and a relaxed culture that deserves to be better known. Among the more striking features are the cylindrical, whitewashed buildings with grey conical roofs known as trulli, which are often joined together in a random, organic manner. Elsewhere we will see imposing castles and ornate cathedrals, ancient archaeological sites and mysterious caves, and have a taste of the top-quality olive oil for which the region is famous for.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Bari** we transfer to our hotel in Lecce, where a welcome dinner is included this evening. (D)

**Day 2** Today we will explore **Lecce**, a highly attractive town characterised by the warm pink of the local sandstone, so easy to work with that it fostered the rise of a local style (*barocco leccese*). Rather than the architects, it was the local stonemasons who left their mark on the city, crowding its buildings with ornate and intricate stonework: fanciful cherubs, monsters, flowers, fruits, beauties and beasts. We will meet our local guide at the hotel for a half day **guided walking tour** of the city, during which we will see many of

these fine buildings and visit one in particular, the **Basilica de Sante Croce**. The church has a richly decorated façade, with six smooth columns supporting an entablature with animals, grotesque figures and vegetables. The Basilica also boasts a large rose window. The main portal has a pair of Corinthian columns and the coats of arms of Philip III of Spain, Mary of Enghien and Walter VI of Brienne. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning after breakfast we head to the 'Beautiful city' **Gallipoli** - a name this town certainly lives up to. We are joined by a local guide for a **walking tour** of the historic centre which is surrounded by fortified walls and is accessed by a



Matera

bridge. Here we can explore the narrow laneways home to local gastronomy businesses and craft shops. This afternoon we embark on a captivating tour of **Santa Maria di Leuca**, where the turquoise waters, dramatic cliffs, and charming coastal villages combine to create an enchanting Mediterranean experience. (B)

**Day 4** Today we visit "**La Cutura**" **Botanical Garden**, an old country estate built in the classic rural style of the late 19th century. Today the renowned botanical garden extends for 35 hectares and houses a rich collection of rare plants: succulents and tropicals. A paradise born of stone (*Cutura* - from "cute", a dialectal synonym of stone), unique in Italy, rich in flora, a place of knowledge and recreation, where pleasure and nature blend in perfect harmony, in a triumph of scents and colours. In the early afternoon we enjoy a peaceful walk through the charming centre of **Otranto** with our



Alberobello

local guide. We learn about the coastal town's history and take in the beautiful landscape surrounding Otranto. Later we enjoy a relaxed walk at **Orte bay and bauxite caves**. (B)

**Day 5** This morning, we leave Lecce and head to **Matera**, the Sassi town, famous for movies like "The Passion of Christ" and the James Bond film "No Time to Die". The UNESCO World Heritage-listed rock city of Matera stretches over a steep cliff. We have some free time to wander through the streets of the historic Sasso Caveoso neighbourhood to admire the churches and public squares and don't forget to snap some photos of the famous cave houses. Later this afternoon we head to our hotel in the town of **Alberobello**. (B, D)

**Day 6** Today after breakfast, we embark on a **guided tour of the town of Alberobello** to see some of the trullo houses, the cylindrical, whitewashed buildings with grey conical roofs, often joined together in a random, organic manner, that are unique to this part of Italy. In the Monti district there are 1030 trulli, which are among the oldest buildings, still preserving the original features of construction. Our local guide will explain the history and construction methods that have been used for countless generations. In the afternoon we leave for **Cisternino** to visit an **oil mill** learning the secrets of olive harvest, olive pressing and olive oil production. The experience ends with olive oil tasting in a very authentic Pugliese environment. Following this, we then head to **Castellana Caves** for a guided tour of the caves which are hidden beneath the sun-drenched landscapes of Puglia. The mesmerising Castellana Caves are a subterranean wonderland of awe-inspiring beauty and geological marvels. Carved over millions of

years by the forces of nature, these vast underground chambers and labyrinthine passages invite visitors on a journey into the heart of the Earth. Descending into the depths of the Castellana Caves, visitors are greeted by a world of stunning natural formations—stalactites, stalagmites, and delicate crystalline structures that shimmer in the soft glow of underground streams and cavernous chambers. (B)

**Day 7** Today we visit **Taranto**, one of the largest towns of Puglia, where we enjoy a guided walking tour. Taranto is famous for having 2 seas, the Mar Piccolo and Mar Grande which are separated by a revolving bridge. We visit the **Aragonese castle**, the Greek colony in the Ancient Village and the New Town. We visit the **National Archaeological Museum** where we can view one of the largest collections of artifacts from the Magna Graecia. Indeed, Taranto was one of the biggest cities of the Greek Empire dating back some 3500 years. (B)

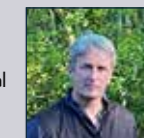
**Day 8** After breakfast we leave Alberobello and head to **Bari**. We explore the city on foot with a local tour guide visiting the most beautiful spots and learn all the city's stories and secrets. Starting with a **walk around Bari's Old Town**, the tour introduces you to standout sights such as the **Basilica of St. Nicholas** with its sacred crypt, the **San Sabino Cathedral** and the beautiful squares facing the Adriatic Sea. A stop in the **orecchiette street** will make your day as we see the locals hand-crafting this regional pasta speciality. This afternoon we visit **Castello Svevo**. Perched majestically on the edge of the sparkling Adriatic Sea, it stands as a timeless sentinel, bearing witness to centuries of history and intrigue. This imposing fortress, with its

sturdy stone walls and formidable towers, commands attention and admiration from all who behold it. Later in the afternoon we transfer to the airport where our tour concludes.

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

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER CLIVE WARSOP

Clive Warsop is an environmental archaeologist. He lectured and tutored at the University of Edinburgh for 10 years on the archaeology of Scotland and aspects of European archaeology.



SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed and breakfast; four nights at the 4-star Hilton Garden Inn, Lecce and three nights at the 4-star Grand Hotel Olimpo, Alberobello (or similar)
- ▶ Three dinners
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of Clive Warsop as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
1 - 8 Oct	\$2,970	\$2,865
Single Supplement		\$555

# Palladian Villas of Veneto

5 DAYS from \$2,550 | TOUR MANAGER: Kate Williamson

Veneto is one of Italy's wealthiest regions, reflected in the extravagance of its grand villas and their stunning gardens. Many of the villas we visit were designed by Andrea Palladio, one of the most influential individuals in the history of western architecture. Join us as we discover no fewer than five glorious villas, including Palladio's masterpiece Villa Rotonda.

**Day 1** After arriving in **Venice** we visit the grand gardens of the **Villa Pisani**. The high walls here enclose an impressive array of greenhouses, where prize-winning camellias were once grown. From here, we transfer to our hotel. (D)

**Day 2** We are joined by a local guide for a walking tour of Vicenza's historic city centre, including the wonderful **Teatro Olimpico**. We continue to **Villa Rotonda**, where we have a personal guided tour with the aristocratic owner. From here, we visit the **Villa Valmarana** and enjoy a personally guided tour followed by dinner in a room adorned with Tiepolo's frescoes. The Villa's surroundings are designed to suit different tastes and functional needs, ranging from an Italian garden with dovecote and the well, the walk through the hornbeam and the pagoda in the woods. (B, D)

**Day 3** We start at the **Villa Barbarigo**, surrounded by an exceptional example of Baroque

gardens. One of the most striking features is a series of ascending pools decorated with statues and fountains. Next, we'll have a photo opportunity outside **Villa Vescovi** in the Euganean Hills. Dating from 1535, this was the summer retreat of the Bishops of Padua. Later, we explore **Le Paradis des Papillons**, a wonderful garden which is a haven for butterflies and birds. (B, D)

**Day 4** After breakfast, we explore the **Villa Barbaro**, with its secret garden behind the villa. In the evening we visit the lustrous **Villa Godi Malinverni**, where we have a gala dinner, hosted by the aristocratic owners. (B, D)

**Day 5** We head for Padua and visit the **Orto Botanico (Botanic Garden)** followed by the **Scrovegni Chapel**, with its exquisite Giotto frescoes, before we transfer to Venice airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Villa Rotonda

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' bed and breakfast in the 4-star Sweet Hotel in Schiavon (or similar)
- ▶ Four dinners
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ Services of officially accredited guide Kate Williamson as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
20 - 24 May	\$2,795	\$2,690
16 - 20 Sep	\$2,655	\$2,550
Single Supplement		\$275

# Gardens and Architecture of Andalucia

8 DAYS from \$2,515

Andalucia is unrivalled in Europe for its wealth of history, culture, Moorish architecture and gardens – all set against the backdrop of snow-capped mountains. We visit the gardens which complement the adjoining palaces and discover the wild mountain landscapes. A highlight for many will be the wonderful Generalife Gardens in Granada, where patios and terraces are filled with colour, and captivating views of the city are framed by archways. Moving on to Córdoba we visit the Great Mosque, one of the most ancient garden sites in the world, and continue to the vibrant city of Seville and the dramatically perched Ronda.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Málaga** we transfer to our hotel for our evening meal. (D)

**Day 2** Visit the **Alhambra Palace** and **Generalife Gardens**, Granada's outstanding attraction. Later we wander through the medieval streets of the **Albaicín**, catching glimpses of patio gardens. (B)

**Day 3** We are joined by a local guide as we head to the **Alpujarra** and **Sierra Nevada** region, paying visits to small villages and enjoying beautiful scenery along the way. (B)

**Day 4** En route to Seville, we visit **Córdoba**. Here we discover the **Great Mosque** with its Orange Grove, which was first laid out in the late 8th century. The gardens of **The Royal Palaces of**

**the Alcázar** are Moorish in style, laid out in rows around long pools with numerous fountains. (B, D)

**Day 5** Enjoy a guided tour of **Seville** including the **Plaza de España**, **Gardens of Murillo**, the **Cathedral**, **Seville's Orange Tree Courtyard** and the **Royal Palaces of the Alcázar**. (B)

**Day 6** Today is free to explore **Seville**. (B)

**Day 7** We visit **Ronda**, a spectacular town rising above the gorges of the River Tajo. (B, D)

**Day 8** After breakfast, we transfer to Málaga airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Alcazar de los Reyes Cristianos

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed & breakfast: three nights at the 4-star Hotel Santos Saray in Granada; three nights at the 3-star Hotel Macarena in Seville; one night at the 3-star Hotel R. Polo in Ronda (or similar)
- ▶ Three dinners
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager & local guides

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
12 - 19 May	\$2,620	\$2,515
8 - 15 Sep	\$2,620	\$2,515
Single Supplement		\$555

# Rome, Ninfa and Castel Gandolfo

4 DAYS from \$2,130

Open by special arrangement, we are delighted to offer this opportunity to visit the beautiful gardens of Ninfa. We also have the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the Popes as we visit the gardens of Castel Gandolfo.

The romantic flower-covered ruins at Ninfa, are as close to gardening perfection as you can get. Scented roses, hydrangeas and jasmines curtain what remains of the walls of medieval buildings and paths meander beside a crystal-clear river.

The Villa Lante is a study in geometry and symmetry dating back to the 16th century, with many water features including a huge, balustraded water fountain which is a superb example of late Renaissance style. The 16th century gardens at Villa D'Este, romantically overgrown with tall pines, evergreen oaks and cedars, are renowned for their use of water and the garden seems to be full of sparkling spray.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Rome** we have a short city tour, including sights such as the **Colosseum**, **St. Peter's Square and Basilica** and the **Spanish Steps**. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast we depart for **Viterbo**, where we have a guided tour. We'll see a number of grand palaces and a host of old churches which are enclosed by an intact set of medieval walls. Nearby, we find the gardens of **Villa Lante**, described as "one of Italy's greatest Renaissance gardens." (B)

**Day 3** The gardens at the traditional papal residence of **Castel Gandolfo** await this morning and in the afternoon we visit **Ninfa**, which after being abandoned for hundreds of years because of malaria is now deemed by many to be the most beautiful garden in Europe. (B)

**Day 4** This morning we visit **Villa d'Este** in Tivoli, the 16th century gardens known for their use of water. Later, we transfer to the airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Gardens of Ninfa

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' bed & breakfast at a 4-star hotel in Rome
- ▶ Dinner and welcome drink on the first evening
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
13 - 16 May	\$2,235	\$2,130
Single Supplement		\$590

# Gardens and Architecture of Mallorca

6 DAYS from \$1,885

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.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Palma**, we transfer to our hotel. (D)

**Day 2** Our day starts at the gardens of **Raixa**, once part of a Moorish estate. From here, we take a tour of the garden of **Son Marroig**, which is arranged in a series of attractive terraces. Later, we take a ride on the **vintage train** that runs along a highly scenic route from Soller to Palma. (B, D)

**Day 3** We visit the **Jardines de Alfaiba**, where young chusan palms contrast with more substantial mature date palms. After lunch, we visit the monastery of **Real Cartuja de Valldemosa** with its green bell tower. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today we tour the city of **Palma**. (B, D)

**Day 5** We visit the unique necropolis of **Son Real** before lunch in the former capital of the island, **Alcudia**. Later we transfer to the **Museo Sa Bassa Blanca**. (B, L, D)

**Day 6** After breakfast, we transfer to Palma airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Garden at Son Marroig

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Five nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 4-star Hotel THB Maria Isabel, Playa de Palma, plus one lunch
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
18 - 23 Mar	\$1,990	\$1,885
22 - 27 Apr	\$2,550	\$2,445
15 - 20 Oct	\$2,270	\$2,165
Single Supplement		\$555



La Majorelle Garden

## Gardens of Marrakech

5 DAYS from \$2,095

This timeless city has an enduring appeal with its low-rise pink and red buildings set against the snow-capped Atlas Mountains. Its beating heart is the square of Jemaa El Fna, where musicians and story-tellers and snake-charmers act out compelling scenes which have changed little over the centuries, and you will find yourself irresistibly drawn here.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Marrakech** we transfer to our hotel, where there will be a **guided tour** of the resort grounds. (D)

**Day 2** We begin our tour of Marrakech at **El Bahia Palace**. The garden here spans over two-acres with rooms opening onto sunlit courtyards, planted with cypress, orange trees and jasmine. From here we will walk to **El Badi Palace** before continuing on to famous garden of **La Majorelle**, which was made in the 1920s by the



Gardens of Anima

French painter Jacques Majorelle, with marble pools, raised pathways, banana trees, groves of bamboo, coconut palms and bougainvilleas. Later, we explore **Yves Saint Laurent Art and Design** for a brief visit before we drive to the expansive gardens of **M. Ben Chaabane**, a renowned garden designer. (B, D)

**Day 3** Our first visit today is to the tranquil **Menara Garden**, which has its origins in a 12th century orchard of palm, olive and fruit trees. We continue with a walk in **Arset Moulay Abdessalam** then on to **Jnane Harti**, known for its cactus and other exotic plants. Later, we explore one of the most sumptuous palaces of Marrakech, **Dar el Basha**. Later, we visit **Le Jardin Secret**, designed by Chelsea Gold Medal winner Tom Stuart-Smith, and the **artisan quarter**, before a guided walk on the square of **Jemaa El Fna**. (B, D)

**Day 4** We head into the **Atlas Mountains** to visit a **Saffron Plantation** and learn all about this ancient, expensive and almost mythical spice. Then, we travel to **Nectarome**, an aromatic garden located deep in the valley, for a guided tour. This afternoon we visit the contemporary gardens of **Anima**, created by an Austrian artist who skilfully combines plants and indigenous African art. (B, L)

**Day 5** After breakfast, enjoy some free time for some last-minute shopping and sightseeing before we transfer to Marrakech airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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



El Bahia Palace detail



Menara Garden

**SAVE \$105 PER PERSON**

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' bed & breakfast at the 5-star El Saadi Hotel, Marrakech
- ▶ Three dinners and one lunch
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
2 - 6 Apr	<del>\$2,200</del>	\$2,095
1 - 5 Oct	<del>\$2,340</del>	\$2,235
Single Supplement		\$560



Mouse Island

## Discover 'The Durrells' Corfu with Lee Durrell

5 DAYS from \$2,060

Explore the Greek island that inspired Gerald Durrell's hilarious accounts of a sun-kissed childhood with his eccentric family (and other animals), as well as ITV's *The Durrells*. During this tour, we meet naturalist and writer Lee Durrell, who will give a talk on her late husband Gerald's pioneering role in wildlife conservation and will accompany us over two days as we visit some of her family's favourite places in Corfu. We also enjoy a walking tour of historic Corfu town and a visit to the **Achilleion Museum**, which is filled with statues and other mementoes of its former royal owners.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Corfu** we will transfer to our luxurious home for the next four nights: the 5-star **Corfu Holiday Palace**, which has superb facilities including two swimming pools and a private beach. In the afternoon, we ease into our holiday with an optional guided walking tour through picturesque **Corfu Town**, taking in the Spianada Square and the 16th-century St Spyridon Church, one of the island's iconic sights. (D)

**Day 2** We start today with a visit to one of Corfu's must-see destinations, the **Achilleion Museum**, which is filled with statues and other mementoes of its former royal owners: Empress Elisabeth of Austria and Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. Along with our local guide, **Lee Durrell** will join us today and accompany us as we follow in the footsteps of the Durrells, first by taking a trip to **Pontikonisi**, or Mouse Island, a place that Gerald and his sister Margo both loved to visit, and where Gerald Durrell's ashes are scattered. This evening Lee will give a fascinating talk about the Durrell family's love affair with Corfu and its wildlife and tell the story of her and Gerald's pioneering work for the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. (B, D)

**Day 3** We are joined once again by Lee as we visit some of the unforgettable locations from Gerald Durrell's childhood, his books and the TV series, beginning at the **White House** in Kalami, the beautiful building on the north-east coast of Corfu that was once the home of Lawrence Durrell, Gerald's novelist brother. In the afternoon we

continue to the **Lake of the Lillies**, where Lee will give a poignant reading from the chapter in which it features in *My Family and Other Animals*. We conclude today at the picturesque village of **Perithia**, the oldest on the island, dating back to the 14th century. We will enjoy **lunch** featuring local specialities in one of the tavernas and later meet a local bee keeper with an opportunity to buy some delicious wild honey. (B, L, D)

**Day 4** Today is free to discover more of Corfu at your leisure, or to relax and make use of the swimming pool, spa and private beach at our hotel. A regular bus service into Corfu Town picks up just outside the hotel. Local excursions and boat trips to other islands or over to Albania can also be arranged. (B, D)

**Day 5** After breakfast, we transfer to Corfu airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Corfu



Lee Durrell

### HOLIDAY EXTENSION

Don't want to go home? For those who'd like to stay in Corfu a little longer, we have arranged an optional, great value two-night extension for an additional \$280 per person (single supplement \$115 per person), including airport transfers and breakfast.

**SAVE \$105 PER PERSON**

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the 5-star Corfu Holiday Palace
- ▶ One lunch
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Special Appearance by Lee Durrell, including a tour of locations and exclusive evening talk and Q&A session
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager and local guide

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
6 - 10 May	<del>\$2,165</del>	\$2,060
7 - 11 Oct	<del>\$2,220</del>	\$2,115
Single Supplement		\$315

**NEW TOUR**



Lagoa do Fogo

# The Azores: its Gardens and Natural Wonders

**10 DAYS** from \$3,320 | **TOUR MANAGER:** Sue Pomeroy

The nine islands of the Azores archipelago are a thousand nautical miles from anywhere. They stand in the Atlantic Ocean at the very spot where the tectonic plates for Europe, Africa and North America meet. The islands, built from ancient volcanic eruptions, have lush green scenery, enchanting lakes, picturesque villages and overall a peaceful yet mysterious aura. While these are without question some of the most beautiful islands in the world, they remain an emerging destination.

There are some 800-plus species of plants to be found on the islands, although only 300 of them are endemic. Newcomers include flowering hydrangeas, especially abundant at this time of year, along with roses, agapanthus and cannas. These we will find on our visits to notable gardens, established in the 19th century, while in the countryside we will see hibiscus, tree ferns and rare endemic plants, along with bubbling thermal pools (used as natural cookers), dazzling blue and green lakes and mountain tops clothed in mist. We also offer the opportunity to take part in one of the Azores specialist pursuits – whale watching.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Ponta Delgada**, we transfer by comfortable coach to our hotel. (D)

**Day 2** Today we will have an **introductory tour, on foot, of Ponta Delgada**. We will pass churches and the flower filled municipal garden, near to the government building, with its Jacaranda tree. In the afternoon we will enjoy a tour of two of the notable gardens in the area, where endemic and exotic plants grow in wild profusion. Firstly, we will visit **Jardim José do Canto**, which was created by José do Canto, one of the most knowledgeable gardeners of his time. The garden is made up of several thousand species of plants, all of which

were imported from nurserymen around the world such as London, Paris and Rio de Janeiro. José do Canto was a hard-working enthusiast who even had a list of species he did not want to grow in order to create his perfect garden! We will continue next door to the **gardens of the Presidential Palace**, otherwise known as Sant'Ana Palace. The palace, formerly the home of the Correia family, was designed by an English architect in 1846. Its pink washed walls contrast well with the avenue of dark leaved Trachycarpus. In the extensive gardens you can find native Azorean plants, interesting shrubs and a long allée of box trees. (B)



Ponta do Sossego

**Day 3** Today we will travel east to **Lagoa do Fogo**, the Fire Lake. Situated at the bottom of a steep crater this is the most recent volcanic crater on the island with the last eruption in June 1563. A ferocious glow could be seen from the central islands, almost 100 miles away, however today the lake stands silent and there is a narrow path leading down to the lake where many protected plant species can be seen. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today we continue our exploration of **Ponta Delgada**, with a visit to the market and the museum (formerly a monastery) with its little garden coloured with agapanthus, roses and gazanias. Later we will visit the **garden at the Ponta Delgada University campus** where there are many trees including a Phytolacca dioica from Uruguay, which has a table-like root formation. This afternoon we will travel to **Quinta Bom Jesus**, the former British Consulate in Pico da Pedra, where we will see a pineapple plantation. (B, D)



Nordeste on Sao Miguel Island

**Day 5** Today we depart to the west of the island and explore **Sete Cidades**, a tranquil village located on the shores of two lakes, Lagoa Azul (Blue Lake) and Lagoa Verde (Green Lake). The lakes take their name from mythology where it was believed a princess fell in love with a local shepherd. The King forbade them to marry but let her see the shepherd one last time to say goodbye. As they bid farewell, they shed so many tears that two lakes were formed – one blue lake from the eyes of the princess and one green lake from the eyes of the shepherd. We will continue to **Capelas**. The country roads to Capelas are very picturesque as the meadows are lined with hedges of blue agapanthus, pink rambler roses and scarlet and yellow cannas. (B, D)

**Day 6** Following breakfast, you have the day at leisure or alternatively join our optional excursion, a **whale-watching expedition**. The rich waters around the Azores attract a variety of different species of whale, and it is hoped we may see some during our expedition, the most common being sperm and pilot, beaked and false killer whales. (B)

**Day 7** Today, we depart for the village of **Furnas**, formerly a popular spa town in the 19th Century. Furnas, surrounded by high slopes from the crater, is one of the most picturesque images of São Miguel. Volcanic activity is still present in this town which is awash with small geysers, hot springs of bubbling water and mud and caldeiras, literally cauldrons. Hidden behind a small mountain ridge and above the village lies Lagoa das Furnas (Furnas Lake). The lake appears tranquil but underneath its surface the earth bubbles and boils. Further along at **Caldeiras das Furnas**, steam clouds can be seen from afar, rising from the hot springs. Nearby is another garden of José do Canto, known locally as **Mata Jardim**. This enchanting garden, which has

been asleep for many years, has a melancholy charm. Paths wander through a romantic woodland of palms and tree ferns like a New Zealand forest. While we are here we will enjoy a local speciality, **Cozido das Caldeiras**, a stew of beef, potatoes and vegetables cooked in the natural hot springs. We also explore the famous **Terra Nostra Garden**, now a 30-acre garden situated in the grounds of a hotel. Originally created in the late 18th Century by Thomas Hickling, the former American vice-consul to the Azores, the garden was later extended by the noble Praia family after Hickling's death in 1834. The garden has since been restored on several occasions and now has a fern garden, an abundance of trees and a formal flower garden with native Azorean species and the best arboretum in the Azores. (B, L)

**Day 8** Today we enjoy a full-day tour of the eastern part of the island – **Nordeste**. This is Portugal's outermost region, known for its scenic beauty featuring lush forests, waterfalls, panoramic viewpoints and steep sea cliffs green with native and exotic vegetation. We enjoy a spectacular drive along the east coast to pay a visit to **Ribeira dos Caldeirões park** renowned for its cascading waterfalls that flow through a verdant landscape of dense vegetation. (B)


**Day 9** Following breakfast, you have the day at leisure or alternatively join our optional excursion, a **Chef-led food tour of Ponta Delgada**. This tour offers a delightful culinary journey through the local flavours and traditions of the region. This tour promises a memorable and educational culinary adventure, allowing you to immerse yourself in the rich gastronomic heritage of the Azores. (B)

**Day 10** This morning following breakfast we check out of the hotel. We will then transfer to the airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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

**YOUR TOUR MANAGER**  
**SUE POMEROY**

Sue is looking forward to exploring the stunning scenery and native flora and fauna of the Azores.



**SAVE \$140 PER PERSON**

- YOUR TOUR INCLUDES**
- Nine nights' bed & breakfast: six at the 4-star Lince Azores, Ponta Delgada and three at the 4-star Octant Hotel, Furnas
  - Four dinners including wine and one Cozido das Caldeiras lunch
  - Comfortable coach travel throughout
  - All visits as outlined in the itinerary
  - Services of horticulturalist Sue Pomeroy as tour manager and local guide

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
10 - 19 Jun	<del>\$3,460</del>	\$3,320
Single Supplement		\$1,395
Optional excursion:		
Food tour of Ponta Delgada		\$380
Whale watching expedition		\$135



Monte Palace Gardens

## Gardens of Madeira

8 DAYS from \$2,410

Set in a bright blue sea, some 400 miles off the coast of Africa, lies the lush, volcanic Portuguese island of Madeira. Just 36 miles long and 14 miles wide, it is an island of outstanding natural beauty. Much of the island is assigned as a conservation area where rare flowers cover the island like a green mantle. Orchids, bougainvillea, lilies, hydrangeas, magnolias, jacarandas and azaleas bloom effortlessly throughout the year, and delight the eye at every turn. One of the best ways to explore the island is by following the footpaths alongside the "levadas" (small man-made irrigation canals), which wind their way around the island, and we have included a gentle half-day levada walk, with the opportunity to take further walks on your free days. Further highlights include the splendid Palheiro Gardens and the glorious Monte Palace Gardens, to name but two of Madeira's horticultural wonders.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Funchal** we transfer to our hotel, where a welcome dinner is included this evening. (D)

**Day 2** We begin our exploration of Madeira with a visit to the **Quinta da Boa Vista**, a historic former estate that is home to the best orchid collection on the island. In the afternoon we visit the **Botanical Gardens**, which boast more than 2,000 exotic plants. (B)

**Day 3** We visit the **Quinta do Palheiro** (formerly known as **Blandy Gardens**). Established over several generations, the gardens have something for everyone with green fingers. In the afternoon we will enjoy a gentle half-day walk on the footpaths alongside the "levadas" (small irrigation canals), which wind their way around the island. In the late afternoon we stop for tea and cake at the **Jasmine Tea House**. (B)

**Day 4** Today we visit the local market, the **Mercado dos Lavradores**, followed by the **Quinta Vigia**, a small garden which is part of the Presidential Palace, and the neighbouring **Santa Catarina Park**, set in a natural amphitheatre. We conclude at a tea house where we enjoy some Madeiran specialities. (B)

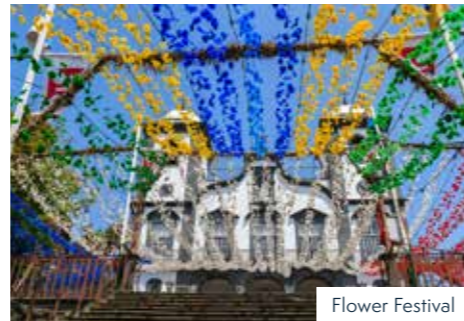
**Day 5** Today is at leisure to relax in the hotel or explore on your own. Alternatively join us on an **optional full day tour** of the island, with lunch. Highlights include the picturesque villages of **Camara de Lobos**, made famous by Sir Winston Churchill in 1950 when he painted here, **Porto Moniz**, famous for its natural bathing pools and lovely scenery, and **Ponta do Sol**, which as the name implies is the sunniest part of the island. (B)

**Day 6** We take the 10-minute cable car ride from the centre of Funchal to the fashionable hill town of Monte, which offers splendid views over the harbour and the bay. Here we visit the wonderful **Monte Palace Gardens** which surround the chateau-like Palace. In the afternoon we go to the famous **Reid's Palace Hotel** for a look around the lush gardens followed by a delicious afternoon tea in luxurious surroundings. (B, AT)

**Day 7** Today is at leisure to relax in the hotel or explore on your own. A farewell dinner will be served in the hotel in the evening. (B, D)

**Day 8** After breakfast, we transfer to the airport where our tour concludes. (B)

**Inc. meals:** B: Breakfast, AT: Afternoon Tea, D: Dinner



Flower Festival



Porto Moniz

SAVE \$1055 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed and breakfast at the 4-star Golden Residence Hotel, Funchal (or similar)
- ▶ Welcome and farewell dinners at the hotel and afternoon tea at Reid's Palace
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
1 - 8 May*	\$3,145	\$3,040
24 Nov - 1 Dec	\$2,515	\$2,410
Single Supplement		\$555
Optional Excursion: Island tour		\$135

\*Includes Madeira Flower Festival



Monet's Garden

## The Genius of Monet

4 DAYS from \$1,780

**DEPARTURE POINT:** London St Pancras International

Just as the gardens at Giverny inspired Monet, who spent half his life nurturing and enjoying them, so they continue to enthral countless visitors more than 90 years after his death. The lovingly restored gardens give a vivid impression of Monet's favourite subjects. Arched bridges, painted an acid apple green, are festooned with wisteria and the draped fronds of weeping willow frame the water lilies - Monet's paintings brought unnervingly to life. The perfect complement to Giverny is the Orangerie Museum in Paris. The centrepiece of this outstanding collection is Monet's breathtaking series of murals, **Les Nymphéas**. Housed in two vast elliptical rooms, the 2-metre-high murals extend to almost 200m in length and provide a moving and unforgettable testament to the genius of a painter at the height of his powers. Besides Giverny, we visit the **Château de Chantilly**, with its extensive collection of fine art and its gardens designed by Le Nôtre, and also the pleasant market town of Senlis.

**Day 1** We depart from London by Eurostar and upon arrival in **Paris** we are met by our comfortable coach. We travel to the charming town of **Chantilly**, in the heart of the Chantilly Forest, where our hotel is set in its own wooded grounds. All our bedrooms are in the original building. Later, we enjoy a welcome glass of kir before sitting down to dinner. (D)

**Day 2** This morning, we transfer to the **Château de Chantilly**, one of the jewels in the crown of France's cultural heritage, a magnificent edifice surrounded by water. Our visit includes the sumptuously decorated Grands Appartements, along with time to stroll around the extensive formal gardens, designed in part by André le Nôtre. Later we transfer to **Senlis**, a market town typical of Picardy, where we can explore the shops or enjoy some pâtisserie. (B, D)

**Day 3** The famous house and gardens of **Claude Monet** await discovery today, along with free time in **Giverny** where you can visit the church where Monet is buried. (B, D)

**Day 4** We travel to Paris today and visit the **Musée de l'Orangerie des Tuileries**. The highlights of its collection are Monet's two-metre-high murals, entitled **Les Nymphéas**. Thereafter, there is time to sightsee at leisure before we catch our Eurostar train back to London. (B)

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



Château de Chantilly



Eiffel Tower



Musée de l'Orangerie

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner (with wine), bed & breakfast at the Château de Montvillargenne, Chantilly
- ▶ Return standard class rail travel between London and Paris with Eurostar
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
9 - 12 May	\$1,955	\$1,850
18 - 21 Jul	\$1,885	\$1,780
Single Supplement		\$415



Prague Castle

# History and Culture of the Czech Republic

9 DAYS from \$3,005 | TOUR MANAGER: Clive Warsop

This tour takes in the history, archaeology and natural wonders of the Czech Republic. We spend some time in the capital Prague discovering the UNESCO World Heritage Site – Prague Castle, the Starhov Monastery and the Wallenstein Palace and Garden. We also visit the picturesque Karlštejn Castle which sits atop a craggy valley and dominates the skyline for miles. We will also spend a morning touring the Moravia Karst, a protected area of natural and geological importance with more 1,100 caverns and gorges. We travel to the beautiful town of Kroměříž, site of the UNESCO-listed Kroměříž flower garden. Other highlights include Pernštejn Castle, one of the most beautiful castles of Moravia, the UNESCO-listed Renaissance Château in Litomyšl and a visit to Poděbrady Castle.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Prague**, we are met by our local coach before departing on an introductory tour of the city. We continue to the **National Museum**, a vast treasure trove of historical artefacts said to hold up to 14 million items before heading to our hotel where dinner is served in the evening. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast, our first visit is to **Strahov Monastery**, an institution that has taken much pride in outlasting fires, the Hussite wars of religion, the Thirty Years' War and the rise of

Communism. We later visit **Prague Castle**, a UNESCO World Heritage site, remembered as the location of the second Defenestration of Prague, where the Protestant lords threw their Catholic adversaries out of the window, thus contributing to the beginning of the Thirty Years' War that engulfed most of Europe (c. 1618 – c. 1648). We continue to **St. Vitus Cathedral**. A masterpiece of Gothic architecture, the Cathedral also houses the tombs of many Bohemian Kings and the Holy Roman Emperors, Charles IV and Rudolf II. Our final visit is



Kroměříž flower garden

to **Wallenstein Palace and Garden**, the monumental palace of Albrecht of Wallenstein, General of the Habsburg armies, which was built in the 1630s as a rival to Prague Castle. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today, we will visit **Karlštejn Castle**. Built to store the royal treasures of Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV in the mid-1300s, this exceptionally vivid castle sits atop a craggy valley and dominates the skyline. In the afternoon, we travel to the town of **Plzeň** to enjoy some free time. (B)



Punkevní cave

**Day 4** After breakfast, we depart for **Kutna Hora**, a UNESCO-listed city. Known as the 'national treasury' for its wealth of silver mines, this prosperous city brought about a boom time for the Czech Kingdom until the silver dried up in the 18th century. The riches of the silver city can still be found in the sumptuous architecture of the urban dwellings as well as the Church of St Barbara, a jewel of the late Gothic period. We then transfer to the **World Heritage Site Sedlec Ossuary**, a fascinating Roman Catholic chapel for those with a taste for the macabre. The skeletons of between 40,000 to 70,000 people have been artistically arranged into furnishings, decorations and ornaments at the behest of the House of Schwarzenburg. Their family's coat of arms is bedecked with bones while the gigantic chandelier contains at least every bone of the human body and hangs from the centre of the nave with garlands of skulls draping the vault. In the afternoon we continue to **Brno**, where we will have free time to explore Moravia's cosmopolitan capital and the hometown of the great Czech composer, Leoš Janáček. (B, D)

**Day 5** We will spend the morning touring the **Moravian Karst**, a protected area of natural and geological importance with more 1,100 caverns and gorges. Here we visit **Punkevní Cave** and walk through mighty underground spaces and passages decorated with stalactites and stalagmites. This will be followed by a boat ride along the underground river Punkva and includes a visit to the **Masaryk's Dome**, one of the most beautiful caves of the Moravian Karst. In the afternoon, we visit the **Moravian Museum**, the Czech Republic's oldest museum. Founded in 1817 by imperial decree by František I in 1817, the museum is a haven for anthropologists, archaeologists, zoologists, botanists and musicologists. Highlights include permanent exhibitions on the pre-history of

Moravia, which display the social changes in Medieval Moravia and a memorial to Leoš Janáček (B, D)

**Day 6** Following breakfast we travel to the beautiful town of **Kroměříž**, site of the UNESCO-listed **Kroměříž flower garden** with its stunning intricate and formal Baroque style flower beds. We will have some time to explore the labyrinth of green walls, flora and fauna, fountains and sculptures. We continue to **Olomouc**, to view the **Holy Trinity Column** which UNESCO regard as 'one of the most exceptional examples of the apogee of central European Baroque artistic expression.' (B, D)

**Day 7** After breakfast we check out of the hotel and depart for a visit to **Pernštejn Castle**. One of the most beautiful castles of Moravia, it has been standing in the deep forests of the Moravian-Bohemian Highlands for eight centuries. Perched on a rocky hill and known as the 'marble castle', its towers and ramparts loom over the surrounding lush countryside. We continue to the hotel in Litomyšl. (B, D)

**Day 8** Following breakfast we visit the UNESCO-listed **Renaissance Château in Litomyšl**. The seat of the Perštejn dynasty, this is an immaculately preserved example of the arcade castle design developed in Renaissance Italy. It was built in the 1560s-1580s by Vratislav of Perštejn as a gift for his beloved wife, Maria Manrique de Lara. An intriguing feature of the château is the use of sgraffito on hundreds and hundreds of square metres of individual bricks in order to intricately decorate the exterior with various representations of myths and fables. We then depart for the town of **Hradec Králové** where we will stop for lunch (not included). Renowned as the 'Salon of the Republic', the town is permanently remembered as a centre of

modern architecture during the 1920s and 1930s. This afternoon we will continue to the spa town of **Poděbrady**, which sits on the banks of the River Elbe. We will visit **Poděbrady Castle**, founded in the first half of the 12th century as a strategic fortress on a limestone rock overlooking the river. Later we return to Prague and check in to our hotel. (B)

**Day 9** After breakfast we transfer to the airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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

**YOUR TOUR MANAGER**  
**CLIVE WARSOP**



With the help of Clive and his experience from previous visits to the Czech Republic we are proud to introduce this new tour discovering the history and culture of this fascinating destination.

**SAVE \$105 PER PERSON**

**YOUR TOUR INCLUDES**

- Eight nights' bed and breakfast plus 6 dinners in comfortable hotels: four nights in Prague, three nights in Brno and one in Litomyšl
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of Clive Warsop as tour manager

**DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON**

	Was	Now
Early booking offer*		
3 - 11 Sep	\$3,110	\$3,005
Single Supplement		\$555





Frederiksborg Palace

## Archaeology of Denmark & Sweden

8 DAYS from \$3,845 | TOUR MANAGER: Clive Warsop

The neighbouring Nordic nations of Sweden and Denmark offer a host of archaeological and historical sites, from Neolithic megaliths to Viking forts, from fairytale castles to a magnificent royal warship. We visit the archaeological sites at Gamla Uppsala, Anundshög and Baroque Skokloster Castle, and the excellent Historical Museum and impressive Vasa Museum. A relaxing rail journey takes us to Malmö in the south of Sweden, where we tour the Österlen region before crossing the Öresund Bridge to Copenhagen. We have a day in the Danish capital, including Rosenborg Castle, then transfer to Aarhus in mainland Denmark, where we visit the Moesgård Viking Museum and the Viking Castle at Fyrkat.

**Day 1** On arrive in **Stockholm**, where we visit the archaeological site of **Gamla Uppsala** with its three Royal Mounds. (D)

**Day 2** Today we visit the archaeological site at **Anundshög**, and then **Skokloster Castle**, one of the great castles of Baroque Europe. (B)

**Day 3** We visit the **Vasa Museum** with its impressive model of the ill-fated warship and the **Swedish History Museum** whose collections comprise archaeological artefacts and ecclesiastical art. We take a late afternoon train to the southern city of **Malmö**. (B, LM)

**Day 4** Today we visit the ancient megaliths of **Ales Stenar** before crossing the **Öresund Bridge**. (B, D)

**Day 5** Visit **Copenhagen's** historic sites and museums, including **Rosenborg Slot**, the **National Museum of Denmark** and the **Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek**. (B)

**Day 6** We tour **Frederiksborg Slot**, the largest Renaissance Palace in Scandinavia. (B, D)

**Day 7** Today we visit the **Viking Museum**, the Viking site of **Fyrkat** and then the astonishingly well preserved 'Bog Bodies' at **Silkeborg Museum**. (B)

**Day 8** We visit the archaeological site of **Jelling**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site before transferring to Copenhagen where our tour concludes. (B)

**Inc. meals:** B: Breakfast, LM: Light meal, D: Dinner



Ales Stenar in Schweden



Skokloster

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER CLIVE WARSOP

Join Clive as he discovers the historical wonders of Denmark and Sweden. One of his most popular tours.



### SAVE \$140 PER PERSON

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed & breakfast in 3- and 4-star hotels: two nights Uppsala, one night Malmö, two nights Copenhagen and two nights Aarhus
- ▶ Three dinners and one light meal on board the train
- ▶ Standard class rail journey from Stockholm to Malmö
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of Clive Warsop as tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
17 - 24 Sep	\$3,985	\$3,845
Single Supplement		\$695



Tomb of the Kings

## The Archaeology of Ancient Cyprus

8 DAYS from \$2,410

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 back over 10,000 years, and over these millennia the Cypriot people have developed their own distinctive artefacts, buildings, art and culture. At this time of year, 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 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 Tomb 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.

**Day 1** Arrive in **Cyprus** and transfer to our hotel. (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**, here the settlement of **Tenta** is of special interest, an aceramic Neolithic settlement that dates back to 7000 BC. Our last visit is to the **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 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 **Tomb 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 where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Kourion

### FOUR-DAY PAPHOS EXTENSION FROM \$245pp

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.

### SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

#### 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	\$2,615	\$2,510
5 - 12 Nov	\$2,515	\$2,410
Single Supplement		\$455

# Albanian Archaeology

8 DAYS from \$2,480

Albania is opening its doors to the world. In archaeological terms, offering some of the best sites in Europe with a host of Classical cities that were once on a par with those in Greece and Italy. A dramatic landscape of mountains and rugged coastline adds to the experience as we tour the country visiting the best of the sites. These include Durrës, one of the largest amphitheatres in the Balkans; Apollonia, the second largest Greek colony in Albania; the UNESCO World Heritage site at Butrint, and the remote mountain city of Byllis.

- Day 1** Upon arrival in **Tirana** we transfer to our hotel. (D)
- Day 2** This morning we enjoy a walking tour of **Tirana**, visiting the **Skanderbeg Square**, the **Mosque of Et'hem Bej**, the **National Historical Museum** and **Skanderbeg Castle**. (B, D)
- Day 3** This morning we drive along the coast to the **Bay of Vlorë** before heading to **Llogara National Park**. We travel through the seven villages of the Himara region and after visiting the **springs of Borshi** we continue towards Saranda. (B, D)
- Day 4** Enjoy a full day at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of **Butrint**. We will admire the theatre, temple of **Asclepius**, the **Baptisteries**, the **Gymnasium**, the **aqueduct**, and the **Venetian Castle**. This evening we visit **Lekuresi Castle**. (B, D)

- Day 5** Today we travel to the town of **Gjirokastra**, visiting the 8th century castle museum, the ethnographic museum, the 18th century bazaar and the **Antigonea Archaeological Park**. (B, D)
- Day 6** This morning we visit **Byllis**, perched dramatically on a mountain top overlooking the Vjose River valley. We also visit **Cobo Winery** where we enjoy a tour. (B, D)
- Day 7** Today we discover the attractive medieval town of **Berat**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. During our time here, we will visit Byzantine churches and mosques. (B, D)
- Day 8** We spend the morning at **Appollonia** where we visit the **Odeon**, the **Pritaneon** and the **temple of Diana**. From here, we travel to **Durrës** to visit the amphitheatre. We then return to Tirana airport where our tour concludes. (B, D)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Amphitheatre at Butrint

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' dinner, bed & breakfast: two night in Tirana; two nights in Saranda; one night in Gjirokastra and two nights Berat
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager and local guides

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
7 - 14 Oct	<del>\$2,585</del>	\$2,480
Single Supplement		\$415

# The Art & Architecture of Antwerp

5 DAYS from \$1,640 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

DEPARTURE POINT: London St Pancras International

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 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.

- Day 1** We depart London St Pancras International to Brussels with onward connection to **Antwerp**. On arrival we transfer to our hotel. (D)
- Day 2** After breakfast, we head into the historic heart of **Antwerp** on an introductory **walking tour**. We will join our local guide, highlights include **Antwerpen-Centraal Station**, **Saint James Church**, the **Steen**, the beautiful **town hall** and **guild houses**. Finally, we head along the charming **Vlaaikengang**, before visiting the **Cathedral of Our Lady** where an experienced guide will take us on a tour of the Cathedral. We conclude this afternoon with a visit to the **Diamond Quarter**. (B)
- Day 3** Today we visit the **KMSKA – Royal Museum of Fine Arts** for a **guided tour**

- through the collections. This afternoon we have a guided tour at **Snijders & Rockox Huis**. (B)
- Day 4** This morning we depart for the **Rubens Experience Centre and Gardens**. This afternoon we visit the **Plantin-Moretus Museum**. (B, D)
- Day 5** This morning we enjoy an '**Art Nouveau along the railway**' walking tour and discover the hidden gems of the frivolous architectural style located either side of the Antwerp – Mechlen railway line. We later depart Antwerp by rail, connecting to the Eurostar service returning to London St Pancras. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Cathedral of Our Lady

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### 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 and all visits
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager plus local guides

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
27 - 31 Mar	<del>\$1,745</del>	\$1,640
2 - 6 Oct	<del>\$1,745</del>	\$1,640
NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT		

# Crete Archaeology

8 DAYS from \$2,410

The Greek island of Crete presents a rich tapestry of archaeological treasures, sleepy villages and lively towns, all set in a Homeric landscape of mountains, gorges and flower-strewn pastures. It was home to one of the earliest European civilisations, the Minoans, who roamed these hills some 4,000 years ago. Their legacy can be seen all over the island, in particular at the legendary Palace of Knossos, the centre of the Minoan civilisation in Europe.

- Day 1** Upon arrival in **Crete**, we transfer to our hotel. (D)
- Day 2** Today we visit the **Archaeological Museum** and the mighty **Palace of Knossos**, the centre of the Bronze Age Minoan civilization, which leaves the visitor breathless with wonder. (B)
- Day 3** Free day, or join our optional excursion to the island of **Spinalonga**, a former leper colony. Later, we enjoy some free time in charming **Agios Nikolaos**. (B)
- Day 4** The first stop is at **Gortyn**, an old Greek Roman town with its famous law stones, Roman amphitheatre and the ruins of **Saint Titus**, before we visit **Phaistos**, one of the most important centres of Minoan civilisation, and the most wealthy and powerful city in southern Crete. We continue to **Zaros**, on the south slope of Ida Mountain. (B)

- Day 5** Enjoy a walking tour of **Rethymnon**, which is a mixture of Venetian and Turkish influences. Later, we travel to **Chania** to explore its historic centre and Venetian harbour. (B)
- Day 6** We have free time to explore the local area, or alternatively join our optional excursion to the **Arkadi Monastery** and **Eleutherna Museum** including lunch. (B)
- Day 7** We visit the Minoan cemetery of **Armeni** and Byzantine monuments in the picturesque **Amari valley**. We enjoy a farewell dinner with wine in a local taverna this evening. (B, D)
- Day 8** After breakfast, we transfer to the airport where our tour concludes. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Palace of Knossos

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed & breakfast: three nights at the 3-star Marin Hotel, Heraklion and four nights at the 4-star Bio Hotel in Rethymnon (or similar)
- ▶ One dinner in the hotel and a farewell dinner (with wine) in a local taverna
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert as tour manager

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
22 - 29 Apr	<del>\$2,515</del>	\$2,410
7 - 14 Oct	<del>\$2,655</del>	\$2,550
Single Supplement		\$630
Optional Excursions:		
Arkadi Monastery		\$170
Spinalonga		\$160

# Malta's Archaeological Heritage

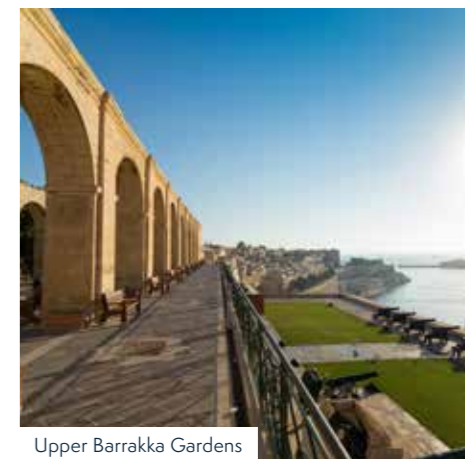
7 DAYS from \$2,200 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

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.

- Day 1** Upon arrival in **Malta** we transfer to our hotel. (D)
- Day 2** We explore **Valletta**, Malta's capital city, including the **Upper Barrakka Gardens**, the **Grand Master's Palace** and the **Archaeological Museum**. (B, D)
- Day 3** Today we explore **Mosta Church** and the walled citadel of **Mdina**. Later we visit the **Skorba Temples**, the **Museum of Roman Antiquities** and **St. Paul's Catacombs**. (B, D)
- Day 4** Visit **Ħaġar Qim** and the **Mnajdra Temples**. We then take a **boat trip** to the stunning **Blue Grotto** and the **Dingli Cliffs**. (B, D)

- Day 5** Today is free to spend at leisure or there is an optional excursion to the neighbouring island of **Gozo**, which has archaeological wonders of its own. (B, D)
- Day 6** Take a tour of the fishing village of **Marsaxlokk**, visit the **Tarxien Temples** and explore the world-renowned **Ħal Saffieni Hypogeum**. This historic wonder is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (B, D)
- Day 7** After breakfast, we transfer to Malta airport where our tour concludes. (B)

Inc. meals: B: Breakfast, D: Dinner



Upper Barrakka Gardens

SAVE \$105 PER PERSON

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Six nights' dinner (with wine), bed & breakfast at the 4-star Doubletree by Hilton, St Paul's Bay
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
4 - 10 Mar	<del>\$2,305</del>	\$2,200
6 - 12 May	<del>\$2,585</del>	\$2,480
4 - 10 Nov	<del>\$2,305</del>	\$2,200
NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT		
Seaview Room Supplement		\$105
Optional Excursion: Gozo		\$205

# 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 pristine wilderness of Hokkaido in Japan and the hill villages of Vietnam 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.

**102** Gardens of Honshu and Hokkaido

**104** Seasonal Gardens of Japan

**106** Brazil's Gardens and Natural Wonders

**108** Gardens of the Hudson Valley

**110** Gardens and Wildlife of Western Canada

**111** Gardens of Costa Rica

**112** California – In the footsteps of John Muir

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**118** Gardens of Barbados

**119** Gardens and Temples of Ancient Egypt

**120** Spring Flowers of Namaqualanda

**122** Journey through Vietnam



Linh Ung Pagoda



Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens



Ashikaga

## Gardens of Honshu and Hokkaido

12 DAYS from \$8,885 | TOUR MANAGER: Colin Crosbie

It's time once again to expand our horizons in the land of the rising sun and explore more of this fascinating country. Hokkaido, the mountainous, arrowhead-shaped northern island, seems like the perfect place to start. We get the impression that it is such a beautiful place that the Japanese would really rather keep it a secret. Nevertheless, we can expect the usual warm welcome from our hosts, many of whom still find westerners highly intriguing! Compared to our regular garden holiday, this tour takes us deeper into Japan, both in terms of the countryside and the culture. This holiday should appeal both to those who have been with us to Japan before and want to discover more, and to those who want to explore a beguiling region of mountains, lakes and thermal springs, interwoven with a unique cultural experience.

We begin in Honshu, the largest of the four main islands that comprise Japan, with two nights in Tokyo. This is one of the most modern cities in the world, yet offers surprises at every turn – where else can you find ancient temples and exquisite gardens, surrounded by skyscrapers? We then visit two of the top three landscape gardens in Japan as we visit Kairakuen Garden in Mito and then take the Bullet Train to Kanazawa in the west to visit Kenrokuen Garden. A visit to the stunning wisteria gardens at Ashikaga is included en route to Tokyo from where we fly north to Hokkaido. On the eastern side of the island our exploration includes the Shiretoko Peninsula, a pristine wilderness typified by lush virgin forest, waterfalls and thermal springs; the strange, withered trees of Todowara Woods and the Notsuke Peninsula, home to a diverse range of birdlife. We then transfer to western Hokkaido and our base in Sapporo, from where we explore further gardens and the natural wonders of the Shikotsu Toya National Park.



**Day 1** On arrival, we transfer to our hotel in **Tokyo**.

**Day 2** We depart by coach this morning for **Mito**, the capital of the Ibaraki Prefecture, where we find **Kairakuen**, ranked among Japan's three finest landscape gardens. In addition to its famous plum trees, of which there are more than three thousand, Kairakuen also features a bamboo grove, cedar woods and a traditional building used in tea ceremonies. We return by coach to our hotel. (B)

**Day 3** This morning we enjoy one of the unique experiences of a trip to Japan as we take the **Bullet Train** to **Kanazawa**, where we visit **Kenrokuen**, another of the top three landscape gardens. The name "having six factors", represents the attributes which bring out the garden's stunning beauty: spaciousness, tranquillity, artifice, antiquity, water sources and magnificent views. Following our visit we take a stroll around **Higashi Chaya**, the Geisha District of Kanazawa, with restored teahouses and taverns reminiscent of bygone Japan. We continue to our hotel for an overnight stay. (B)



Kenrokuen

**Day 4** Depart by **Bullet Train** for Takasaki in Japan's eastern Kantō region, where we visit the **Ashikaga Flower Park**, famed for its spectacular Wisteria Festival, which will be taking place at this time. Following our visit here we transfer by coach to Tokyo. (B)

**Day 5** Today we fly to Memanbetsu in **Hokkaido**. On arrival we travel the short distance to our comfortable, western-style hotel in **Abashiri**, stopping on the way at the observation point at **Mt Tentozan**, which affords panoramic views over Abashiri and the Okhotsk Sea beyond. (B, D)

**Day 6** We begin our exploration of the unspoilt natural wonders of eastern Hokkaido today by touring the area around **Lake Saroma**, which is the largest lake in Hokkaido. A visit is included to the **Lake Saroma Wakka Nature centre**, which gives background information on the flora and fauna of the area. We will also visit the **Wakka Gensei Kaen 'Natural Garden'**, an area of natural grassland that sits between Lake Saroma and the sea, home to a huge variety of wildflowers, forests, meadows and wetlands. We return to our hotel in Abashiri in the afternoon. (B, D)

**Day 7** Leaving our hotel in Abashiri, we will tour the **Shiretoko Peninsula**, an area of untouched primeval forest, lakes and mountains, protected as a National Park. Included are visits to the **Shiretoko Nature Centre**, **Furepe Falls** and **Shiretoko Five Lakes**. It takes about an hour to walk round the five lakes. Following our visit here we will continue to our comfortable hotel by **Lake Kussharo**. (B, D)



Sapporo

**Day 8** We depart today on a full day excursion to the **Notsuke Peninsula**, whose shape is said to resemble a shrimp's bent back and has been formed by sea currents moving the sand and earth that has been flushed out of the Shibetsu-gawa River. It is accessed by the **Flower Road**, named for the profusion of wild flowers that grow here in the summer months. We will also see the woods of withered trees known as **Todowara (fir straw) Woods**, the result of fir trees which were washed by seawater until they withered. We later visit the **Notsuke Peninsula Nature Centre**, long established as a rest house, which provides background information. (B, D)

**Day 9** After breakfast we will transfer to Kushiro Airport, with a visit en route to **Lake Mashu**, and depart on an early afternoon flight to **Sapporo**, where on arrival we will have an introductory **sightseeing tour** of the city and visits to **Nijo Market** and **Sapporo Beer Museum**. (B)

**Day 10** A day among spectacular volcanic lakeland scenery in the **Shikotsu-Toya National Park** begins with a boat cruise on **Lake Shikotsu**, a caldera lake formed over 30,000 years ago by volcanic activity. **Lake Okotanape** by contrast is relatively small, and was formed when the lava flow of Mt Eniwa-dake dammed the Okotanape River. We continue to **Jozankei** for another uniquely Japanese experience as we visit the **Onsen**, the naturally occurring hot springs used for bathing and relaxation. We also visit the **Iwato Kannondo**, a 120m long cave in which have been placed 33 different statues of Kannon, the goddess of mercy. (B)

**Day 11** We will spend today touring **Sapporo**, including **Odori Park**, a flower-filled oasis which extends for 1500m through the city centre; the **Hokkaido University Botanic Garden**, which retains sections of virgin forest and contains some 4,000 varieties of plants collected from all over Hokkaido; and **Yurigahara Park**. We continue to **Otaru**, the Venice of Japan, to see the **Otaru Canal**, constructed in 1923 and now a popular photo-stop with its stone-built warehouses lining the canal side. On our return to the hotel we will have some time in

the **Sakaimachi Shopping Street**, an opportunity perhaps for some final souvenir shopping. (B)

**Day 12** Sadly our tour ends today and after checking out of the hotel we transfer to Sapporo Airport where our tour concludes (B)

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

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER COLIN CROSBIE

Colin has been looking forward to sharing more of Japan's wonderful gardens with our guests.



SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ 11 nights' bed and breakfast accommodation: two nights at the 4-star Grand Prince Takanawa, Tokyo; one night at the 3-star Daiwa Roynet Hotel in Kanazawa; one night at the 4-star Villa Fontaine Grand Haneda, Tokyo; two nights at the 4-star Hokuten No Oka Abashiri Tsuruga Resort in Abashiri; two nights at the 3-star Kussharo Prince Kussharo; three nights at the 4-star Gracery Sapporo in Sapporo
- ▶ Four dinners
- ▶ All domestic flights and rail travel in Japan
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Colin Crosbie as tour manager plus local English-speaking guides

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
5 - 16 May		\$9,095	\$8,885
Single Supplement			\$1,395



Mount Fuji



Golden Pavilion, Kyoto

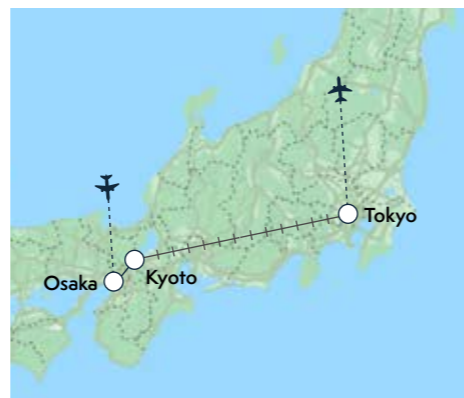
## Seasonal Gardens of Japan

12 DAYS from \$8,255 | TOUR MANAGER: Colin Crosbie

Surround yourself with the splendours of the Far East with an itinerary of rare gardens, bamboo forests, ancient temples, golden Buddhas, and, of course, the majestic Mount Fuji. Experience the otherworldliness of this mystical country on a garden tour unlike any other. Travel aboard the iconic bullet train, visit the historic town of Omihachiman, take a cruise beneath Mount Fuji's snow-capped peaks on Lake Ashi, and embark upon an optional excursion to Hiroshima and its Peace Memorial Park. We have included a variety of different natural styles in order to bring this tour to life, from landscape gardens and stroll gardens to pond-and-island spaces. A popular addition to this tour is dinner with a maiko – an apprentice geisha – in traditional costume. Tradition, stories and natural beauty await. Travel in March for stunning cherry blossom or in November for vibrant autumn colours.



Tatsumi bashi bridge, Kyoto



**Day 1** Upon arrival in Osaka, we head to the gardens of the **Imperial Palace** which feature broad gravel paths, lawns and groves of trees, including attractive weeping cherry trees, which should be in blossom for our spring tour. From here, we continue to our hotel for dinner and a welcome drink. (D)

**Day 2** We enjoy a full day in **Kyoto** visiting some outstanding gardens. These include **Daisen-in temple, Ryogen-in, Zuiho-in, Kinkakuji temple** and **Ryoan-ji temple**. (B)

**Day 3** We journey to the **Prefecture of Shiga**. Beginning in **Otsu**, we visit the ancient temple of **Ishiyamadera**, which was established around the middle of the 8th century by Roben Osho. From here we continue along the shores of **Lake Biwa-ko** to the historic town of **Omihachiman** and the **Hachimanbori Canal**. Before returning to Kyoto, we'll also visit the **Nishikawake House**, the former residence of a wealthy merchant family. (B)

**Day 4** Today we explore **Ginkaku-ji** or 'Silver Pavilion', a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the private garden of **Hakusasonso** and **Kyoto Botanical Garden**, which displays over 120,000 plants. We'll also visit the **Bamboo Forest Path** in Sagano, a strange, otherworldly forest of dense bamboo, whose soaring trunks shade the path, their leaves rustling musically in the breeze. (B)

**Day 5** Enjoy Kyoto at leisure or join an optional excursion by train to **Hiroshima** and view the **Peace Memorial Park**. (B)

**Day 6** This morning we transfer to **Nara** and explore the **Todai-ji Temple**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will also enjoy **Nara Park** and visit the **Kasuga Grand Shrine**, one of Japan's most important Shinto shrines. 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)

**Day 7** After breakfast, we check out of the hotel and visit the **Heian-jingu Shrine**, a rare example of an extensive pond garden in the grounds of a Shinto shrine. Next, we explore the **Nanzen-ji Temple complex**, a quintessential Zen temple that exudes an air of serenity. This afternoon we leave Kyoto, taking the famous 'Shinkansen' or **Bullet Train** to Tokyo. (B)

**Day 8** We journey to the historic seaside town of **Kamakura** to visit the **Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine**, located between two lotus ponds. Next, we admire the **Great Buddha**, which has survived tidal waves, earthquakes, fires and typhoons. We continue to the **Hase Kannon Temple**. Simple and elegant, the temple is home to a superb 11-faced Kannon, Goddess of Mercy, which is said to date from the 8th century. (B, L)

**Day 9** 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 will also enjoy a cruise on **Lake Ashi**, the principal attraction of Hakone, 723m above sea level. After lunch, we drive along the foot of **Mount Fuji** for a further photo stop at **Lake Kawaguchi**. (B, L)

**Day 10** Our day begins at the garden of **Kyū Fūrukawa**, a masterpiece of modern design, combining the authentic Japanese style with an Italian terraced-style garden full of roses. Next, it's on to **Mukojima Hyakkaen Garden**, the only surviving flower garden of the Edo period. Free time follows. (B)

**Day 11** Following breakfast we have a full day sightseeing in **Tokyo** today. We begin with a visit the **Senso-ji Temple**, Tokyo's most sacred temple. Directly in front of the Senso-ji Temple lies the **Nakamise-dori**, the temple's shopping precinct, where you will have free time to browse the stalls which sell everything from haircombs, fans and kimonos to wigs and genuine Edo crafts. We continue to **Rikugien Garden**, often considered Tokyo's most beautiful Japanese landscape garden. Our next visit is to the **Imperial Palace East Garden**, which has a fine collection of bamboo and Japanese spring blossom. In the afternoon, we explore **Hamarikyū Garden** and take a cruise along the **Sumida River**. We conclude with a farewell dinner this evening. (B, D)

**Day 12** We check out of our hotel today and transfer by coach to Tokyo Airport, where our tour concludes. (B)

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

**YOUR TOUR MANAGER COLIN CROSBIE**

Colin will be in his element here with such a wide range of plants and trees to help identify.



**SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\***

- YOUR TOUR INCLUDES**
- ▶ 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
  - ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
  - ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
  - ▶ Services of horticulturalist Colin Crosbie as tour manager and local guides

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
25 Mar - 5 Apr*	<del>\$8,465</del>	\$8,255
3 - 14 Nov	<del>\$8,305</del>	\$8,395
Single Supplement		\$1,750
Optional Excursion: Hiroshima		On request

\*Cherry blossom departure



Iguazu Falls

## Brazil's Gardens and Natural Wonders

15 DAYS from \$12,875 | TOUR MANAGER: Trevor Edwards

"I had just returned from my Piranha fishing excursion to find two yellow frogs in my bathroom" exclaimed a passenger on our first tour - such is the excitement of Brazil! The tour opens in Rio de Janeiro with a cruise round the calm waters of Guanabara Bay on a Brazilian schooner followed in the next few days by a cable car ride up Sugar Loaf Mountain and a train ride to the Christ the Redeemer statue — talk about sensory overload!

We will also, however, venture off the well-worn tourist trail of Rio, with a guided visit to the garden and former home of Roberto Burle Marx, one of the most important landscape architects of the 20th century, as well as the botanical garden and an outstanding National Park, with native species of the Atlantic Rainforest in a stunning natural setting.

After five nights in Rio we travel along the coast to Paraty, once the main port for shipping gold to Portugal and now a charming and well-preserved colonial town. Two full days of touring here gives us the opportunity to visit further gardens and sites of botanical interest. From Rio we fly on to Iguazu and our hotel adjacent to the awesome waterfalls, seven times the size of Niagara. An excursion into neighbouring Argentina is included here as we view the falls from every possible angle.

For a thrilling conclusion of our tour we travel into the interior to explore the Pantanal, the world's largest continuous wetland area. From our base at the comfortable Caiman Lodge we will have an in-depth tour of the region and its diverse natural inhabitants, from trees and flora to an astonishing profusion of birds and aquatic wildlife.



**Day 1** Arrive in **Rio de Janeiro** early this morning, to be met by our local coach and guide. The rest of the day is free to relax or explore Rio.

**Day 2** As an introduction to the flora of Brazil there could be no better place to start than the **Botanical Garden** in Rio de Janeiro, one of the largest in the world with approximately 8200 species of living plants. Later we drive along Copacabana beach and on to **Flamengo Park**, a large landfill area in the bay which was designed by Burle Marx. We continue to one of Rio's most famous attractions, the **Sugar Loaf Mountain**, with a short stroll along the **Bem Te Vi** path, surrounded by lush vegetation, before we take the cable car to the top of the mountain and some stunning views. (B)

**Day 3** We begin this morning with a guided tour of a garden associated with **Roberto Burle Marx** (1909-1994), known internationally as one of the most important landscape architects of the 20th century, the **Sítio Burle Marx** in Barra de Guaratiba on the outskirts of Rio. This was his private home for most of his adult life, which is now open to visitors. The "sítio" - a small farm - boasts a marvellous



Pantanal



Hyacinth Macaws

collection of his work, including paintings, sculptures, glass paintings, as well more than 3,500 plants in the gardens. Lunch in a local restaurant is included today. (B, L)

**Day 4** We take the rack railway for a close-up look at the iconic statue of **Christ the Redeemer**. This afternoon we enjoy a cruise around the calm waters of **Guanabara Bay** aboard a refurbished Brazilian schooner, which will give us marvellous views of Rio. The evening is at leisure or alternatively enjoy an **optional barbecue dinner at Barra Brasa**. (B)

**Day 5** We have arranged an exclusive visit to one of the most famous of Roberto Burle Marx's gardens, **Fazenda Marambaia** (known formerly as the **Monteiro Garden**), which includes a guided tour. We return to Rio later in the afternoon, with the evening at leisure. (B)

**Day 6** We leave Rio and travel along the coast to **Paraty**, once the main port for shipping gold to Portugal and now a charming and well-preserved colonial town. (B)

**Day 7** This morning we enjoy a **cruise** on a **Brazilian 'Saveiros'** along the calm waters of Paraty Bay. Paraty has 65 islands dotted around the turquoise and crystal-clear waters, surrounded by exuberant rainforest and secluded beaches. (B)

**Day 8** We visit a **bromeliad and orchid plantation**, before enjoying lunch at **Villa Verde**, a beautiful, small restaurant owned and run by a Swiss chef, who has found his own piece of tropical paradise. (B, L)

**Day 9** This morning we return to Rio in time for our flight to **Foz do Iguazu**. On arrival we transfer to our luxurious hotel, uniquely located in the Brazilian National Park, next to the Falls. (B)

**Day 10** In the morning we have a guided tour of the Brazilian side of the **Iguazu Falls**. After an opportunity for lunch (not included) we transfer by coach to the 'Birds Park', a large reserve located next to the Falls boasting a variety of species including the familiar toucan. (B)

**Day 11** The morning is free to relax and in the afternoon we travel via Paraguay into Argentina for further thrilling views of the falls, and a train through the park to the various viewpoints. This evening there is an **optional Dinner Show**, including an excellent meal and folkloric dances from this region which covers the three countries of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. (B)

**Day 12** We return to the airport for our flight to **Campo Grande** situated in the **Pantanal**, the world's largest continuous wetland area. On arrival we shall travel to **Caiman Eco Lodge** where we enjoy a drinks reception and presentation. (B, D)

**Day 13** We have a full and rewarding day dedicated to observing the Pantanal's flora and fauna at the **Caiman Eco Lodge** private reserve. The bird-life alone features an extraordinary range of species, including bare-faced curassow, buff-necked ibis and the horned screamer. Both lunch and dinner are served at the Lodge today. (B, L, D)

**Day 14** Today we enjoy another fascinating day at the **Caiman Eco Lodge** private reserve. You may wish to enjoy more activities or learn about the customs and culture of the local cowboys, known as "Pantaneiros" or enjoy learning about the Hyacinth Macaw Project which is based at the lodge. The project's main objective is to observe and collect data about the Hyacinth Macaw (*Blue Macaw*), a bird threatened with extinction, as well as to find new nesting sites and monitor those that already exist. (B, L, D)

**Day 15** Sadly it is time to say 'adeus' to Brazil as we return to the airport at Campo Grande where our tour concludes. (B)

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

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER TREVOR EDWARDS

Join Trevor on an adventure of a life time exploring the natural wonders, flora and fauna of Brazil.



SAVE \$280 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ 14 nights' accommodation: five nights bed and breakfast at a 4-star hotel in Rio de Janeiro; three nights bed and breakfast at the Pousada do Sandi in Paraty; three nights bed and breakfast at the 5-star Hotel das Cataratas in Iguazu; three nights full board at the Caiman Lodge in the Pantanal (or similar)
- ▶ All transfers and flights within Brazil
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Trevor Edwards as tour manager plus local guides

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
19 Oct - 2 Nov		\$13,155	\$12,875
Single Supplement			\$5,455
Optional BBQ dinner at Barra Brasa			On request
Optional Dinner Show			On request



Untermyer Gardens



Vanderbilt Mansion garden

## Gardens of the Hudson Valley

8 DAYS from \$5,105 | TOUR MANAGER: Trevor Edwards

Prepare to be immersed and inspired as we explore the very best gardens of the Hudson Valley. This corner of America is rife with examples of horticultural mastery that offer interest in every season. We visit in the lushness of summer where the long days and balmy weather combine and allow for meditative strolls and peaceful reflection surrounded by colourful wildflowers and spectacular views. During our floriculture foray some highlights include the traditional walled Italianate Garden of Blithewood, the sprawling 165-acre Innsfree Garden designed by the landscape architect Lester Collins and the garden at Bellefield Mansion designed by the master gardener Beatrix Farrand. We also visit the Locust Grove estate which is perched on a hill with sweeping views overlooking the Hudson River and the smaller but perfectly formed Stonecrop Gardens home to a water garden, woodlands, rock garden and English-style flower garden.

**Day 1** On arrival in **New York**, we will transfer to our hotel.

**Day 2** After breakfast, we visit **Kykuit** garden which was begun by the oil billionaire John D. Rockefeller and served as a Rockefeller family summer retreat from 1913 to 1991. Kykuit (pronounced 'cake-8') means 'lookout' in Dutch and it has fine views over the magnificent scenery of the Hudson Valley. A host of attractive features includes terraces, a semi-circular rose garden, fountains, a Japanese Garden and an Italian loggia. Here we enjoy the **classic estate tour**. This afternoon, we visit **Untermyer Gardens**. In 1899 Samuel Untermyer purchased Greystone and in the

forty-one years he owned the property he transformed the gardens and greenhouses into some of the most celebrated gardens in America. The gardens are now managed by the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy, a non-profit making organisation. The Indo-Persian Walled Garden is divided into quadrants by waterways and bordered by crenellated walls anchored by octagonal towers; the Vista was modelled on a similar series of descending stairs at the Villa D'Este in Italy and here they cascade towards the Hudson River. We have a private tour of the gardens included. (B)



**Day 3** This morning we visit **Stonecrop**. At just 12 acres, it might seem at first like a little gem, but it's really a vault full of jewels. Surrounding a country manor house built in 1958 are thickets of blooms: *Salvia uliginosa*, *Ruta graveolens*, *Tweedia caerulea* and dozens more. Stonecrop changes dramatically as you walk from one area to the next. One minute a bamboo grove so thick you have to hold back the branches; the next a rocky ledge amid tiny alpine blossoms of brilliant red, purple and pink. A guided tour is included here. Our final visit of the day is to **Locust Grove Estate**. First purchased in 1895 by William and Martha Young, they soon began adding onto the property, and now Locust Grove has nearly 200 acres of grounds and formal gardens, including a historically accurate cutting garden and a kitchen garden for fruits and vegetables. Here we enjoy a tour of the house and gardens. (B)

**Day 4** This morning after breakfast we depart for our first visit of the day which is **Vanderbilt Mansion** where we have a guided tour included. One of several homes owned by the renowned Frederick William Vanderbilt, the 54-room mansion was constructed in the late 19th century and is an

example of Beaux-Arts style. Situated overlooking the Hudson River, the surrounding grounds include manicured lawns, formal gardens and woodlands. Next, we have a treat in store as we visit the **Culinary Institute of America's** campus in Hyde Park, where we will enjoy a tour followed by lunch. Afterwards, we visit **Bellefield** which was designed in 1912 by Beatrix Farrand, a renowned landscape architect who pioneered the concept of "garden rooms" with their own feel. Bellefield has three such garden rooms, which stretch from the house's terrace to an arched doorway, with a velvety green lawn down the middle that narrows twice, elongating the space. (B, L)

**Day 5** This morning we visit **Blithewood Garden**, a classic example of a walled Italianate Garden. Perched on a sloping bluff above the Hudson River, Blithewood Gardens sprawls over a 45-acre section of the Bard College campus with the awe-inspiring Catskills mountains as its backdrop. Here we enjoy a tour of the gardens. Later, we return to the hotel where the afternoon is at leisure. (B)

**Day 6** This morning following breakfast, we tour **Innsfree Garden**, a sprawling 165-acre garden designed by the landscape artist Lester Collins. The garden combines mid-century

modernist and romantic principle with traditional Chinese and Japan garden design and include rock, water, and wood features. We then visit **Wildflower Island**, a two-acre island refuge home to more than 250 species of wildflowers, trees, ferns, and grasses. (B)

**Day 7** We visit **Lyndhurst**, a Gothic Revival home originally designed by the America architect Alexander Jackson Davis in 1838. Despite the house's imposing size and looming towers, there is a real family home feel to the estate. During the mid 19th-century the Master Gardener Ferdinand Mangold revitalized the parklands bringing the latest trends from European royal estate to Lyndhurst. Afternoon is at leisure. (B)

**Day 8** Today we visit the gardens of **Wave Hill** in the Bronx which enjoys fabulous views over the River Hudson. After a period of decline in the 1960s the garden was transformed into a vibrant horticultural experience, with a flower garden filled with many unusual plants at its heart. There is also a herb garden, an aquatic garden, dry and wild gardens, an alpine house and conservatory, but it is the view over the river that may provide the lasting memory of our time here in New York and the Hudson Valley. We will then head to the the **New York Botanical Garden** for a guided tour. Established in 1891, the 250-acre garden, the largest

in any city in the USA, is a National Historic Landmark and comprises 50 speciality gardens and collections which are home to over one million plants. Highlights include the Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden, the Native Plant Garden and 30,000 distinguished trees some of which are over 200-year-old. We later transfer to the airport where our tour concludes (B)

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

### THREE-DAY NEW YORK FROM \$665PP

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

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER TREVOR EDWARDS

Join award-winning Garden Designer, Trevor as he explores the horticultural highlights of the Hudson Valley.



SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed & breakfast: four at the 4-star Courtyard Tarrytown and three at the 3-star Residence Inn Poughkeepsie (or similar)
- ▶ One Lunch
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Trevor Edwards as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
5 - 12 Jul		\$5,315	\$5,105
Single Supplement			\$1,115



Wave Hill



Butchart Gardens

## Gardens and Wildlife of Western Canada

9 DAYS from \$6,995 | TOUR MANAGER: Julia Corden

Spectacular scenery and a warm welcome await us in Vancouver, a city which owes its vibrancy and cosmopolitan flavour to the diverse cultural background of its inhabitants. Set amidst majestic mountains and surrounded by blue Pacific waters, Vancouver's gentle climate keeps the city green year-round and makes it the perfect backdrop for many outstanding gardens. We will be privileged to visit some of the finest private gardens in Vancouver and Victoria. Our journey also includes the opportunity to enjoy a whale watching trip, and, if we're lucky, we'll catch a glimpse of orca, grey, humpback and minke whales. From Tofino, we embark on a bear watching boat tour along the calm coastal waters and we'll explore the Naa'Way'a Sum Gardens spread over 12 hectares of gardens, forest and shoreline.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Vancouver** transfer to our hotel.

**Day 2** Today we take a tour around **Vancouver** exploring **Stanley Park** with its famous Totem Poles, **English Bay**, **Canada Place**, historic **Gastown**, **Chinatown** and **Vancouver Lookout**. Later we visit **Van Dusen Botanical Gardens**, which is spread over 55 acres and the first authentic full-sized classical Chinese garden built outside China, that of **Dr Sun Yat-Sen**. (B)

**Day 3** This morning we explore the **UBC Botanical Garden**, the oldest university botanical gardens in Canada. Later, we head northwards to the **Capilano Suspension Bridge Par.** (B)

**Day 4** Today we travel to **Vancouver Island** and upon arrival, we head to the world famous **Butchart Gardens**, one of the world's premier floral show gardens. We later enjoy some sightseeing in **Victoria**, where highlights include the **Inner Harbour** and **Parliament buildings**. (B)

**Day 5** Our day begins with an optional **whale watching** cruise tour. This afternoon, we take a scenic route to the historic **Hatley Estate**, one of Canada's largest and most diverse National Historic Sites. (B)

**Day 6** We venture to **Ucluelet**, enjoying the scenery as we traverse Vancouver Island to its Pacific coast. Enroute we have a visit to the **Milner Gardens and Woodland**, a seaside garden set in Qualicum beach on the eastern coast of Vancouver Island, with views across the Strait of Georgia. (B)

**Day 7** After breakfast, we head out in search of the **Vancouver Island black bears** which at this time of the year venture to the shoreline in search of rock crab and other seafood treats. Later, we visit the **Naa'Way'a Sum Gardens**. Formerly known as the Tofino Botanical Gardens, the site is spread over 12 hectares of gardens, forests and shorelines and it explores the relationship between culture and nature. (B)

**Day 8** This morning as we travel across **Vancouver Island**, passing through Parksville to Nanaimo where we board the ferry to **Horseshoe Bay**. Upon arrival, we head into **Vancouver** for a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. (B, D)

**Day 9** Explore at your own leisure this morning before we transfer to Vancouver airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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



### YOUR TOUR MANAGER JULIA CORDEN

Julia was trained in Horticulture at RHS Garden Wisley and at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh and has a wealth of knowledge of all types of plants, animals and birds.



SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\*

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Eight nights' bed and breakfast in 3-star hotels: four nights Vancouver, two nights Victoria & two nights Ucluelet
- ▶ One dinner
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Julia Corden as tour manager and local guides

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
12 - 20 Sep		\$7,205	\$6,995
Single Supplement			\$1,815
Optional Excursion: Whale watching			\$135



Monteverde

## Gardens of Costa Rica

12 DAYS from \$5,945 | TOUR MANAGER: Colin Crosbie

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.

This tour will be led by Colin Crosbie, former Head Curator of RHS Garden Wisley and currently President of the Scottish Rock Garden Club.

**Day 1** On arrival in **San José** transfer to our hotel. (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)

**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, cocoa, 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 where our tour concludes (B)

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



### YOUR TOUR MANAGER COLIN CROSBIE

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



### FOUR-DAY MANUEL ANTONIO BEACH EXTENSION FROM \$1,045pp

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

SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\*

#### 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 Antonio (or similar)
- ▶ Eight dinners and ten lunches
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Colin Crosbie as tour manager and a local guide

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
26 Jan - 6 Feb		\$6,155	\$5,945
Single Supplement			\$1,395





Yosemite National Park

## California – In the footsteps of John Muir

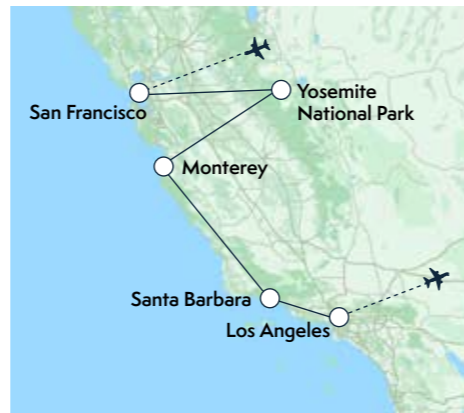
14 DAYS from \$8,885 | TOUR MANAGER: Mike Nelhams

California is a paradise on the Pacific, a place of mythic proportions blessed with an intoxicating climate. Its monumental landscapes, including ocean, mountains, mighty redwood forests and barren sweeps of deserts all fill the senses. Our unique horticultural tour starts in the San Francisco district, moves to Yosemite, comes back to Monterey and follows the coastal route down to Santa Barbara.

Of course we are only scratching the surface of the Golden State, however what we have included on our full itinerary will stay with you forever. With its breathtaking landscapes, diverse climates and rich plant life, California contains some of the most exciting and stunning landscapes in the world. We have a combination of famous botanical gardens such as those of Berkeley University, Santa Barbara, Strybing and Huntington, one of the most famous gardens in North America. We also visit private gardens such as Filoli with its beautifully preserved Georgian revival house and Lotusland, for many the outstanding garden of this tour.

All these man-made features will be dwarfed in comparison with the redwood forests and the National Park of Yosemite. In 1868 the young Scotsman John Muir ventured through California's wild landscape and was so entranced by the beauty of the place that his enthusiasm to conserve it for eternity eventually led to the formation of America's network of National Parks. We also visit the Channel Islands National Park, five remarkable, uninhabited islands with a wealth of natural and cultural resources which afford a glimpse of southern California as it once was.

Our tour is led by the Curator of Tresco's Abbey Gardens and expert horticulturalist Mike Nelhams, who rates the Pacific coast of California as one of his favourite destinations in the world.



- Day 1** Upon arrival in **San Francisco**, we will be met by our coach and transferred to our hotel. The remainder of the day is free to explore and relax.
- Day 2** This morning we will board the coach for our **city tour** taking in the sights of this "City by the Bay" including **North Beach**, famous for its Italian community; **Nob Hill**, where the city's elite have their homes; **Chinatown**, which boasts the largest Chinese community in North America, and fashionable **Union Square**, home of some of the finest shopping in the country. In the afternoon we will visit **Botanic Garden** at the **University of California, Berkeley**. We return to our hotel in San Francisco where the evening is at leisure. (B)



Filoli Gardens

- Day 3** This morning we cross the famous **Golden Gate Bridge** to visit **Muir Woods**, a 559-acre forest of towering coast redwood trees. In the afternoon we enter the **Golden Gate Park** for our visit to **Strybing Arboretum & botanical garden**. There is much to see here, including Mediterranean and Tropical Climate Gardens, Temperate Gardens and a host of Speciality Gardens. (B)

- Day 4** This morning we head to **Filoli Gardens**, a 654-acre estate situated 30 miles to the south of San Francisco. These magnificent gardens are untouched by the passage of time and surround the grand Georgian mansion with hundreds of rare flowers, plants and trees. Afternoon free, or alternatively, you may wish to take part in our optional excursion to **Alcatraz**, the infamous prison island in the middle of San Francisco Bay. (B)

- Day 5** We enjoy a full day tour to the **Napa Valley** and the **Francis Ford Coppola Winery**. Francis Ford Coppola is perhaps better known for making movies but has been making wines since 1977. (B)

- Day 6** We leave our hotel in San Francisco and head to the suburbs of Walnut Creek to the **Ruth Bancroft Gardens and Nursery**. One of the finest dry gardens in the world, we see an expansive display of climate resilient plants. We later travel to **Yosemite National Park**, a region of outstanding natural beauty with a grand collection of waterfalls, meadows and forests. (B)

- Day 7** This morning we tour **Yosemite**. Highlights include the Mariposa Grove, which contains hundreds of the giant sequoias and a sub-alpine meadow surrounded by mountain peaks. (B)

- Day 8** Today we leave our hotel in Yosemite and travel to **Monterey Peninsula**. Described as the greatest meeting of land, sea and sky, this beautiful seaside community combines all the charm of small-town America with an endless variety of recreational activities. (B)

- Day 9** We have a real treat in store today as we travel along the stunning **17 Mile Drive**. Passing through the **Del Monte Forest** there are approximately 20 stops along this well marked route, each with a landmark of interest. We then visit the **Mission San Carlos Borromeo** in Carmel, one of the most popular tourist sites in California and a place of pilgrimage for visitors from all over the world, including Pope John Paul II in 1987. (B)

- Day 10** This morning we explore **Monterey Bay**, which has an abundance of sea life such as sea otters and sea lions. Heading south, we will visit **Hearst Castle**, which is now a State Monument giving glimpses into the Hearst's opulent lifestyle. Continue to our hotel in **Santa Barbara**. (B)

- Day 11** This morning we depart for Ventura Harbor, 30 miles south of Santa Barbara, the starting point for our boat trip to the **Channel Islands National Park**. Encompassing five remarkable, uninhabited islands and their ocean environment, the Park preserves and protects a wealth of natural and cultural resources. (B)

- Day 12** We visit the **Lotusland Gardens**, where highlights include an outdoor theatre, a topiary garden, large collection of rare cypresses and a lotus pond. In the afternoon we will visit the **Santa Barbara Mission Garden** and the private garden of **Casa del Herrero**, giving us an insight into the pleasures of gardening here in California. (B)



Vineyard in Napa Valley

- Day 13** This morning we visit the **California Botanic Garden**, the largest of its kind, focussing solely on the Golden State's native plant species. (B)

- Day 14** We depart for **Fullerton Arboretum**, a former orange grove and now the largest botanical garden in Orange County. En route to the airport, our final visit is to **Huntington Botanical Gardens**, which consist of 15 specialised gardens arranged within a park-like landscape. Among the most remarkable is the Desert Garden with its mature cacti. We then transfer to Los Angeles International Airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER MIKE NELHAMS

Mike is looking forward to returning to California to explore some of the best gardens this Golden State has to offer.



SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ 13 nights accommodation in 3 and 4-star hotels on a bed and breakfast basis: five nights in San Francisco, two nights in Yosemite National Park, two nights in Monterey, four nights in Santa Barbara and one night in Anaheim
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Mike Nelhams as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
23 Sep - 6 Oct		\$9,095	\$8,885
Single Supplement			\$2,655
Optional Excursion: Alcatraz			\$85



Rodney Bay



Pitons

## Gardens of Saint Lucia

8 DAYS from \$4,965 | TOUR MANAGER: David Hurrión

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.



Castries market



Hummingbird on Heliconia

**Day 1** On arrival in **Saint Lucia**, we will transfer to our hotel.

**Day 2** Today after breakfast, we visit the **Eclectic Garden** nestled at a private home, an oasis in the midst of a bustling neighbourhood. We explore the private and enchanting garden which is 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. We complete our visit with a stop at the renowned **Castries market**, noted by National Geographic as the 5th best market worldwide, before heading back to our hotel. (B)

**Day 3** Today we enjoy panoramic views and embrace the magical scenery of the west coast of the island as we travel through fascinating coastal villages and verdant vegetation to the enchanting town of **Soufrière**, which is dominated by the majestic Pitons rising from the sea to the skies. We embark on an enchanting journey through the acclaimed and award-winning **Diamond Botanical Gardens**, where a stunning display of profound beauty of flora and fauna awaits, and the senses are captivated by a cascading waterfall. We travel onwards to **Emerald Estate**, a delightful

exploration of organic farming featuring the cultivation of mangoes, avocados, guavas, and cocoa and a wide variety of tropical plants 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** nestled above Soufrière. This is a small but exquisitely designed garden which serves as a sanctuary for prayer and reflection which infuses a touch of serenity into this immersive experience. (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, after breakfast we depart for **Mamiku Gardens**, nestled on Saint Lucia's picturesque east coast with a panoramic view of Praslin Bay. Renowned for its historical significance, Mamiku Gardens witnessed a notable battle during the 18th-century English military occupation. We will delve into the world of medicinal herbs, uncovering their various uses, and gain insights into the conservation of endangered trees and plants along the forest trails. To complement our visit, we enjoy 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 to Soufrière, often at times called the "Garden of Saint Lucia". We indulge in a unique chocolate-making adventure at "Hotel Chocolat" on the historic **Rabot Estate**. Guided by a skilled Cocoa Grower and chocolatier, we will stroll through a cocoa grove,

see coca pods, before creating our very own chocolate bar. Participate in the entire chocolate-making process, from seedling nursery to tasting. After crafting our chocolates, we savour a delightful lunch at Rabot Market, and leave with our delicious creations as we shop at the Rabot retail store. Unforgettable chocolate moments await! (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. We will be amazed at the range of the colours and vibrancy that greets and inspires. Learn how the islanders' forebears used traditional herbs, bushes, and blooms in their daily lives to cure their ailments. We can view numerous artefacts around the grounds and in the museum that offer an overview of the rich historical and cultural journey of the island. Relax and enjoy lunch in the tropical aura and relish this experience. 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 where our tour concludes. (B)

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

### FOUR-DAY BEACH EXTENSION FROM \$805pp

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

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER DAVID HURRIÓN

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



### SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\*

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed and breakfast at the 4-star Coco Palm Hotel, Saint Lucia
- ▶ Three lunches and one dinner
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist David Hurrión as tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
27 Feb - 6 Mar		\$5,735	\$5,525
13 - 20 Nov		\$5,175	\$4,965
Single Supplement			\$1,675
Pool View Supplement			from \$122.50
Optional Excursion: Rainforest Aerial Tram			\$155



Île aux Aigrettes



Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden

## Gardens of Mauritius

10 DAYS from \$4,895 | TOUR MANAGER: Sue Pomeroy

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.

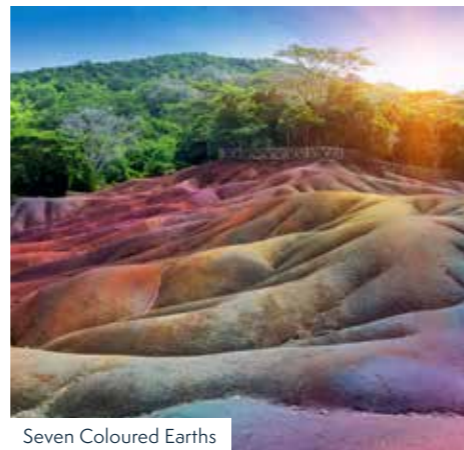


Caudan Waterfront

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Mauritius**, we transfer to our hotel and have the rest of the day to settle in and relax. (D)

**Day 2** Our day starts at **La Vanille Tropical Garden**, where we will have a guided tour of the flora and fauna in this unique zoo, which is beautifully landscaped with tropical plants. In the afternoon we visit the **Domaine de Saint Aubin**, a colonial house from 1819, which offers a number of different visitor experiences. You can also explore the Botanical Garden which houses one of just two *Chorisia* (*silk floss trees*) in Mauritius and a Spice Garden. (B, D)

**Day 3** After breakfast, we head to Morcellement St André on north coast where we visit a **large greenhouse** filled with plants and flowers and meet



Seven Coloured Earths

the owner. Afterwards, we travel to the capital **Port Louis**, where we visit the colourful **market** and the **Blue Penny Museum**, which is wholly devoted to Mauritius. The museum collection includes the 1847 Blue and Red Penny stamps, which are amongst the rarest and most sought after stamps in the world. Later we have a visit to **Caudan Waterfront** including the local handicraft market. (B, D)

**Day 4** We depart on an excursion to the **Black River Gorges National Park**. This beautiful highland area south-west of Curepipe is like no other part of the island and looks more like North America than an island in the Indian Ocean. Look 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** and the **Grand Bassin** and our day concludes at the **Seven Coloured Earths**, a rare geological oddity created by volcanic activity which brought together a number of different minerals and elements. (B, D)

**Day 5** Today we take a boat trip to the island's nature reserve of **Île aux Aigrettes**, where we will see plants and animals on the verge of extinction, which have been saved and now thrive here, 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 6** Free day to relax and enjoy the facilities of the hotel or explore the surrounding area at your leisure. (B, D)

**Day 7** Enjoy a guided visit to **Curepipe Botanical Garden**. The little botanic garden is notable for its palm *Hyphorbe amaricaulis*, a doomed species as it is the last of its kind in the world and has proved impossible to propagate. In the afternoon we visit **Le Domaine de Bois Cheri**, the largest and oldest tea plantation in Mauritius, where we will tour the museum and enjoy a tasting of the finished product. (B, D)



Giant tortoise

**Day 8** This morning we travel to the capital **Port Louis** for some free time before we depart for a visit to the **Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanic Garden** at Pamplémousses, famous for its canal full of giant waterlilies. Later we visit the **Domaine de Labourdonnais**, where we discover the Château and the Nursery, which has a wide range of plants, before enjoying a tasting of local rum or fruit juice. (B, D)

**Day 9** We begin today with a visit to the **plantations** in Moka situated on the central plateau of the island, where we will see fields and greenhouses filled with all manner of plants. Later we visit a **pineapple plantation** followed by a tasting of the delicious fruit. In the afternoon we explore **Eureka House**, a colonial mansion with a dramatic woodland ravine as well as a garden, with lunch included. (B, L, D)

**Day 10** For our final day we relax in the hotel and then transfer to the airport where our tour concludes (B)

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

### FIVE-DAY BEACH EXTENSION FROM \$900pp

Why not extend your holiday with a four-night stay at the 4-star Anelia Resort & Spa (or similar) including dinner, breakfast and airport transfers giving you the chance to spend a few days at leisure.



Grand Bassin

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER SUE POMEROY

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



### SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\*

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Nine nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 4-star Anelia Resort and Spa
- One Afternoon Tea and one lunch
- Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- Services of horticulturalist Sue Pomeroy as tour manager and local guides

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
27 Mar - 5 Apr		<del>\$5,105</del>	\$4,895
13 - 22 Nov		<del>\$5,245</del>	\$5,035
Single Supplement			\$1,115
Superior Ocean View Supplement			from \$160



Hunte's Botanical Garden © Trevor Edwards

## Gardens of Barbados

8 DAYS from \$4,125 | TOUR MANAGER: David Hurron

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.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Bridgetown** transfer to our hotel. (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 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 where our tour concludes (B, IF)

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



### YOUR TOUR MANAGER DAVID HURRON

Join David as he explores the wonderful tropical gardens of Barbados.



### FOUR-DAY BEACH EXTENSION FROM \$625pp

Why not extend your holiday with a three-night stay at the 4-star Accra Beach Hotel (or similar) including breakfast and airport transfers giving you the chance to spend a few days at leisure. (B, L)

### SAVE \$140 PER PERSON\*

#### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights' bed & breakfast at the 4-star Accra Beach Hotel, Barbados (or similar)
- ▶ Two dinners and four packed lunches
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist David Hurron as tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
6 - 13 Feb		<del>\$4,265</del>	\$4,125
3 - 10 Nov		<del>\$4,265</del>	\$4,125
Single Supplement			\$1,115
Ocean View Suite			from \$295
Deluxe Ocean View Suite			from \$1,175
Optional Excursion: Catamaran Cruise			\$170



Great Sphinx

## Gardens and Temples of Ancient Egypt

12 DAYS from \$5,735

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 four nights aboard a Nile river cruise ship.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Cairo** transfer to our hotel. (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 head for 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 Seti I**

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 visiting 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)

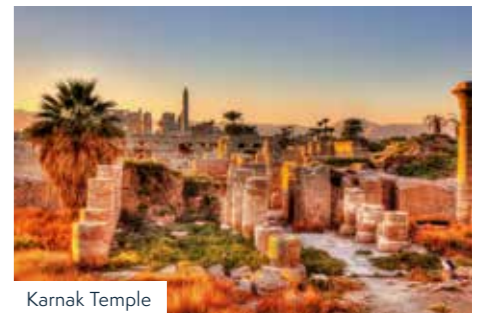
**Day 9** Optional excursion to **Abu Simbel**, a temple built by Ramesses II. Later enjoy **afternoon tea** at the Old Cataract Hotel where Agatha Christie wrote *Death on the Nile*. (B, AT, D)

**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** Transfer to the airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Karnak Temple

### SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\*

#### 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
- ▶ Flights Cairo to Luxor and Aswan to Cairo
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ On arrival Tourist Visa Entry Fee
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

	Early booking offer*	Was	Now
6 - 17 Feb		<del>\$5,945</del>	\$5,735
6 - 17 Nov		<del>\$6,785</del>	\$6,575
Single Supplement			from \$1,645
Optional Excursion: Abu Simbel			\$665



Namaqualand



Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens

# Spring Flowers of Namaqualand

13 DAYS from \$6,225 | TOUR MANAGER: Colin Crosbie

Namaqualand, in South Africa's Northern Cape, is a place of rare and exquisite beauty, an unspoilt expanse of open spaces broken by ancient outcrops of granite - and a plant lover's delight. With an intensity dependent on the winter rains, come spring the barren ground bursts into a carpet of flowers, a vast tapestry of stunningly interwoven colour. In addition to this spectacular display our tour includes coastal and mountain fynbos, succulent plants, bulbs and orchids, proteas and heaths, a game drive, a chance to go whale watching and of course a vineyard!

We begin in Cape Town with visits to familiar destinations such as Kirstenbosch and Table Mountain, but as we head north we move into less well-known territory, through the homelands of the San people with their distinctive clicking language and on into Namaqualand. A series of visits will bring us into close contact with swathes of colourful flowers for a truly memorable experience.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in Cape Town, we will transfer to the hotel followed by lunch at a local restaurant. Later, we depart for **Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden**. Established in 1913, today it is one of the finest botanic gardens in the world and provides the perfect introduction to South Africa's flora. (L)

**Day 2** After breakfast we will ascend to the top of **Table Mountain** by cable car and discover some of the many floral species to be found here. Later, we have a city orientation tour including a walk in the **Company's Garden**. Afternoon is at leisure, or you may join the optional excursion to

**Robben Island** - the island prison which housed Nelson Mandela during his 18-year incarceration. (B)

**Day 3** Today we depart for a long but rewarding day as we explore the **Cape Peninsula**. We head along **Chapman's Peak Drive** and visit the **Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve**. At **Boulder's Beach** where we find a colony of over 3,000 African Penguins. (B, L)

**Day 4** We depart for a visit to **!Kha Ttu San Cultural Centre and Nature Reserve**. Here we try the memorable, health-giving tea and hear a story in the !Kung language, with its



distinctive click consonants. Later we have the chance to embark on an **Open Vehicle Game Drive** in the reserve where Eland, Zebra, Springbok, Black Wildebeest, Ostrich roam free. This afternoon we visit the **West Coast National Park** and the **Postberg Nature Reserve** within the park, which is famous for its carpets of spring flowers such as the rain daisy. (B, L, D)

**Day 5** We drive up the West Coast and see the beautiful, bright yellow canola fields, enjoy lunch by the sea and, weather permitting, a lovely walk on the beach. We continue north and enter the unique region of **Namaqualand**. (B, L, D)

**Day 6** We drive up the breathtaking **Vanrhyns Pass** and visit the quiver tree forest before continuing to **Matjiesfontein** to enjoy the fields of flowers that stretch as far as the eye can see. (B, L, D)

**Day 7** We head further north and spend the day in the **Namaqua National Park**, walking along the flower paths and discovering the native flora and fauna. (B, L, D)



Boulders Beach

**Day 8** We depart for **Clanwilliam**, marvelling at the amazing rock formations, and visit the **Ramskop Wild Flower Garden**, home to more than 350 species of cultivated wild flowers. (B, L, D)

**Day 9** We visit the **Karoo National Botanical Gardens**, home to over 400 naturally occurring plant species, one of the largest collections of indigenous succulents in South Africa. (B, L)

**Day 10** We head to **Stellenbosch Botanical Garden**, the oldest university garden in South Africa, featuring a huge variety of plants from across the globe. After a picnic lunch, we visit the **Vergelegen Wine Estate**. (B, L)

**Day 11** We visit the **Caledon Wildflower Garden and Nature Reserve**, a place of beauty and conservation. Afternoon at leisure in **Hermanus**.

Alternatively, you may choose to join the optional afternoon **whale watching excursion**. (B)

**Day 12** We begin with a visit to **Fernkloof Nature Reserve**, which protects coastal and mountain fynbos and a small patch of evergreen forest. Later, we visit **Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens**, renowned for its waterfalls and amber pools. (B, L)

**Day 13** Time at leisure before transferring to the airport where our tour concludes (B)

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

**YOUR TOUR MANAGER COLIN CROSBIE**

Colin's extensive horticultural knowledge will considerably add to our experience when we return to the amazing floral landscapes of Namaqualand.



**SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\***

**YOUR TOUR INCLUDES**

- ▶ 12 nights' bed and breakfast basis: three at the 4-star Commodore Hotel, Cape Town; one night at the 3-star Saldanha Bay Hotel, Saldanha; three nights at the 3-star Letsatsi Lodge, Vanrhynsdorp; one night at the 3-star Clanwilliam Hotel, Clanwilliam; two nights at the 4-star De Zalze Lodge, Stellenbosch, two nights at the 3-star Windsor Hotel, Hermanus (or similar)
- ▶ Ten lunches and five dinners
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Colin Crosbie as tour manager and local guide

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON		
Early booking offer*	Was	Now
30 Aug - 11 Sep	\$6,435	\$6,225
Single Supplement		\$695
Optional Excursions:		
Whale watching		\$125
Robben Island		\$55



Mai Chau

# Journey through Vietnam

14 DAYS from \$5,035 | TOUR MANAGER: Richard Baines

Vietnam - a land of wondrous natural beauty, cultural complexities, bustling cities and hill-tribe villages. As we embark on our journey, we discover the capital Hanoi, famed for its centuries-old architecture and rich cultural influences from both Asia and France. We discover some of the city's highlights before heading into the hill country to sample the slower pace of life here, surrounded by steeped rice terraces and misty mountains. We also spend some time in Hue, where we have an informative visit to the Imperial Citadel, once the seat of the Nguyen Dynasty emperors. Our tour continues into the central highlands of Vietnam and the town of Da Lat. Here we find some of the best floral displays in the country at the Flower Park and the Fresh Gardens, along with hydrangeas and other flowers. Our final stop is the southern city of Ho Chi Minh, where we have a glimpse into the city's war-torn past and today's modern day-to-day life. Our tour manager Richard Baines will also conduct some informal botanising whenever the opportunity presents itself.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Hanoi**, we transfer to our hotel and have the rest of the day to relax. We gather this evening for a welcome dinner. (D)

**Day 2** This morning after breakfast we embark on a city tour of **Hanoi**, the cultural heartbeat of Vietnam. Accompanied by our local guide we explore ancient temples and bustling markets and from the exterior we view the **Mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh** and the **Presidential Palace**. We later visit the **Temple of Literature**, founded over 1,000 years ago as a temple dedicated to Chinese philosopher Confucius. We also visit the **Ethnology Museum** which focuses on the 54 officially recognised ethnic groups who call Vietnam home.

In the early evening, there is the chance to join an optional excursion 'Street Eats' where we explore Hanoi's **Old Quarter** with our local guide and sample some of the local dishes. (B)

**Day 3** We depart Hanoi and travel west through rolling hills, verdant rice paddies and charming villages to **Mai Chau**, home to a White Tai community (the third largest of the 54 ethnic groups). This afternoon we have a walking tour of **Pom Coong**, which offers a more off-the-beaten-track experience compared to better-known villages. Next, we head through paddy fields to the village of **Lac 2** where we have an opportunity to speak with a local resident before enjoying a



**dyeing class** with the chance to dye your own items. (B, L, D)

**Day 4** This morning, we depart on a leisurely walk through selected villages granting us a first hand glimpse into the daily lives of the local White Tai community of the area. After lunch we return to Hanoi. (B, L)

**Day 5** After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our flight to **Hue**, where on arrival we visit the **Minh Mang Tomb**, said to be one of the most majestic of the Nguyen Dynasty royal tombs, consisting of around 40 palaces, temples and pavilions. This afternoon we visit the **tomb of Emperor Khai Dinh**, which features a blend of Vietnamese and western architectural styles. (B)

**Day 6** We depart for a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage listed **Imperial Citadel** and explore the remains of the **Purple Forbidden City**.



Hoi An

Later we discover the traditional art of **paper flower making**. After lunch, we take a short boat ride to view the **Thien Mu Pagoda**. Later we visit the **Ancient Garden House**, a traditional residence of the Mandarins who lived in the vicinity. (B, L, D)

**Day 7** Today we have a long but rewarding day as we travel from Hue to the **Ba Na Hills**. On arrival we take a **cable car ride** to the summit, from where we enjoy spectacular views across the mountains, along with a visit to the **Linh Ung Pagoda** and the **Giant Buddha statue**. We then visit the flower garden at **Le Jardin D'Amour**, located on the top of Chua Mountain and divided into nine smaller areas. After lunch, we visit the 150-metre long **Golden Bridge** before continuing to Hoi An. (B, L)

**Day 8** We enjoy a tour of **Hoi An Ancient Town**, whose impeccable preservation has earned it recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The remainder of the day is at leisure. Alternatively, you may join the optional excursion **Ky Anh Tunnels Experience**, where we follow in the footsteps of one of the witnesses of the Vietnamese war. (B)

**Day 9** Today is free to explore at your leisure. Alternatively, you may wish to join our optional **Vietnamese Cooking Class**. (B)

**Day 10** This morning we transfer to the airport for a flight via Ho Chi Minh City to **Da Lat** in southern Vietnam's central highlands. (B)



Linh Ung Pagoda

**Day 11** Today we visit the picturesque **Fresh Garden**, considered one of the largest green gardens in Da Lat, followed by the opportunity to visit a local flower field and hydrangea garden. (B, L)

**Day 12** We visit the **Da Lat Flower Park**, with more than 300 species of flowers blooming throughout the year. Later, we transfer to the airport for our flight to **Ho Chi Minh City** (formerly known as Saigon). Upon arrival, we start our Story of Saigon tour with a visit to the **War Remnants Museum**. The museum contains displays of military aircraft, weaponry and many photographs. (B)

**Day 13** We have an early start, as on today's walking tour we immerse ourselves in the **local culture**, witnessing the lives of resident population through their daily exercise routines, vibrant flower markets and religious observance. The afternoon is free, or you may wish to join the optional excursion **Bean to Bar Chocolate Tasting** experience at Maison Marou. Later we enjoy a farewell dinner. (B, D)

**Day 14** Morning at leisure before we transfer to the airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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

## YOUR TOUR MANAGER RICHARD BAINES

Richard is Curator of Logan Botanic Garden and in recent years he has led four expeditions to Vietnam resulting in the discovery of five species new to science.



## FOUR-DAY PHAN THIET BEACH EXTENSION FROM \$695pp

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

## FOUR-DAY SIEM REAP EXTENSION FROM \$1,395PP

Why not extend your holiday with a three night extension exploring the Temples of Angkor Wat. Price includes regional flight to Siem Reap, three nights at the 4-star Sokha Angkor Resort (or similar), airport transfers and sightseeing programme.

## SAVE \$210 PER PERSON\*

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ 13 nights' accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis: three nights at the 4-star Thang Long Opera Hotel, Hanoi; one night at the 4-star Mai Chau Ecodge, Mai Chau; two nights at the 4-star Eldora Hotel, Hue; three nights at the 5-star La Siesta Hotel, Hoi An; two nights at the 4-star Du Parc Hotel, Da Lat; two nights at the 5-star New World Hotel, Ho Chi Minh City (or similar)
- ▶ Five lunches and four dinners
- ▶ All domestic flights
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Richard Baines as tour manager plus local English-speaking guides

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

Early booking offer*	Was	Now
25 Apr - 8 May	\$5,245	\$5,035
Single Supplement		\$975
Optional Excursion:		
Hanoi - Street Eats		\$80
Hoi An - Ky Anh Tunnels & Rum Tasting		\$200
Hoi An - Vietnamese Cooking Class		\$70
Ho Chi Minh - Bean to Bar Chocolate Experience		\$85

# Your 2025 Calendar



## January

Up Helly Aa - 7 day  
25 - 31 Jan  
Gardens of Costa Rica  
26 Jan - 7 Feb  
Up Helly Aa - 4 day air  
27 - 30 Jan

## February

Glorious Gardens of the Canary Islands  
1 - 8 Feb  
Gardens of Barbados  
6 - 13 Feb  
Gardens and Temples of Ancient Egypt  
6 - 17 Feb  
Snowdrop Gardens of the Cotswolds  
7 - 10 Feb  
Iceland's Northern Lights  
9 - 13 Feb  
Gardens of the French Riviera - Menton Lemon Festival  
13 - 18 Feb  
Gardens of the French Riviera - Menton Lemon Festival  
20 - 25 Feb  
Gardens of Saint Lucia  
27 Feb - 6 Mar

## March

Cultural Malta  
4 - 8 Mar  
Malta's Archaeological Heritage  
4 - 10 Mar  
Galicia's Camellia Route  
12 - 17 Mar

Portugal - Route of the Almond Blossom  
12 - 19 Mar  
Scotland's Extreme North West  
13 - 16 Mar  
Great Gardens of Cornwall in the company of Mike Nelhams  
17 - 21 Mar  
Spring Gardens of Cornwall  
17 - 20 Mar  
Scotland's Extreme North West  
18 - 21 Mar  
Gardens and Architecture of Mallorca  
18 - 23 Mar  
Gardens and Villas of Sicily  
18 - 25 Mar  
Portugal - Route of the Almond Blossom  
19 - 26 Mar  
Glasgow's Art Treasures featuring the Burrell Collection  
21 - 24 Mar  
Great Gardens of Cornwall in the company of Mike Nelhams  
24 - 28 Mar  
The Archeology of Ancient Cyprus  
25 Mar - 1 Apr  
Seasonal Gardens of Japan  
25 Mar - 5 Apr  
Villas and Gardens of the Italian Lakes  
26 Mar - 2 Apr  
Art and Architecture of Antwerp  
27 - 31 Mar  
Gardens of Mauritius  
27 Mar - 5 Apr  
The Architecture of Glasgow and Edinburgh  
28 - 31 Mar  
The Mary Rose: A Tudor Tale  
28 - 31 Mar

## April

Gardens of Marrakech  
2 - 6 Apr  
Scotland's Extreme North West  
8 - 11 Apr  
Gardens of South and West Wales  
11 - 15 Apr  
Gardens of the Neapolitan Riviera  
11 - 17 Apr  
A Grand Tour of the Outer Hebrides - 5 days (B-S)  
14 - 18 Apr  
Dutch Bulfields in Spring  
14 - 18 Apr  
An Archaeologist's View of Orkney & Shetland  
14 - 19 Apr  
Great Gardens of Cornwall in the company with Mike Nelhams  
15 - 19 Apr  
Lord of the Glens - 7 day cruise (Voyages Through the Heart of Scotland)  
17 - 23 Apr  
Scotland's Extreme North West  
18 - 21 Apr  
Ancient Stones of the Outer Hebrides  
22 - 26 Apr  
Gardens and Architecture of Mallorca  
22 - 27 Apr  
A Classic Scottish Steam Break  
24 - 27 Apr  
Crete Archaeology  
22 - 29 Apr  
Journey Through Vietnam  
25 Apr - 8 May

## May

Gardens of Madeira  
1 - 8 May  
Orkney & Shetland by Air  
5 - 9 May  
Gardens of Honshu and Hokkaido  
5 - 16 May  
Discover the Durrell's Corfu with Lee Durrell  
6 - 10 May  
Scotland's Northern Edge  
6 - 10 May  
Malta's Archaeological Heritage  
6 - 12 May  
Scenic Scottish Railways  
7 - 10 May  
The Best Rhododendron Gardens in the World?  
7 - 10 May  
The Isles of Scilly  
7 - 12 May  
Villas and Gardens of the Italian Lakes  
7 - 14 May  
A Classic Scottish Steam Break  
8 - 11 May  
Gardens of the French Riviera - International Rose Festival  
8 - 13 May  
The Genius of Monet  
9 - 12 May  
Highlights of Orkney and Shetland  
12 - 17 May  
Gardens & Architecture of Andalusia  
12 - 19 May

Rome, Ninfa and Castel Gandolfo  
13 - 16 May  
Gardens and Villas of Sicily  
13 - 20 May  
Gardens of Jersey  
14 - 18 May  
Arran, Scotland in Miniature  
19 - 23 May  
Lord of the Glens - 8 day cruise (Secrets of the Highlands and Islands)  
19 - 26 May  
Palladian Villas of Veneto  
20 - 24 May  
The RHS Chelsea Flower Show and Classic English Gardens  
22 - 28 May  
A Classic Scottish Steam Break (Stirling Highland Hotel)  
23 - 26 May  
Seine River Cruise featuring Monet's Garden and the Gardens of Normandy  
23 - 30 May  
RHS Garden Bridgewater and Gardens of the North West  
24 - 27 May  
Highlights of Orkney and Shetland  
26 - 31 May  
Gardens of Perthshire and the Scone Palace Garden Fair  
29 May - 1 Jun  
Gardens of Rutland, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire  
30 May - 2 Jun  
Highgrove and the Cotswolds  
30 May - 2 Jun  
Gardens of Wester Ross  
30 May - 3 Jun

## June

Gardens of Dumfries & Galloway  
1 - 4 Jun  
Stately Homes and Seaside Castles of Norfolk  
1 - 5 Jun  
Gardens and Wildflowers of the Burren  
3 - 7 Jun  
In the Footsteps of Gertrude Jekyll  
3 - 8 Jun  
Highlights of Northumberland  
7 - 11 Jun  
Arran, Scotland in Miniature  
8 - 12 Jun  
A Grand Tour of the Outer Hebrides - 6 days (B-S)  
8 - 13 Jun  
Historic Houses of Aberdeenshire  
9 - 12 Jun  
Scotland's Northern Edge  
9 - 13 Jun  
The Azores - its Gardens and Natural Wonders  
10 - 19 Jun  
The Irish Rover  
12 - 19 Jun  
Castles, Palaces and Abbey's of Eastern Scotland  
15 - 18 Jun  
Scenic Journeys of the Highlands and Islands  
15 - 21 Jun  
Gardens of Kent & Sussex  
20 - 23 Jun

Summer Gardens of Cornwall  
23 - 29 Jun  
A Classic Scottish Steam Break  
25 - 28 Jun  
Highland Wildlife Safari  
25 - 28 Jun  
Highgrove and the Cotswolds  
27 - 30 Jun  
Mull, Staffa and Iona  
28 Jun - 1 Jul  
Gardens of Yorkshire  
30 Jun - 3 Jul

## July

Somerset's Secret Gardens  
5 - 8 Jul  
Gardens of the Hudson Valley  
5 - 12 Jul  
History and Horticulture in Corsica  
11 - 18 Jul  
The Genius of Monet  
18 - 21 Jul  
Tall Ships in Aberdeen  
19 - 22 Jul  
Castles and Palaces of the Highlands  
20 - 23 Jul  
Gardens of Dumfries & Galloway  
20 - 23 Jul  
A Grand Tour of the Outer Hebrides - 6 days (B-S)  
20 - 25 Jul  
Undiscovered Orkney  
28 Jul - 1 Aug

## August

Highgrove and the Cotswolds  
1 - 4 Aug  
In the Footsteps of the Picts  
1 - 4 Aug  
RHS Garden Bridgewater and Gardens of the North West  
2 - 5 Aug  
The Irish Rover  
7 - 14 Aug  
Shetland and its Outer Isles  
9 - 13 Aug  
A Grand Tour of the Outer Hebrides - 6 days (B-S)  
10 - 15 Aug  
Arran, Scotland in Miniature  
11 - 15 Aug  
Gardens of Kent & Sussex  
15 - 18 Aug  
Orkney & Shetland by Air  
16 - 20 Aug  
A Grand Tour of the Outer Hebrides - 5 days (S-B)  
17 - 21 Aug  
Highlights of Orkney and Shetland  
20 - 25 Aug  
A Classic Scottish Steam Break  
21 - 24 Aug  
Scenic Scottish Railways  
27 - 30 Aug  
Spring Flowers of Namaqualand  
30 Aug - 11 Sep

## September

Ancient Stones of the Outer Hebrides  
2 - 6 Sep  
Gardens of Jersey  
3 - 7 Sep  
History and Culture of the Czech Republic  
3 - 11 Sep  
Glasgow's Art Treasures featuring the Burrell Collection  
5 - 8 Sep  
Mull, Staffa and Iona  
6 - 9 Sep  
Scenic Journeys of the Highlands and Islands  
7 - 13 Sep  
Scotland's Northern Edge  
8 - 12 Sep  
Gardens and Architecture of Andalusia  
8 - 15 Sep  
Gardens of Guernsey & Sark  
12 - 16 Sep  
Gardens and Wildlife of Western Canada  
12 - 21 Sep  
Arran, Scotland in Miniature  
13 - 17 Sep  
Gardens of Dumfries & Galloway  
14 - 17 Sep  
Highlights of Northumberland  
14 - 18 Sep  
Palladian Villas of Veneto  
16 - 20 Sep  
Archaeology of Denmark & Sweden  
17 - 24 Sep  
Knitting in Shetland  
18 - 23 Sep  
Lord of the Glens - 8 day cruise (Secrets of the Highlands and Islands)  
22 - 29 Sep  
California - In the Footsteps of John Muir  
23 Sep - 7 Oct  
Scenic Scottish Railways  
24 - 27 Sep  
An Archaeologist's View of Orkney & Shetland  
25 - 30 Sep  
Highlights of Orkney and Shetland  
29 Sep - 4 Oct

## October

Gardens of Marrakech  
1 - 5 Oct  
White Cities of Puglia  
1 - 8 Oct  
Art and Architecture of Antwerp  
2 - 6 Oct  
A Grand Tour of the Outer Hebrides - 5 days (S-B)  
6 - 10 Oct  
Scotland's Extreme North West  
7 - 10 Oct  
Discover the Durrell's Corfu with Lee Durrell  
7 - 11 Oct  
Albinian Archaeology  
7 - 14 Oct  
Crete Archaeology  
7 - 14 Oct

A Classic Scottish Steam Break  
10 - 13 Oct  
The Architecture of Glasgow and Edinburgh  
10 - 13 Oct  
The Mary Rose: A Tudor Tale  
10 - 13 Oct  
Lord of the Glens - 7 day cruise (Voyages Through the Heart of Scotland)  
12 - 18 Oct  
Autumn Tints of Arran  
15 - 18 Oct  
Scenic Scottish Railways  
15 - 18 Oct  
Gardens and Architecture of Mallorca  
15 - 20 Oct  
Brazil's Gardens and Natural Wonders  
18 Oct - 3 Nov  
Autumn Tints of Dumfries and Galloway  
26 - 29 Oct

## November

Gardens of Barbados  
3 - 10 Nov  
Seasonal Gardens of Japan  
3 - 14 Nov  
Cultural Malta  
4 - 8 Nov  
Malta's Archaeological Heritage  
4 - 10 Nov  
The Archeology of Ancient Cyprus  
5 - 12 Nov  
Gardens and Temples of Ancient Egypt  
6 - 17 Nov  
Iceland's Northern Lights  
9 - 13 Nov  
Gardens of Saint Lucia  
13 - 20 Nov  
Gardens of Mauritius  
13 - 22 Nov  
Gardens of Madeira  
24 Nov - 1 Dec





# Booking terms & conditions

Your package holiday booking is with

**Brightwater Holidays, Eden Park House, Cupar, Fife, Scotland KY15 4HS.**

**Telephone: 646 802 1526**

These Booking Conditions set out the terms on which you contract with us and this contract is made on the terms of these booking conditions, which are governed by Scottish Law, and the jurisdiction of the Scottish Courts. If you reside in England or Northern Ireland you may choose the applicable law and jurisdiction if you wish to do so.

In these booking conditions, “you” and “your” includes all persons named on the booking (*including anyone who is added or substituted at a later date*). “We”, “us” and “our” means Brightwater Holidays. Brightwater Holidays is a subsidiary of Specialist Tours Limited (*company number 08395250*). Except where otherwise stated, these booking conditions only apply to holiday arrangements which you book with us and which we agree to make, provide, or perform (*as applicable*) as part of our contract with you. All references in these booking conditions to “holiday”, “booking”, “contract” or “arrangements” mean such holiday arrangements unless otherwise stated.

## +KEY POINTS

You enter into a booking with us when we issue our booking confirmation/invoice. If you then cancel, there will be cancellation charges. Initially as a minimum this may only be a deposit but can go up to 100%. In certain circumstances you may be able to make changes to your booking however charges will apply. We can change and cancel your booking. We'll pay you compensation in certain circumstances. It is a condition of booking that all travellers are covered by comprehensive travel insurance. We are responsible to you for providing your holiday but there are legal limits.

BRIGHTWATER HOLIDAYS holds ATOL number 4498 issued by the Civil Aviation Authority. For all other packages, The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT) provides financial protection under The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018.

## 1. BOOKING

All information provided in the brochure/website is, to the best of our knowledge or belief, correct at the time of publication. We will advise you of any changes that are fundamental to the contract, or which we believe will affect your enjoyment of the holiday. Please advise us if there is any requirement, which you believe is fundamental to your holiday so that we can give you the latest information at the time of booking.

When you ask us to proceed with a booking you will be required to make a (minimum) deposit payment which will vary dependent on the specific holiday you are booking. This will be advised at the time of booking and confirmed in your booking confirmation. It may also be necessary to collect payment at the time of booking for other (non-refundable) costs e.g. flight tickets, transfers etc. In the case of bookings made after the balance due date, we will require full payment for the holiday.

You must be at least 18 years old to make a booking and you guarantee that you have the authority to accept, and do accept, these terms and conditions for all members of the party (including anyone who is added or substituted at a later date), and in particular payment for all the persons on the booking. We reserve the right in our absolute discretion to refuse to accept any booking without necessarily specifying a reason.

A contract is made when we accept your booking and issue our written booking confirmation/invoice. If we cannot accept or confirm the booking, any money paid will be promptly refunded. On receipt of the booking confirmation/invoice it is important to check the details and if there is any inaccuracy this must be notified to us immediately. It may not be possible to make changes or corrections later, or additional costs may be incurred which we will have to pass on to you.

Many of our holidays are based on specially negotiated airfares booked in a specific airline booking class. At the time of booking if these fares are not available, we will endeavour to secure an alternative air fare and advise you of any additional cost. Please note that most special air fares are non-refundable and non-changeable.

## 2. PAYMENT

We hold your deposit (and any additional payment required at the time of booking) towards the full cost of the holiday. The balance must be received by us no later than the final payment due date shown on your booking confirmation/

invoice, as appropriate to your holiday. If you do not pay the full cost within the time specified, we may treat your holiday as cancelled by you in which case the cancellation charges shown in point 4 - Cancellation by You, will apply.

### Deposit Payments (per person):

**UK guests** - \$175pp for holidays without flights, \$350pp for UK/Europe holidays with flights, 15% for long-haul holidays. Deposit for Lord of the Glens cruises is 35% of the total price.

**US guests** - \$175 for holidays without flights, \$350 for UK/Europe holidays with flights, 15% for long haul holidays Deposit for Lord of the Glens cruises is 35% of the total price. You must pay the balance in full as follows (unless otherwise stipulated) :

**Final Balance payment:** 14 weeks prior to tour departure date (20 weeks for cruises).

*If we are booking bespoke flight arrangements for you or deviating from the group flights, we will charge you any difference in cost and payment will be taken in full when the flights are booked.*

**Ways to Pay** - we accept payment by Visa, MasterCard, cheque (GBP ONLY), or bank transfer for which no levy is charged by us. Your bank or credit card provider may charge an additional financial processing charge and we cannot be responsible for any such charges.

Please Note: if you are paying from an overseas bank account, you must accept all bank charges incurred by us. A surcharge of 2.5% will be applied for card payments made with cards registered outside the EEA and USA.

## 3. YOUR HOLIDAY PRICE

a) Prior to booking you will receive a verbal quote based on your specific holiday requirements and travel dates.

b) We reserve the right to notify you of any alteration in the advertised or quoted price and any changes in holiday arrangements before accepting your booking.

**Note:** We make every effort to ensure that the most up to date and correct prices are shown on our website, but we reserve the right to correct pricing errors at any time. The price you pay at the time of booking is the price we guarantee. Prices can go up when demand is so high, so we recommend you book early to avoid disappointment. Alternatively, you may amend your booking or select an alternative holiday at the applicable and correct price.

c) Subject to these conditions, once we have confirmed your booking, the price is fully guaranteed and will not be subject to any additional ‘surcharges’, which means any increase due to changes in the price of the carriage of passengers resulting from changes to the cost of fuel or other power sources, the level of taxes or fees imposed by third parties, including tourist taxes, landing taxes or embarkation or disembarkation fees at port and airports or exchange rates.

d) Prices in our brochures and/or on our website are calculated on rates of exchange linked to those available to us; either based on rates previously secured or our view of currency exchange rates applicable at the time payments are due.

## Single, Double, Twin Bedded Rooms

Single supplements are payable for sole occupancy of a room. A single room does not guarantee the provision of a double or twin room, and in some instances may be smaller. A ‘double’ bed is often two single beds pushed together, sometimes with double bed base linen (although it is not unusual for single duvets to be provided in some hotels for doubles).

## 4. CANCELLATION & VARIATION BY YOU Cancellation by You

If you or any member of your party wish to cancel your holiday, or if you fail to pay the full cost of the holiday within the specified time you will be liable, as a minimum, to pay the charges detailed below up to the point of cancellation, in addition to any non-refundable items<sup>o</sup>. Or in the case of failure to pay, at the date that we deem your booking to have been cancelled. Notification from the person who made the booking must be received at our offices. This can be by phone, or in writing, either by email or letter. The cancellation charge will be calculated according to the date this is received, or the date upon which your cancellation is treated as occurring because of non-payment.

*oNon-refundable holiday costs charged including upgraded air tickets, hotel upgrades, extensions, extra nights, transfers etc., will be charged at 100% and the charges shown below will then apply to the remainder of the holiday cost and any amendment charges are not refundable. Additional accommodation costs for reduced occupancy or other components, may be payable in the event that one or more passengers cancels but where remaining passengers still wish to travel.*

**Group Bookings** - cancellation charges will apply to any guests in the group who may wish to cancel in the unlikely event of cancellation by the lead passenger.

**Note:** If your cancellation falls within the provisions of your travel insurance policy you may be able to make a claim which must be made direct to your insurance company.

**Cancellation Charges - if you cancel your holiday Up to 98 days:** deposit and any invoiced flight or hotel costs | **97-84 days:** 15% and any invoiced flight or hotel costs | **83-64 days:** 35% and any invoiced flight or hotel costs | **63-46 days:** 55% and any invoiced flight or hotel costs | **45-31 days:** 75% and any invoiced flight or hotel costs | **From 30 days to departure:** 100% and any invoiced flight or hotel costs.

### Lord of the Glens:

**Up to 6 months:** deposit and any invoiced flight or hotel costs | **6 months-0 days:** 100% and any invoiced flight or hotel costs.

We will observe travel advice provided by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Should circumstances dictate, you can cancel your booking without paying cancellation charges if the performance of your holiday, or the carriage of passengers to your destination, is significantly affected by unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances. In such circumstances, we will arrange for your booking to be cancelled and for you to receive a full refund.

### Variation by You

**Booking alterations:** If, after our booking confirmation/invoice has been issued, you wish to change your travel arrangements in any way, for example your chosen departure date or accommodation, we will do our utmost to make these changes (subject to agreement by our suppliers) but it may not always be possible. Any request for changes to be made must be received at our offices. This can be by phone, or in writing, either by email or letter from the person who made the booking. You will be asked to pay an administration charge starting from \$75 per person in addition to any associated costs of the changes imposed by our suppliers and any extra arrangements, these costs are non-refundable. Quotes normally have a 24-hour time frame before they expire, and the price is therefore subject to change. You should be aware that these costs could increase as the departure date becomes closer and you should contact us as soon as possible. Additional fees may be charged, depending on the cost and work caused to us by the requested change.

**Booking transfer to another person:** You can transfer your existing booking to another person suggested by you (subject to agreement by our suppliers)<sup>o</sup>. Notice be made must be received at our offices, this can be by phone, or in writing, either by email or letter from the person who made the booking at least 25 days before departure. The replacement traveller must satisfy and fulfil any conditions that apply to the holiday, and all costs of the original booking. Both you and the new traveller are responsible

for paying all costs we incur before the transfer can be made by us. The cost of the transfer will consist of both an administration charge of \$75 and any costs which our suppliers impose<sup>o</sup>.

**Note:** Certain travel arrangements may not be transferable after a reservation has been made, for example, some airlines may require payment of 100% cancellation charges and the cost of a new ticket for ANY variation that is made, and changes to other arrangements may incur a cancellation charge of up to 100%.

<sup>o</sup> If you are unable to travel, you may wish to check whether cover is provided for your cancellation within the terms of your travel insurance policy as this may incur less cost to you.

**Booking transfer to an alternative holiday:** It may be possible at our discretion for you to transfer to another holiday; however this is subject to availability and time frame of departure. You must transfer within 7 days of notifying Brightwater Holidays and the new departure must be within 1 year of notification. Any price difference between what you paid for your original tour and the price of the new tour will be payable. An administration fee of \$75 per person applies to any transfer up to 14 weeks prior to departure. Less than 14 weeks prior to departure and full cancellation fee will apply.

**While on holiday:** If you decide to cut short your holiday for your own reasons, or not stay at accommodation that has been booked for you, take any pre-booked meals, excursions, or other holiday components, then we are unable to offer you any refund or cover any costs. Depending on the circumstances, your travel insurance may offer cover for such curtailment, so we suggest that you check the conditions and requirements of your policy.

## 5. CANCELLATION & VARIATION BY US

We start planning the holidays we offer many months in advance. Occasionally, we have to make changes to and correct errors and other details both before and after bookings have been confirmed or cancel confirmed bookings, events or activities. Holidays to remote and in some cases, underdeveloped parts of the world carry the risk that parts of the holiday may be subject to alterations beyond our control, sometimes at short notice. While we always endeavour to avoid changes and cancellations, we must reserve the right to do so.

### Cancellation by Us:

We reserve the right to cancel your booking. Whilst we will endeavour not to cancel your confirmed booking after the final ‘balance due’ payment date, we may need to do so if, through late cancellations or other factors, the tour falls below its minimum number of participants (see below); additionally, as a result of unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances (see point 6) or failure by you to pay the final balance of your holiday.

**Minimum Numbers** - some of our holidays require a minimum number of participants to enable us to operate them. If the minimum number of bookings required for a particular holiday or flight have not been received, we are entitled to cancel it even after the final ‘balance due’ payment date. Please note that in such cases we are not able to accept responsibility for any costs you may have incurred, including costs of other travel arrangements made in association with the cancelled holiday, unless booked through Brightwater Holidays.

We are happy to give you an indication at any time of the current number of passengers booked on a trip, but this should not be taken as any guarantee whether the holiday will or will not go ahead as booking numbers can fluctuate. There may be certain circumstances when a holiday may operate with less than the minimum number than the advertised group size.

We will endeavour to do all possible to have a tour operate. If the tour is not viable due to numbers, where possible we will see if suppliers will supply a more ‘private’ tour and we will come back to you with a revised cost. If everyone currently booked is willing to pay this, then the tour may continue with a much smaller group. If your holiday is cancelled, you can either have a refund of all monies paid or accept an alternative holiday of comparable standard from us if we offer one (we will refund any price difference if the alternative is of a lower value).

In the event a refund is paid to you, we will compensate you for reasonable, non-refundable costs (eg flight tickets) which you have incurred, to be mutually agreed on a case-by-case basis.

### Cancellation as a result of global travel disruption

If it becomes necessary to cancel your tour as a result of

global travel disruption, we reserve the right to refund the cost of your tour in the form of credit for a limited amount of time, to be used against any other tour in the Specialist Journeys portfolio. If you do not use this credit within that time, a refund will be payable. This change to the standard booking conditions would only apply if approved by the UK Government and enshrined in the Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations (PTRs) as an emergency measure to support tour operators in extraordinary circumstances such as the 2020 Covid-19 outbreak.

### Variation by Us:

It is a term of your booking that we are able to make changes to any aspect of your booking. If the change is insignificant, we will ensure that you are notified about it. Examples of insignificant changes include a change of airline or aircraft type, alteration of your outward/return flights by less than 12 hours, change of airports and/or local connecting transport, tour staff and changes to supplementary arrangements such as site visit, or change of accommodation to another of the same or higher standard.

Occasionally, we may have to make a significant change. If we are constrained by circumstances beyond our control to significantly alter any of the main characteristics of the travel services that make up your package, you will have rights set out below.

• We will contact you and you will have the choice of accepting the change or having a refund of all monies paid. You can also accept an alternative holiday, where we offer one (we will refund any price difference if the alternative is of lower value) or purchase an alternative holiday subject to availability and applicable cost. We will tell you the procedure for making your choice. Please read any notification of changes carefully and respond promptly as if you do not respond to us within the timescale given, your booking may be cancelled.

• If you choose to accept a refund, we will compensate you for reasonable, non-refundable costs (e.g. flight tickets) which you have incurred, to be mutually agreed on a case-by-case basis.

Very rarely, we may be forced by ‘circumstances beyond our control’ (see point 6) to change or terminate your holiday after departure but before the scheduled end of your time away. This is extremely rare, if this situation does occur, we regret we will be unable to make any refunds (unless we obtain these from our suppliers), pay you any compensation or meet any costs or expenses you incur as a result.

We do not control the day-to-day management of your accommodation, and in exceptional cases it is possible that we may be advised that the reserved accommodation has been overbooked. If this happens before your departure or on arrival in a location, we will endeavour to provide accommodation of at least the same standard in the same area. If only accommodation of a lower standard is available, we will refund the difference of the holiday price between the accommodation booked and that available and will pay up to \$50 per person for any inconvenience.

If under any circumstances a refund is applicable, this will be made to the lead passenger who made the original booking and to the payment method used for that booking.

## 6. CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL

Except where otherwise expressly stated in these booking conditions, we regret we cannot accept liability or pay any compensation, reimburse expenses, or cover losses where the performance of our obligations under our contract with you is prevented or affected by, or you otherwise suffer any damage, loss or expense of any nature as a result of ‘circumstances beyond our control’. In these booking conditions, ‘circumstances beyond our control’ means any event which we or the supplier of the service(s) in question could not, even with all due care, foresee or avoid. Such events may include actual or threatened war, riot, civil strife, terrorist activity and its consequences (including suspected terrorist activity and all action taken during any “terror alert”), industrial dispute, natural or nuclear disaster, adverse weather conditions, epidemics and pandemics, unavoidable technical problems with transport, airport or airspace closures, as well as other air traffic management decisions (that may result in long or overnight delays or cancellations), fire, concert/event changes or cancellation and all similar events outside our control. This list is not exhaustive.

**Group-based holidays and activities** - worldwide weather patterns are becoming ever more erratic and unpredictable. If it is not possible to operate certain excursions for this reason, we will endeavour to offer alternatives if this is possible. Such circumstances are totally beyond our control and you

therefore should proceed with your booking on this basis.

**Public Holidays, Sporting & Local Events** - in addition to public holidays, many countries host other national or international events or there may be local festivals, which may impact on local/tourist services or travel arrangements, including the reduction or closure of facilities, route diversions etc. during your visit. We have no control over these events, and as dates and details of arrangements are often changeable year on year, it is not possible for us to guarantee to forewarn you of specific details that may be relevant to your holiday or accept any responsibility for any disruption that may be caused. During public holidays, shops, restaurants, and tourist attractions may also be closed.

**Third-Party Information & Websites** - your booking is based on the information supplied to you by Brightwater Holidays. We understand you may conduct additional research into your holiday through other third parties and associated websites, but as we have no control over such information this does not form any basis of our contract with you.

**Wi-Fi** - where the provision of Wi-Fi may be indicated in a property description, no guarantee is given or implied that it will be operative during your holiday and its availability is outside our control. Some properties may charge for this service and the areas where it is available may be limited and not necessarily available in guest rooms. In all cases, no compensation or refund will be paid in the event that it is not available for whatever reason.

**Dietary Requests & Allergies** - even nowadays, in some destinations, basic well-known dietary requirements (such as vegetarian, gluten free etc.) are often misunderstood and seldom catered for adequately, despite the best intentions and assurances from hoteliers and restaurateurs. While we are happy to pass on any such requests, we cannot guarantee choice or availability - especially with any airline meal options. We cannot accept detailed lists of specific dietary or food preparation requests and are unable to accept any other requests (eg. personal preferences) that are not for medical or religious reasons. Note: Whilst on tour it is your responsibility to double-check and reconfirm any allergy or dietary requirements directly with the various holiday suppliers.

**Other Hotel Guests** - it is not unusual for hotels or other accommodation to receive group bookings (sometimes with large numbers) from guests participating in conventions and conferences or other gatherings. At certain times of the year, there may be an influx of groups such as students on organised educational visits (popular during school holidays), associations or clubs. This may result in hotel facilities being much busier than usual or additional demands on hotel staff and services, but we are unable to accept any responsibility for any inconvenience caused by such groups or their activities.

**Guides** - we reserve the right to substitute any named guide, guest lecturer or other escort with an alternative qualified person and this will not be deemed as any significant change to your arrangements.

**Flights** - if you have booked a flight upgrade and there is a change of airline prior to departure as a result of circumstances beyond our control, it may not be possible to offer an equivalent upgrade, or an addition cost may apply.

## 7. FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH TRAVEL ADVICE, HEALTH, VISAS & DOCUMENTS

a) Your specific passport and visa requirements, and other immigration requirements including, inoculations and health certificates are your responsibility, and you should confirm these for all countries to, or through which you are intending to travel, and cover all costs for this. Requirements should be checked well in advance of travel and we do not accept any responsibility if you cannot travel because you have not complied with any passport, visa or immigration requirements.

b) Essential information for British citizens (only), including health, passport and visa requirements along with up-to-date Foreign Office travel, safety and security advice can be obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/travelaware>. We also strongly recommend that you sign up for the latest email updates as travel and safety information can change at any point without notice.

c) If you or any member of your party is not a British citizen or holds a non-British passport, you must check passport and visa requirements with the Embassy or Consulate of the country or countries to, or through which, you are intending to travel and consult the relevant authority for the latest travel and safety advice for the destinations you are visiting.

d) We recommend that you consult your doctor well in advance of travel for the latest advice on inoculations and health certificates. You can also obtain the latest health information ahead of travel by visiting the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website <https://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk>.

#### Entry & Exit system for visiting the EU (EES)

All non-EU nationals travelling to a European country will be subject to checks at the border. The EES system replaces passport stamping and automates border control procedures collecting and recording the data in your passport, your date and place of entry and exit from a European country and also your facial image and fingerprints. In most cases these checks will be carried out upon arrival in the EU when arriving by air, however, due to the dual French and UK border arrangements in Dover, these checks will take place in Dover for coach passengers, prior to boarding the ship for the cross-channel sailing or at London St Pancras International and Paris Gare du Nord self-service pre-registration kiosk before going through the ticket gates if travelling via Eurostar.

#### European Travel Information Authorisation System (ETIAS)

During the first half of 2025 the rules of travel to Europe will change and there will be an entry requirement for visa-exempt nationals. Travellers will be required to make an online application for and obtain an ETIAS travel authorisation to enter most EU countries, a fee of €7 will be charged. Once confirmed this is linked to your passport and will be valid for 3 years or until your passport expires if that is sooner. If you get a new passport, you will need a new ETIAS travel authorisation. You must carry the email confirming your successful ETIAS submission and unique ETIAS application number along with your passport when travelling as both documents will be checked at the border.

ETIAS is not required for Crown Dependencies – Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, or the common travel areas of Northern and Southern Ireland.

Further details can be found at [travel-europe.europa.eu](http://travel-europe.europa.eu) and we will update this page as exact dates and further details are released.

#### 8. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Our holidays are not designed for party members to undertake special projects or research whether in connection with study, employment or otherwise. We cannot accept any liability for any losses or damages arising out of such use or planned use nor for any loss or damage which has special financial consequences. Please note if you do intend to use one of our holidays for such purposes you should obtain adequate insurance in respect of it and any special equipment you decide to bring with you on such holidays.

#### 9. HOLIDAY PARTICIPATION

It is a condition of participation on our holidays that you agree to accept the authority and decisions of our employees, tour leaders and agents while on holiday with us. If in the opinion of such a person your health or conduct at any time, before or after departure, appears likely to endanger the safe, comfortable, or happy progress of a holiday, you may be excluded from all or part of the holiday and/or we may terminate your holiday, and any additional costs incurred by you as a result of such exclusion will be your responsibility. In the case of ill health, eg. Covid-19, we may make such arrangements as we see fit and recover any resulting costs from you.

**Note:** Note: While there are no age limits or health requirements on our holidays, please note that for certain destinations require a degree of mobility and fitness to get the most out of the holiday and need to keep up with the group. Should you have any concerns or your mobility changes as your holiday gets closer, please contact us to discuss further.

#### 10. OUR LIABILITY TO YOU

We make every effort to ensure that the holiday arrangements we have agreed to provide as part of our contract with you are delivered with reasonable skill and care. It is the laws and regulations of the country in which the services are actually provided which apply to your holiday arrangements and not those of the UK or your home country and any resulting complaint or claim will be judged on this basis. If the particular services which gave rise to the claim or complaint complied with local laws and regulations applicable to those services at the time, the services will be treated as being properly provided. Please note, it is your responsibility to show that reasonable skill and care have not

been used if you wish to make a claim against us. In addition, we will only be responsible for what our employees, agents and suppliers do or do not do if they were at the time acting within the course of their employment (for employees) or carrying out work we had asked them to do (for agents and suppliers). Also bear in mind that standards of, for example, safety, hygiene, and quality may vary and services and transport your holiday involves may differ to the stringent standards we are accustomed to in the UK or your home country. Including for example, the absence of seatbelts on coaches contracted outside the UK as this is not always a legal requirement elsewhere.

Certain holidays involve risks and hazards of travel to and in remote and/or uninhabited areas where injury, illness, death, delay, or unanticipated events may occur as a result of forces of nature, wildlife and adverse weather conditions. Medical services or facilities may not be readily available or accessible in some parts, and the medical facilities that do exist could be of inferior quality compared to what is available at home. In remote regions risks may include but are not limited to: mechanical breakdown of expedition vehicle(s); becoming stranded in remote and/or uninhabited areas; being subjected to rugged terrain and a harsh climate; encounters with wild animals, insects and pests, and the possibility of illness, injury or death therefrom; the uncontrollable and unpredictable behaviour of wild animals in their natural habitat; the possibility of not seeing certain animals; and dangerous weather and climate conditions.

You must inform us without undue delay of any failure to perform or improper performance of the travel services included in this package. If any of the travel services included in your package are not performed in accordance with the contract, or improperly performed, by us or the travel service suppliers, and this has affected the enjoyment of your travel arrangements, you may be entitled to an appropriate price reduction or compensation or both. We will not be liable where any failure to perform or improper performance of the travel services is due to you or another member of your party; or a third party unconnected with the provision of the travel services in the package and is unforeseeable or unavoidable.

Our liability, except in cases involving death, injury, or illness, shall be limited to a maximum of three times the cost of your travel arrangements (excluding amendment charges). Our liability (if we are found liable to you on any basis) will also be limited in accordance with and/or in an identical manner to:

a) The contractual terms of the companies that provide the travel services that made up your package.

These terms are incorporated into this booking contract; and  
b) Any relevant international convention, for example the Montreal Convention in respect of travel by air, the Athens Convention in respect of travel by sea, the Berne Convention in respect of travel by rail and the Paris Convention in respect of the provision of accommodation, which limit the amount of and conditions under which compensation can be claimed for death, injury, delay to passengers and loss, damage and delay to luggage (there are strict Conditions of Carriage obligations for making claims for missing or damaged baggage that must be followed). We are regarded as having all benefit of any limitation of the extent of or the conditions under which compensation is to be paid under these or any conventions.

You can ask for copies of the travel service contractual terms, or the international conventions from Brightwater Holidays. Where a carrier or hotelier would not be obliged to make any payment to you under the applicable international convention or regulation in respect of a claim or part of a claim, we similarly are not obliged to make a payment to you for that claim or part of the claim. Under EU law (Regulation 261/2004) you have rights in some circumstances to refunds and/or compensation from your airline in cases of denied boarding, cancellation, or delay to flights – see point 11 below.

If it is impossible to ensure your return as scheduled due to unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances, we will bear the cost of necessary accommodation, if possible, of equivalent category, for a maximum of three nights if this is not provided by your airline, in accordance with Regulation 261/2004. The limit doesn't apply to persons with reduced mobility and any person accompanying them, pregnant women and unaccompanied minors, or persons in need of specific medical assistance, provided that you notified us of these needs at least 48 hours before the start of your holiday.

**Note:** this entire clause does not apply to any services which do not form part of your contract with us i.e.

'own arrangements'. This includes for example, any additional services, including excursions, that you organise independently, or services which your hotel or any other supplier agrees to provide for you where these are not organised by us as part of our contract with you. We recommend that sufficient and appropriate insurance is taken out. In addition, we cannot accept any liability for any damage, loss, expense or other sum(s) of any description (1) which on the basis of the information given to us by you concerning your booking prior to our accepting it, we could not have foreseen you would suffer or incur if we breached our contract with you or (2) which did not result from any breach of contract or other fault by ourselves or our employees, or where we are responsible for them, our suppliers or (3) arises out of use of our services for special projects or research whether in connection with study, employment or otherwise or (4) is connected with any business. We further advise you, and you agree that in the event of any claim against us, that such claim shall be governed by Scottish Law and Jurisdiction shall lie in any Court of Competent Jurisdiction in the United Kingdom and you further acknowledge these requirements and waive any objection(s) thereto.

#### 11. TRAVEL DELAYS & CARRIAGE BY AIR

Should delays due to weather conditions disrupt your itinerary, additional costs may be incurred and these would be the responsibility of you, the client. You will be assisted by the airline in accordance with the airlines' policy on delays. We cannot accept liability for any delay which is due to any of the reasons set out in point 6 of these booking conditions (which includes the behaviour of any passenger(s) on the flight who, for example, fails to check in or board a flight on time).

Under EU law (Regulation 261/2004) you have rights in some circumstances to refunds and/or compensation from your airline in cases of denied boarding, cancellation, or delay to flights. Full details of these rights will be publicised at EU airports and will also be available from airlines. However, reimbursement in such cases will not automatically entitle you to a refund of your holiday cost from us. Your right to a refund and/or compensation from us is set out in these booking conditions. If any payments to you are due from us, any payment made to you by the airline will be deducted from this amount. You are required to make any claim under this regulation directly with the airline, but if your airline does not comply with these rules you should complain to the Civil Aviation Authority on 0207 453 6424 <https://www.caa.co.uk>.

Where long flight delays result in lost holiday time, we are unable to offer any refunds for unused accommodation or other services as reimbursement will not be made by our suppliers in these circumstances, and hotel rooms are held for delayed arrivals and not re-let. We strongly recommend you have adequate insurance provisions in place to fully cover such eventualities.

We are unable to guarantee that all parties will be seated together. With some airlines it is possible to request, or in some cases, reserve certain preferred seats on the aircraft (most airlines will make an additional charge for this). We are happy to assist with this, but this is an additional service over and above your contractual arrangement for 'carriage by air' with the airline. Airlines reserve the right to make changes to any specific seat numbers for operational or safety reasons either before, or on the day of departure and you will be notified of any such change upon check-in. Where applicable, any additional charge made for pre-booking specific seats will be refunded.

In accordance with EU Directive (EC) No 2111/2005 Article 9, we are required to bring to your attention the existence of a "Community list" which contains details of air carriers who are subject to an operating ban within the EU. The Community list is available for inspection at [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/safety/air-ban\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/safety/air-ban_en).

In accordance with EU Regulations, we are required to advise you of the actual carrier(s) (or, if the actual carrier(s) is not known, the likely carrier(s)) that will operate your flight(s) at the time of booking. Where we are only able to inform you of the likely carrier(s) at the time of booking, we shall inform you of the identity of the actual carrier(s) as soon as we become aware of this. Any change to the operating carrier(s) after your booking has been confirmed will be notified to you as soon as possible. If the carrier with whom you have a confirmed reservation becomes subject to an operating ban as above as a result of which we/the carrier are unable to offer you a suitable alternative, the provisions of point 5, "Cancellation and Variation by us" will apply. We are not always in a position at the time of booking to

confirm the flight timings, which will be used in connection with your flight. The flight timings shown in our brochure, on our website and/or detailed on your booking confirmation/invoice are for guidance only and are subject to alteration. Flight timings are outside our control. They are set by airlines and are subject to various factors including air traffic control restrictions, weather conditions, potential technical problems and the ability of passengers to check in on time. Specific instructions relating to departure and travel arrangements will be sent with your air or other travel tickets approximately 2 weeks before departure. You must check your tickets very carefully immediately on receipt to ensure you have the correct and up to date flight times. It is possible that flight times may be changed even after tickets have been dispatched - we will contact you as soon as possible if this occurs. Any change in the identity of the carrier, flight timings, and/or aircraft type (if advised) will not entitle you to cancel or change to other arrangements without paying our normal charges except where specified in these conditions. We advise that you keep check on your flight's departure information on the day of departure in case of any late flight changes.

In accordance with EU legislation, we are required to draw your attention to restrictions concerning the import of food items which cannot be brought into the EU (including the UK), from outside the EU. For details, please see <http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/food/personal-imports/> or contact this office.

#### 12. INSURANCE

It is a condition of booking with us that you and all members of your party obtain travel insurance for all overseas Brightwater holidays and is highly recommended for UK Brightwater Holidays. It should include cover for COVID-19 cancellation, curtailment, repatriation, and quarantine. We also strongly recommend that you do not travel against medical advice. The cost of repatriation, medical and other treatment overseas can be high and we are unable to assist in meeting those costs. You should organise it immediately when you book to ensure you have cover against possible cancellation charges, medical treatment, and repatriation. Should you have your travel insurance in place we will need to know the details of your policy 6 weeks before departure at the latest. It is a requirement of booking that you provide us with an emergency contact number while you are on holiday stating your relationship (e.g. family member, neighbour, workplace). This is purely for your benefit in the unlikely event of you becoming ill or incapacitated on tour. Please note that we no longer sell travel insurance but do work closely with Global Travel Insurance who will be happy to provide you with a quotation (01903 235042). Please see our website for more details: [brightwaterholidays.com/travel-insurance/](http://brightwaterholidays.com/travel-insurance/)

#### 13. SPECIAL REQUESTS & MEDICAL CONDITIONS / DISABILITIES

If you or any member of your party have any special requests, you must advise us at the time of booking. Although we will endeavour to pass any reasonable requests on to the relevant supplier, we regret we cannot guarantee any request will be met. Failure to meet any special request will not be a breach of contract on our part. Confirmation that a special request has been noted or passed on to the supplier or the inclusion of the special request on your booking confirmation/invoice or any other documentation is not confirmation that the request will be met. Unless and until specifically confirmed, all special requests are subject to availability. For your own protection, you should obtain confirmation in writing that a special request will be provided (where it is possible to give this) where it is important to you. We regret we cannot accept any conditional bookings, i.e. any booking which is specified to be conditional on the fulfilment of a particular request. All such bookings will be treated as "standard" bookings subject to the above provisions on special requests.

If you or any member of your party has any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday or has any special requirements as a result of any medical condition or disability (including any which affect the booking process), you must tell us before you confirm your booking so that we can assist you in considering the suitability of the arrangements and/or making the booking. In any event, you must give us full details in writing at the time of booking and whenever any change in the condition or disability occurs. You must also promptly advise us if any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday develops or worsens after your booking has been confirmed.

Brightwater Holidays cannot provide individual assistance with boarding coaches or other forms of transport, baggage handling, walking or other personal requirements, etc. and guests should be confident that they can do these tasks unaided. We are happy to give advice and assistance with the choice of your holiday which will be dependent upon the nature of any disability. Our brochures also give a simple guide per tour regarding how active the tour is. In order to ensure your enjoyment of the holiday, we ask all clients to provide full details of any disability or special requirements at the time of booking. Some suppliers such as airlines and cruise lines may request certification from your GP to confirm that you are fit to travel. We regret that we cannot be held liable for any costs you may incur as a result. You are urged to contact our Sales department for further information if you have any difficulty in walking or mobility problems and they will be pleased to advise you on the suitability of any particular holiday.

#### 14. CLIENT BEHAVIOUR

When you book a holiday with Brightwater Holidays you accept responsibility for the proper conduct of you and your party. Brightwater Holidays reserves the right in its reasonable discretion to terminate the holiday of any member of your party whose conduct is disruptive or detrimental to the enjoyment of other clients, or whose conduct may prejudice the reputation of Brightwater Holidays with our suppliers or hotel owners. In that situation Brightwater Holidays shall have no further responsibility or liability to you. The departure of a coach, ship train, plane or other modes of transport will not be delayed for passengers who are not on board by the stated boarding time.

#### 15. COMPLAINTS & ASSISTANCE ON HOLIDAY

If you have any reason to be unhappy with any element of your holiday, we would ask you first to bring this to the attention of the person in charge of the relevant service, on the spot. If this is not possible, please either contact our local representative or our UK office, using the number provided with your travel documents. It is essential that you do this to enable us to try and put matters right where possible. If a problem remains unresolved during your holiday you should make a complaint which must be received at our offices within 28 days of the completion of your holiday giving your booking reference and all other relevant information. This can be in writing, either by email or letter from the person who made the booking. We will reply to you within 28 days of receipt of your complaint. Please keep your complaint concise and to the point. If you fail to follow the requirement to report your complaint while on holiday, we will have been deprived of the opportunity to investigate and rectify it and this may affect your rights under this booking. If you're in difficulty while on holiday and ask us to help, we will provide appropriate assistance, in particular by providing information on health services, local authorities and consular assistance; and helping you to find alternative arrangements and any necessary phone calls/emails. You must pay any costs we incur if the difficulty is your fault.

The terms of this contract are exclusively governed by Scottish Law and the jurisdiction of the Scottish Courts.

#### 16. PROTECTING YOUR MONEY

**We provide full financial protection for our package holidays.**

**Flight inclusive tours (only valid for UK residents):** we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence issued by the CAA (ATOL No. 4498) which provides for your protection in the event of Brightwater Holidays Ltd insolvency. The price of your air holiday packages includes the ATOL Protection Contribution (APC) we pay to the CAA. This charge is included in our advertised prices. the ATOL Protection Contribution (APC) we pay to the CAA. This charge is included in our advertised prices. When you buy an ATOL protected flight or flight inclusive holiday from us you will receive an ATOL Certificate. This lists what is financially protected, where you can get information on what this means for you and who to contact if things go wrong. Not all holiday or travel services offered and sold by us will be protected by the ATOL scheme as explained below.

#### Tours without flights arranged by us:

The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT) provides financial protection under The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 for Brightwater Holidays Ltd - Member 5001, and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for:

*Non-flight packages*

ABTOT cover provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled or repatriation if transportation was included in your package. Please note that bookings made outside the UK are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with Brightwater Holidays Ltd. In the unlikely event that you require assistance whilst abroad due to our financial failure, please call our 24/7 helpline on 01702 811397 and advise you are a customer of an ABTOT protected travel company.

You can access The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/634/contents/made>

#### 17. DATA PROTECTION

To process your booking and to ensure that your travel arrangements run smoothly and meet your requirements we need to use the information you provide. Depending on what's required, the personal data we collect may include names and contact details, credit/debit card or other payment information and special requirements such as those relating to any disability or medical condition which may affect holiday arrangements and any dietary restrictions which may disclose your religious beliefs.

The person who makes the booking is responsible for ensuring that other members of your party are aware of our booking conditions and this privacy policy and that they consent to your acting on their behalf in your dealings with us.

Any such personal data that you provide will be held securely and for the purpose you have provided it, in accordance with both UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.

We take appropriate technical and organisational measures which are intended to prevent unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.

We must pass the information on to the relevant suppliers of your travel arrangements such as airlines, hotels, transport companies, etc. We will not however, pass any information on to any person not responsible for part of your travel arrangements. This applies to any sensitive information that you give to us such as details of any disabilities, or dietary/religious requirements. In making a booking, you consent to this information being passed on to the relevant persons only.

We may need to disclose personal data to a third party within countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) for the purpose of providing your holiday. Controls on data protection in your destination may not be as stringent as in the UK. In addition, your data may be disclosed to regulatory bodies or public authorities such as customs or immigration for the purposes of monitoring and/or enforcing compliance with any regulatory rules/codes.

We will only send you information about special offers, brochures, new holidays and competitions if you have 'opted in' to receive marketing emails from Brightwater Holidays Ltd. If at any time you do not wish to receive this information you can use the 'unsubscribe' function at the bottom of any marketing email or call us.

For full details of how we may use your personal information and your rights in relation to your personal information, please see our Privacy Policy on our website: <https://brightwaterholidays.com/privacy>. By booking online, or over the phone, you are stating that you have read and agreed to our Privacy Policy.

**We are Brightwater Holiday Ltd, registered limited company no: SC137295.**

**Registered Office: Eden Park House, Cupar, Fife, Scotland KY15 4HS.**



# New tours in *2025*

We have had a busy summer here at Brightwater not only assisting our guests as they head off on their summer holidays but also crafting a collection of 14 brand new tours for 2025. We are delighted to bring you two new Italian tours, as well as an awe-inspiring adventure to the Mid-Atlantic archipelago of the Azores. Closer to home we have expanded our Scottish tours with the addition of five exciting new itineraries.



## Castles, Palaces and Abbeys of Eastern Scotland

Featuring a collection of interesting castles and palaces with royal links including Mary, Queen of Scots. **See pg. 32**



## Gardens of Wester Ross

An area of spectacular natural beauty, West Ross is also home to a collection of fabulous gardens.

**See pg. 40**

## Highlights of Northumberland

A perfect combination of historic houses, interesting gardens and Roman history come together on this new tour of Northumberland.

**See pg. 46**



## Gardens of Yorkshire

Discover England's largest county - home to rolling hillsides, quaint villages and some outstanding gardens. A highlight of this tour is the wonderful RHS Harlow Carr.

**See pg. 56**



## Gardens of the Neapolitan Riviera

Sun soaked shorelines, fragrant lemon groves and dazzling gardens, the Neapolitan Riviera is a treat for the senses. **See pg. 82**



## The Azores: its Gardens and Natural Wonders

The volcanic islands of Azores feature lush green scenery, breathtaking lakes, charming villages and are home to a collection of interesting floral species.

**See pg. 90**

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

**646 802 1526**

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*