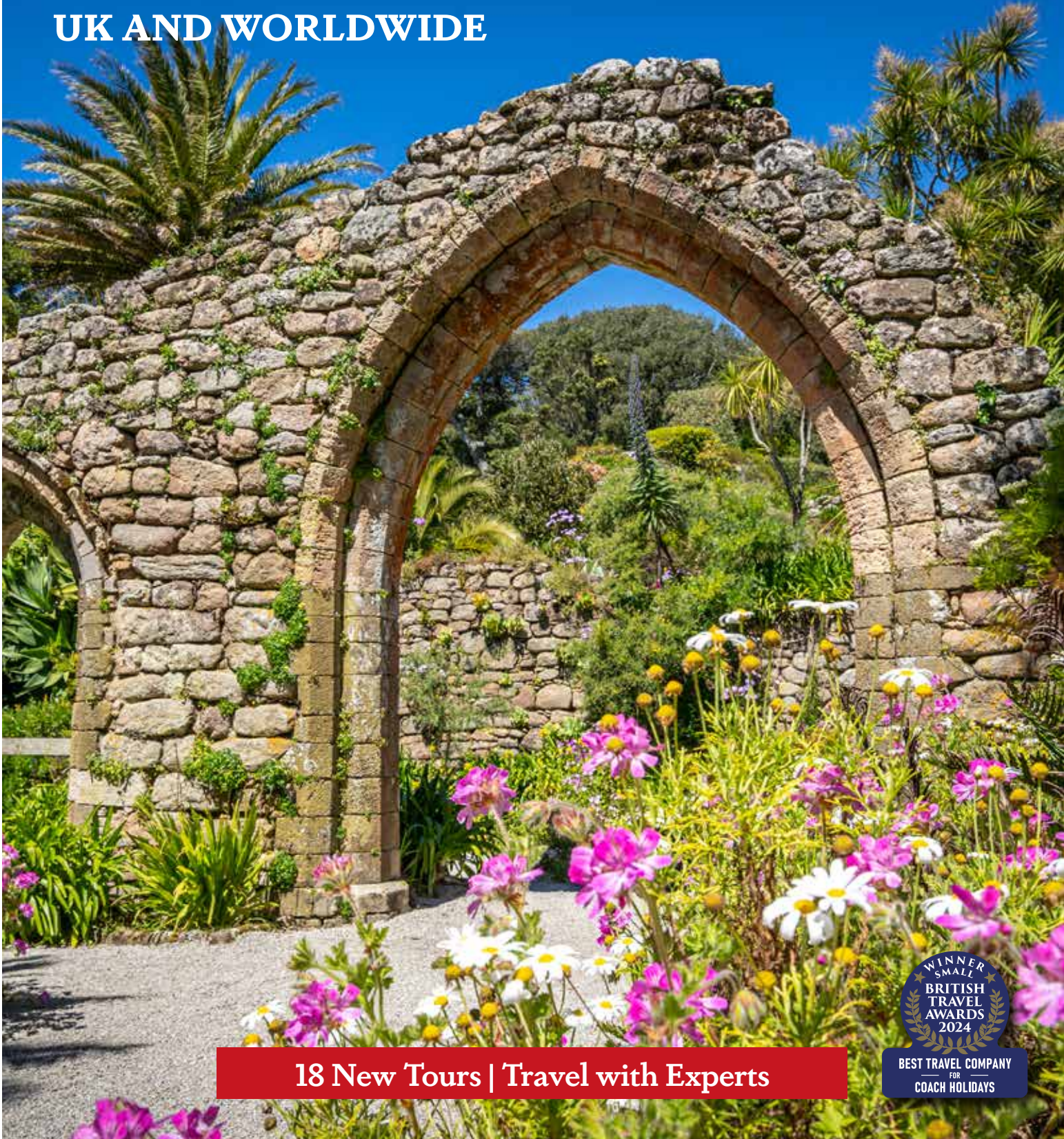


**SCOTLAND, GARDENS  
AND SPECIAL INTEREST  
HOLIDAY COLLECTION  
UK AND WORLDWIDE**

2025



18 New Tours | Travel with Experts





This year, embark on  
an inspiring new  
adventure with  
*Brightwater*  
Holidays

A very warm welcome to our latest brochure for 2025, featuring a selection of inspiring tours across the UK and Europe plus our extended range of Worldwide departures.

As we step into 2025, we take a moment to reflect on the achievements of the past year, and, once again, the team at Brightwater has been incredibly busy. The cherry on the top of 2024 was our recent Gold award for Best Small Travel Company for Coach Holidays at the British Travel Awards - a true testament to the team's hard work. A heartfelt and sincere thank you to every one of you, our valued guests, who voted for us.

We have been busy since our last brochure and have added several new tours to our 2025 collection. Excitement builds for the arrival of a new exhibition at the Dundee V&A in the summer which explores the history of garden design and how the outdoor spaces we enjoy can be harmonised with nature which we have included in our new Best of Angus Gardens tour. We are also pleased to introduce a delightful new cruise on board MV Lord of the Glens visiting some of the finest gardens of Scotland's west coast including the RHS Partner Garden of the Year 2023. Across the Irish Sea in Northern Ireland, we discover some of the charming private gardens in the wonderful company of native tour manager Trevor Edwards, many of which are part of the National Garden Scheme which we are very proud to support. Venturing overseas, join us as we uncover Croatia's Best-Kept Secrets, the gardens of Kvarner and Istria accompanied by one of the UK's leading destination expert tour managers.

We have also expanded our range of worldwide holidays with new ventures to the gardens of Brazil, California and Hokkaido while European additions include Puglia's white-washed cities, the historic treasures of the Czech Republic and the colourful gardens of the Neapolitan Riviera.

Regardless of how you choose to holiday in 2025, memorable experiences await on every tour. So, whether you're looking for a new experience or an old tried and tested Brightwater favourite we hope you find inspiration within the following pages.

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!*



Get in touch  
with an *expert*

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

**800 477 8358**

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 to Europe, new mandatory border checks (EES) and travel authorisation requirements (ETIAS) are likely to be introduced at some point in 2025. Please read the information on page 129 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>

**Need help applying for a visa?**

To help make this process as smooth as possible, we have partnered up with **The Travel Visa Company**  who are a leading provider of travel visa services in the UK, with over 25 years of experience in helping travellers navigate the complexities of international travel. They offer a comprehensive range of visa services for destinations globally and will be including the new ETIAS process for UK travellers when it goes live in 2025.

You can call them directly on 01270 904 901 or find out more via our website: [www.brightwaterholidays.com/visas](http://www.brightwaterholidays.com/visas).

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*"Absolutely amazing,  
once in a lifetime tour  
of English gardens"*

Guest - September 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



Our experience and excellent relationships mean that a tour with Brightwater Holidays is often unlike what 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.



*"Very enjoyable look at a period of Scottish history of which we knew very little."*

Guest - August 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 Small Travel Company for Coach Holidays at the 2024 British Travel Awards. We were also awarded the Feefo 2024 Trusted Service Award for excellence in customer service throughout 2023 and were voted Garden Tour Operator of the Year 2023 at the International Garden Tourism Awards in Canada.



*"Enjoyable and Colin Crosbie is an attentive Tour Manager. Excellent coach driver who was very skilful negotiating some very narrow roads to visit the gardens. This is my third Brightwater holiday - my second with Colin and I will definitely be looking into another one next year."*

Guest - July 2024

*"One of the best holidays I have been on"*

Guest - October 2024



## 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 the same Tour Manager on future holidays.



### 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.



### 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!



### 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 and has supervised and directed excavations in Scotland and France.



*"From beginning to end, a fabulous holiday with many memorable days and experiences."*

Guest - October 2024

*"Most enjoyable. The tours were excellent as was the hotel we stayed in."*

Guest - October 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 Queen Mother's 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.

### 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.



### Michael Gill

Michael Gill is one of Brightwater's most popular Tour Managers with a loyal following among regular guests. A proud Cornishman, Michael has led tours all over the UK and Europe and lists Andalucia, Normandy, Wales and of course Cornwall, among his favourite destinations.

### 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

*“The whole tour was well organised and both tour guide and coach driver were excellent. The tour covered more than ancient stones and provided an insight into how housing developed over a few thousand years”*

Guest - July 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 fellow travellers at 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 at 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.

We can help with travel in the UK to join your holiday. Please see opposite for more information or call our friendly travel team on 800 477 8358.



"A lovely small group, good weather, nice hotel and the variety of excursions made for a very pleasant five days."

Guest - October 2024

## Your *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.



### Airport departures

Although the majority of our flight inclusive tours depart from London, regional departures and domestic connections may be available on request.



## Overseas tours

All our holidays include travel to your destination from the UK by plane or train and include all overseas transfers. Each holiday page details 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.

For regional flight options or connecting flights within the UK please call our friendly team on 800 477 8358.

## UK Travel Service

We make it easy to join your Brightwater Holiday with a full UK Travel service.

If you need help travelling in the UK, with overnight airport accommodation or regional flights we are here to help.

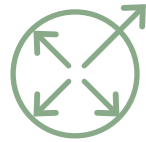
**Rail and air travel** Let us help with your travel by rail or air to your holiday starting-point.

**Regional flights** We offer flights from your local airport to many European destinations and further afield to join your holiday.

**Connecting flights** If your holiday destination is not served by your regional airport we can arrange UK connecting flights or travel to London airports.

# 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.



## 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 in a relevant city or at an airport. We can help you to book this for a reasonable supplement.



## Car parking

Let us help with your airport or port parking.



## For that little something extra

Beat the crowds and relax with an airport lounge and Fast Track security where available.

## Get in touch with an *expert*

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

**800 477 8358**

Alternatively, send us an email to:

**info@brightwaterholidays.com**

For further details, please visit our website:

**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 **800 477 8358** or emailing **groups@brightwaterholidays.com** to get things started. You can also visit our website for some inspiration: **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

As part of our new 2025 collection, we are delighted to bring you several more autumn tours, where landscapes are transformed with warm yellows, rusty oranges and fiery reds. For those wanting to explore somewhere new in Europe, discover the best-kept secrets of charming Croatia or the sun-drenched gardens of the Neapolitan Riviera or closer to home, we have expanded our range of Scottish tours with the addition of two more exciting itineraries.



## Gardens of Western Scotland Cruise aboard the Lord of the Glens

Visit some of Western Scotland's best-kept secrets. **See pg.18**



## Tall Ships in Aberdeen

Experience the spectacle that is the Tall Ships as they descend on Aberdeen in summer 2025. **See pg.32**



## Castles, Palaces and Abbeys of Eastern Scotland

Delve into a world of historic castles and follow in the footsteps of royalty in scenic Eastern Scotland. **See pg. 36**



## Highlights of Northumberland

The best historic houses, castles and gardens of the North-east and a dose of Roman history. **See pg. 63**



## 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. 65**



## Gardens and Wildflowers of the Burren

Explore the beauty of the Burren in County Clare and its rich diversity of exuberant wildflowers. **See pg. 68**



## Gardens of Perthshire and the Scone Palace Fair

Experience the annual spectacular that is the Scone Palace Garden Fair.

**See pg. 45**



## Gardens of Wester Ross

Explore the gardens of the North-west Highlands **See pg. 46**



## Best of Angus Gardens

Explore garden delights of Angus and the Future Gardens Exhibition at the Dundee V&A. **See pg. 50**



## Highgrove and Autumn Tints of the Cotswolds

An autumnal twist on one of our most popular tours. **See pg. 70**



## Autumn Tints of Devon

Join us on the English Riviera, where we explore beautiful gardens as they transform with the rich tapestry of colours that autumn brings **See pg. 71**



## Gardens of the Neapolitan Riviera

Fantastic villas, gardens, vineyards and lemon groves all doused in 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.51**



## Private Gardens of Northern Ireland

Discover some of Northern Ireland's best private gardens. **See pg. 52**



## Gardens of Yorkshire

We visit some of the best gardens in Yorkshire including the stunning RHS Harlow Carr. **See pg. 62**



## White Cities of Puglia

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



## Croatia's Best-Kept Secrets

Head to sun-soaked Croatia and go in search of hidden garden gems in the breathtaking regions of Kvarner and Istria. **See pg. 92**



## History and Culture of the Czech Republic

Discover the history, archaeology and natural wonders of the Czech Republic. **See pg. 96**



# UK & Ireland

Experience the breathtaking beauty and rich history of the British Isles, where stunning gardens, historic houses, world-class art and captivating archaeological sites are just waiting to be explored. Our diverse range of UK and Ireland-based holidays promises unforgettable journeys through some of the most exquisite landscapes and cultural treasures the region has to offer.

Explore enchanting private gardens, where vibrant flowers explode in a riot of colour, creating a picturesque backdrop that changes with the seasons. Many of these gardens are meticulously curated, featuring rare plant species and stunning design elements that invite visitors to wander and reflect amidst nature's tranquillity. Additionally, the British Isles boast an impressive array of archaeological sites that provide a fascinating glimpse into the distant past. Visit ancient ruins, standing stones and burial mounds that echo the whispers of bygone civilizations. These sites not only highlight the area's historical significance but also showcase the profound connection between its inhabitants and the land.

Embrace the natural beauty of Scotland. Why not witness a once-in-a-lifetime event such as the Tall Ships in Aberdeen or take a seat onboard the Lord of the Glens for the best panoramic views of the Highland scenery? Whatever tour you decide on, immerse yourself in the culture and heritage of this stunning country and let us take you on a journey through the remarkable heritage and stunning vistas of the British Isles...

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Lord of the Glens

## Gardens of Western Scotland Cruise aboard the Lord of the Glens

8 DAYS from \$5,175

 DEPARTURE POINT: Inverness

Scotland boasts a diverse collection of gardens which are home to a vast collection of plants from around the world, in spectacular natural settings. Experience the rich diversity of Scotland's west coast gardens and explore botanical beauty on this horticultural extravaganza. Visit some of the area's best kept secrets including Attadale in Wester Ross, the RHS Partner Garden of the Year in Scotland in 2023, Ardchattan Priory garden which was originally planted by medieval monks, Lip na Cloiche a remote hidden garden on Mull, Abriachan Garden and Cawdor Castle Gardens dating back to the 14th century. Other highlights include Neptune's Staircase, Glenfinnan and Armadale Castle.

The MV Lord of the Glens has 26 beautifully appointed and well-equipped state cabins, all with windows and en-suite facilities. The 'Robert Louis Stevenson' restaurant presents cuisine using local and freshly sourced produce whilst the 'Sir Walter Scott' bar and lounge on the upper deck provides magnificent all round panoramic views of the Highland scenery.

**Day 1** Travel under own arrangement to Inverness (rail/air connections can be arranged on request). A coach transfer is provided from Inverness Airport (approx. 1300hrs) or Inverness city centre (approx. 1430hrs) to Kyle of Lochalsh, where we embark the MV Lord of the Glens. Alternatively, you may travel independently to Kyle, via the scenic railway line from Inverness. (D)

**Day 2** Today we visit **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. The gardens have been skillfully restored by their owner Nick MacPherson as an artist's garden after the 1980 storm. We continue to the woodland gardens of **Armadale Castle**, originally laid out by Lord Macdonald in the early 19th century. The gardens boast 40 acres of trees, shrubs and flowers in a peaceful oasis. (FB)



Cawdor Castle

**Day 3** Today we visit **Lip na Cloiche**, a remote, hidden garden situated on a steep hillside on the north-west coast of **Mull**. This densely planted garden has stunning views of Loch Tuath and the Isle of Ulva. There is an eclectic and comprehensive collection of small trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants to be found here, including Chilean and New Zealand rarities. The garden was planned for long-season interest, providing a pattern of good planting ideas all year round. A picturesque burn is planted with primulas, meconopsis, gunneras and other damp-loving specialities. (FB)

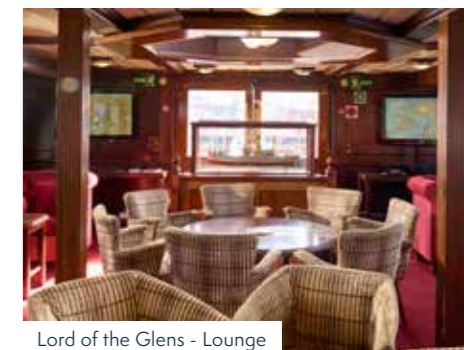
**Day 4** After breakfast we visit **Ardchattan Priory Garden** which was originally planted by medieval monks and affords breathtaking views over Loch Etive to Mull and Ben Cruachan. Highlights here include herbaceous borders, roses, a rockery, ornamental trees and a wild flower garden. After sailing through Loch Linnhe we travel to **Glenfinnan** where the 18m-high monument provides a poignant reminder of the clansmen who gave their lives to the Jacobite cause. (FB)

**Day 5** After breakfast we ascend **Neptune's Staircase**, an impressive flight of eight inter-connected locks that lifts the vessel 103 feet above sea level to Banavie. We then sail through peaceful **Loch Lochy** and **Loch Oich** and various man-made sections of the **Caledonian Canal**, which was started in 1803 to plans produced by

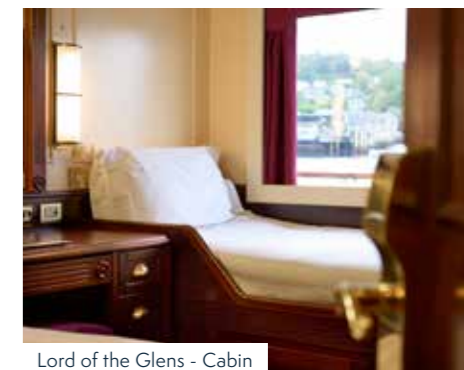
Thomas Telford following survey work by James Watt thirty years earlier. By the time the canal finally opened in 1822 it had taken 17 years and cost £840,000, but instead of the 20 foot depth in Telford's plans, when it initially opened the canal was only 14 feet deep, too shallow for many of the increasingly large ships being built at the time. A second phase of construction was then undertaken between 1844 and 1847 and what emerged from this was the canal originally proposed by Telford. The irony was that by the time the canal was finally complete, steam ships could make the passage around Scotland much more easily than the sailing ships in whose era it was designed. We moor overnight in **Fort Augustus**. (FB)

**Day 6** A scenic sail of **Loch Ness** leads us to **Abriachan Garden**, a uniquely beautiful woodland garden with a fantastic mix of native and exotic plantings, and the most northerly botanic garden in Britain. The garden also affords views across Loch Ness. (FB)

**Day 7** Our final visit is **Cawdor Castle Gardens**, forever immortalised in Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. The castle boasts three very different gardens, each with their own unique history and appearance. Displaying a wealth of flora and fauna, the gardens at Cawdor Castle are ever changing with the seasons. The gardens include large herbaceous borders, collections of rhododendrons and azaleas, whole borders full of lilies and



Lord of the Glens - Lounge



Lord of the Glens - Cabin



Lord of the Glens - Dining room

galtonias, flowering trees and shrubs, archways of rambling roses and laburnum, spring bulbs and contemporary sculptures. (FB)

**Day 8** Following breakfast we disembark. A coach transfer is provided to Inverness city centre (approx. 0930hrs) and Inverness Airport (approx. 1000hrs). Alternatively, you may return home independently - extensions are also available on request. (B)

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

### 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

12 - 19 May	
Lower Deck	\$5,175
Middle Deck	\$6,155
Middle Deck Superior	\$6,995
Upper Deck	\$6,995
Single Supplement	On request



Lord of the Glens



Lord of the Glens

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

7 DAYS from \$3,355

 DEPARTURE POINT: Inverness

This six-night cruise combines both fresh and saltwater cruising, as the Lord of the Glens sails from Oban to the Isle of Mull and through the Caledonian Canal and Loch Ness 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 takes vessels back to sea-level near Fort William. 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, the Glenfinnan Viaduct, Culloden Battlefield and prehistoric Clava Cairns.

The MV Lord of the Glens has 27 beautifully appointed and well-equipped state cabins, all with windows and en-suite facilities. The 'Robert Louis Stevenson' restaurant presents cuisine using local and freshly sourced produce whilst the 'Sir Walter Scott' bar and lounge on the upper deck provides magnificent panoramic views of the Highland scenery. With all meals and excursions included this cruise offers excellent value for money, a treat to be savoured.

**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** After breakfast we depart by coach for a visit to the **Isle of Iona**, the last resting place of some 50 Scottish Kings and the place where St Columba introduced Christianity to Britain. The tiny island has a unique sense of peace and tranquillity. The afternoon is free to explore Mull's 'capital', **Tobermory**. The small town's most famous and striking feature is the row of brightly painted houses that lines the waterfront, originally built by the British Fisheries Company for £20 each to house its workers. Overnight in 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** Our 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 **Loch Ness**, pausing for photos by the ruins of **Urquhart Castle**. On arrival in Inverness we enjoy an excursion to the National Trust for Scotland's Visitor Centre at **Culloden** and the **Clava Cairns**. (FB)

**Day 7** Following breakfast we disembark. A coach transfer will take you back to Inverness city centre (approx. 10.30hrs and Inverness Airport (approx. 1100hrs). (B)

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



Duart Castle



Loch Linnhe

### 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

Oban to Inverness	
17 Apr & 12 Oct	
Lower Deck	\$3,355
Middle Deck	\$4,195
Middle Deck Superior	\$4,895
Upper Deck	\$4,895
Single Supplement	from \$1,960

8 DAYS from \$5,035

 DEPARTURE POINT: Inverness

This seven-night cruise 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, featuring some of the remote and breathtakingly beautiful scenery of Scotland's west coast, and concluding in Kyle of Lochalsh.

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 takes vessels back to sea-level near Fort William. In between our cruising, there is also a full programme of shore excursions including visits to Armadale on the Isle of Skye, the little islands of Eigg and Iona, colourful Tobermory on the Isle of Mull, romantic Eilean Donan Castle, the Glenfinnan Monument, Culloden Battlefield and prehistoric Clava Cairns.

The MV Lord of the Glens has 27 beautifully appointed and well-equipped state cabins, all with windows and en-suite facilities. The 'Robert Louis Stevenson' restaurant presents cuisine using local and freshly sourced produce whilst the 'Sir Walter Scott' bar and lounge on the upper deck provides magnificent panoramic views of the Highland scenery. With all meals and excursions included this cruise offers excellent value for money, a summer treat to be savoured.

**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 for 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** Today after breakfast we enter the ocean, passing mysterious lochs and islands until we reach **Oban**, the seafood capital of the Highlands. Join us for a walk around the town and (if

you wish) up to **McCaigs Tower**, dominating the skyline of the town with great views over the bustling harbour and towards the isle of Mull. We moor overnight here. (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** Following breakfast we disembark. A coach transfer will take you back to Inverness city centre and Inverness Airport. (B)

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



Urquhart Castle



Isle of Iona

### 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


Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh	
19 May & 22 Sep	
Lower Deck	\$5,035
Middle Deck	\$5,875
Middle Deck Superior	\$6,715
Upper Deck	\$6,715
Single Supplement	On request



The Jacobite steam train

## A Classic Scottish Steam Break

4 DAYS from \$1,115 | 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)

**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 Tighnabruaich 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



Loch Katrine

\*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 4-star 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

### ARROCHAR HOTEL

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

24 - 27 Apr	\$1,115
8 - 11 May	\$1,185
25 - 28 Jun	\$1,325
21 - 24 Aug	\$1,325
10 - 13 Oct	\$1,155
Single Supplement	\$130

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT IN APRIL**

### STIRLING HIGHLAND HOTEL

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

23 - 26 May	\$1,295
Single Supplement	\$225



Luskentyre

## A Grand Tour of the Outer Hebrides

5 DAYS from \$1,675 | 6 DAYS from \$2,235

 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 until early 2026 and we will visit the nearby smaller circles instead], the tranquil little Norse Mill and the distinctive Black Houses at Gairrannan.



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 Rodal 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 Gairrannan** and **Norse Mill** at Shawbost await us today. (B, D)



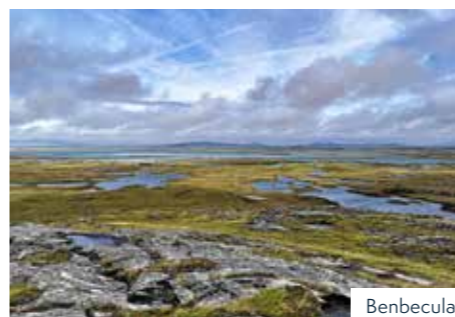
Gairrannan

**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 until early 2026 and we will visit the nearby smaller circles instead.*

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



Benbecula

### 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

8 - 13 Jun	\$2,375
20 - 25 Jul	\$2,375
10 - 15 Aug	\$2,235
Single Supplement	\$350

### 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

14 - 18 Apr	\$1,675
<b>STORNOWAY TO BENBECULA</b>	
17 - 21 Aug	\$1,815
6 - 10 Oct	\$1,675
Single Supplement	\$280



St Ninian's Isle



Lerwick

## Highlights of Orkney & Shetland

6 DAYS from \$2,585

 **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

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ One night's dinner, bed and breakfast at the Scalloway Hotel, Shetland (or similar) 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/Hjaltland 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

12 - 17 May	\$2,725
26 - 31 May	\$2,725
20 - 25 Aug	\$2,655
3 - 8 Sep	\$2,585
29 Sep - 4 Oct	\$2,585
Single Supplement	\$630
Outside Cabin Supplement	\$80

## Orkney & Shetland by Air

5 DAYS from \$2,935

 **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 to 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

### 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

5 - 9 May	\$2,935
16 - 20 Aug	\$3,005
Single Supplement	\$385



Jarlshof

## An Archaeologist's View of Orkney and Shetland

6 DAYS from \$2,515

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 Skail 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 return to **Scalloway** to visit the ruined castle before continuing 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 **Skail 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

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ One nights' 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/Hjaltrand 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

14 - 19 Apr	\$2,515
25 - 30 Aug	\$2,795
Single Supplement	\$630
Outside Cabin Supplement	\$80



Bressay Island

## Shetland and its Outer Isles

5 DAYS from \$2,165

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

### 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

9 - 13 Aug	\$2,165
Single Supplement	\$490
Outside Cabin Supplement	\$80

## Undiscovered Orkney

5 DAYS from \$2,375 | 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



Standing Stones of Stenness

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 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

28 Jul - 1 Aug \$2,375

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

## Ancient Stones of the Outer Hebrides

5 DAYS from \$1,955 | 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 **Dun 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 until early 2026 we will visit the nearby smaller circles instead.



Dun Carloway Broch

### 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

22 - 26 Apr \$1,955

2 - 6 Sep \$2,235

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

## Knitting in the Shetland Isles

6 DAYS from \$2,515

 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 **Jarlshof**. 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, 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

### 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

18 - 23 Sep \$2,515

Single Supplement \$525

Outside cabin supplement \$80

## In the Footsteps of the Picts

4 DAYS from \$1,185 | 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, 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

### 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

1 - 4 Aug \$1,185

Single Supplement \$85





Grossherzogin Elisabeth ©Sail Training International

## Tall Ships in Aberdeen

4 DAYS from \$1,255

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

The Tall Ships Race is a great sporting event which also offers a wonderful spectacle. Whether it's having a good look at the ships while in harbour or watching as they leave 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.

We then take the opportunity to explore the surrounding with visits to Castle Fraser and Balmoral Castle, now most poignantly associated with the last days of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's life and reign.

**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. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast, we return to Aberdeen for a visit to the **Maritime Museum**. 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. Following our visit here we have the rest of the day to continue viewing the Tall Ships in harbour. (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. 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. (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



Castle Fraser



Balmoral Castle

### 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

19 - 22 Jul	\$1,255
Single Supplement	\$315



Glasgow

## The Architecture of Glasgow and Edinburgh

4 DAYS from \$1,255 | 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

### 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

28 - 31 Mar	\$1,325
10 - 13 Oct	\$1,255

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**



Kelvingrove

## Glasgow's Art Treasures featuring the Burrell Collection

4 DAYS from \$975 | 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, in 2024 received the Andrew Doolan **Best Building in Scotland Award**. 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

### 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

5 - 8 Sep \$975

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**



Dunrobin Castle

## Castles and Palaces of the Highlands

4 DAYS from \$1,255

 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



Blair Castle



Cawdor Castle

### 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

20 - 23 Jul \$1,255

Single Supplement \$210

NEW  
TOUR



Stirling Castle



Falkland Palace

## Castles, Palaces and Abbeys of Eastern Scotland

4 DAYS from \$1,395 | 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 tranquillity 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, to 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

### 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

3 - 6 Jun	\$1,395
15 - 18 Jun	\$1,395
Single Supplement	\$210

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT ON 3 JUN**



Duart Castle

## Arran, Scotland in Miniature

5 DAYS from \$1,955

 **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, Lamlash, 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, Lamlash, 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)

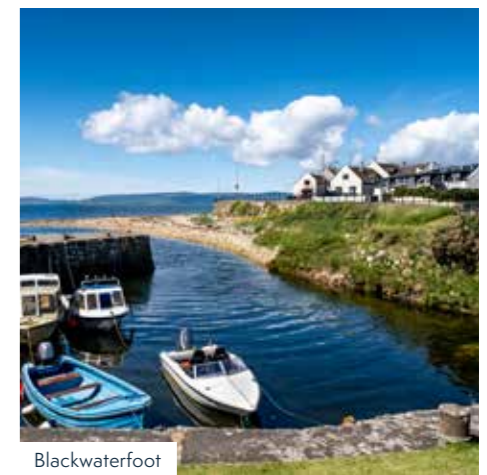
**Day 3** Explore at your leisure or take an optional excursion to the little Hebridean **island of Gigha** including a visit to **Achamore Gardens**. Nestling close to the mainland just off the Kintyre peninsula, this is a gem of an island often

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

### 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

19 - 23 May	\$1,955
8 - 12 Jun	\$1,955
11 - 15 Aug	\$1,955
13 - 17 Sep	\$1,955
Single Supplement	\$455
Optional excursion Gigha:	\$120

## Mull, Staffa and Iona

4 DAYS from \$2,235

 **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 returning to our original pick-up points. (B)

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



Tobermory

### 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

28 Jun - 1 Jul	\$2,235
6 - 9 Sep	\$2,235
Single Supplement	\$590

## Highland Wildlife Safari

4 DAYS from \$1,395 | 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

### 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


25 - 28 Jun	\$1,395
Single Supplement	\$170



Balmoral

## Historic Houses of Aberdeenshire

4 DAYS from \$1,395

 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



Craigievar Castle

### 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


9 - 12 Jun	\$1,395
Single Supplement	\$210



Abbotsford House

## Historic Houses of the Scottish Borders

4 DAYS from \$1,535

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

The Scottish Borders are often overlooked in comparison with the Highlands and Islands. Yet the Borders have a quiet, understated beauty of their own, with softly rolling hills draped in early morning mist, peaceful valleys dotted with sheep farms and the sinuous, salmon-filled River Tweed.

This prosperous region is also home to a number of historic houses, ancient castles and stately homes.

These include Manderston House, described as "The swansong of the stately home", Traquair House, Mellerstain House, an outstanding example of Georgian architecture and Abbotsford, home of Sir Walter Scott. Perhaps the grandest of all is Floors Castle, the magnificent home of the Duke of Roxburghe.

**Day 1** We depart by coach from our local pick-up points and drive into the Scottish Borders for our visit to **Manderston House**. Built in the 1790s, the house became the home of the Miller Family in 1855. A large-scale remodelling of the mansion was undertaken in the early 20th Century, and when the Edinburgh architect, John Kinross, asked how much he could spend on the work, he was told that "it simply doesn't matter". We continue to our accommodation at the **Peebles Hydro**. Dinner is served in the evening. (D)

**Day 2** We travel through Tweeddale to **Abbotsford House**, built by Sir Walter Scott following the success of his great novels. Scott was a passionate collector of armour and weapons - Rob Roy's gun and Montrose's sword along with over 9,000 rare volumes are in his library. In the afternoon we follow the River Tweed back towards Peebles and visit **Traquair House**, which is said to be the oldest continuously inhabited house in Scotland. Everywhere in the house are portraits, old prints and maps, which refer to its history. (B, D)

**Day 3** We will travel to **Mellerstain House**, the home of the Earl and Countess of Haddington, and one of Scotland's great Georgian

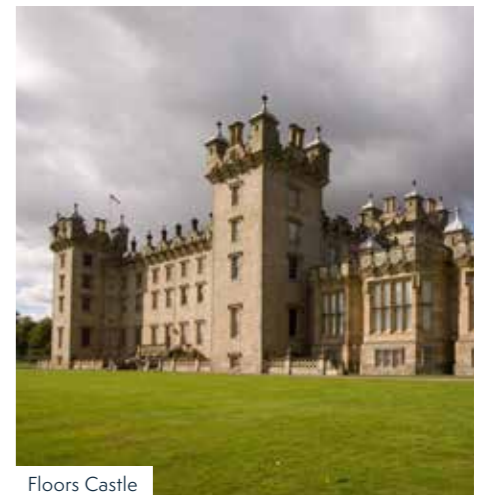
houses. Mellerstain houses a superb collection of paintings including works by Van Dyck, Gainsborough, Ramsay, Aikman and Nasmyth. The house stands in 200 acres of magnificent parkland with an Italianate style terraced garden laid out by Sir Reginald Blomfield in 1909. We move on to Kelso to visit **Floors Castle** - home of the Duke & Duchess of Roxburghe, situated on a natural terrace overlooking the River Tweed and facing the Cheviot Hills. This is a romantic fairytale castle with its roofscape of turrets, pinnacles and cupolas. Dinner will be served back at our hotel in the evening. (B, D)

**Day 4** We check out of the hotel and travel from Tweeddale over into Lauderdale, where we visit **Thirlestane Castle**, a magnificent 16th Century castle. Throughout its long history, Thirlestane has belonged to the Maitland family, one of the most famous in Scotland. In about 1260, Sir Richard Maitland married Avicia, sole heiress to Thomas du Thirlestane which brought the lands of Thirlestane and others into the ownership of the Maitland family. **Lunch** is provided in the Victorian Kitchen here. Following this, our final visit, we return to our original pick-up points. (B, L)

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



Traquair House



Floors Castle

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Three nights' dinner, bed and full breakfast at the 4-star Peebles Hydro Hotel
- ▶ One lunch
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

10 - 13 Sep	\$1,535
<b>NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT</b>	



Glenfinnan Viaduct

## Scenic Scottish Railways

4 DAYS from \$1,255

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 of 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



Strathspey Steam Railway

### 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

7 - 10 May	\$1,255
27 - 30 Aug	\$1,365
24 - 27 Sep	\$1,325
15 - 18 Oct	\$1,255
Single Supplement	\$170

## Scotland's Extreme North West

4 DAYS from \$975 | 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, particularly along the iconic North Coast 500 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 **Kinlochbervie** 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 **Dunrossness**, 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 **Laig**, 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



Achmelvich beach

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

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

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

8 - 11 Apr	\$1,115
18 - 21 Apr	\$1,085
7 - 10 Oct	\$975
21 - 24 Oct	\$975
Single Supplement	\$170

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

5 DAYS from \$1,675 | 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, and the breath-taking landscapes of the wild Northern Highlands. Highlights of the tour include the Castle of Mey, the impressive Smoo Cave and the North West 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 Kinlochbervie. (B, D)

**Day 4** We travel to **Knockan Crag**, an open air visitor centre within the **North West**

**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 Kinlochbervie. (B, D)

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

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



Ardreck Castle

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

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

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

6 - 10 May	\$1,885
9 - 13 Jun	\$1,745
25 - 29 Jun*	\$1,745
19 - 23 Aug	\$1,675
8 - 12 Sep	\$1,675
Single Supplement	\$170

\*Itinerary operates in reverse



Glen Coe

## Scenic Journeys of the Highlands and Islands

7 DAYS from \$2,795

 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 new tour aims to provide the answer to this Caledonian conundrum with an itinerary that ticks off a whole host of visual gems while at the same time providing a series of relaxing, undemanding journeys by train, coach and boat.

Our tour begins with one of the most visually stunning rail journeys in Scotland, the West Highland Line to Fort William, with views of Loch Lomond and the wild, open expanse of Rannoch Moor. This is followed by an excursion to the Isle of Mull, with three different ferry crossings involved. We then enjoy a cruise on Loch Linnhe, a drive through the haunting glacial valley of Glen Coe and a round trip on the Jacobite steam train, over the final section of the West Highland Line. Heading north to Inverness, we enjoy possibly the most scenic of all the Scottish railway routes to Kyle of Lochalsh and a visit to iconic Eilean Donan Castle. Finally we take the funicular railway to the top of the magnificent Cairngorms and then it's 'downhill all the way' as we ride the Highland Railway from Aviemore to Glasgow.

**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 and 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



The Jacobite

### 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

15 - 21 Jun	\$2,795
7 - 13 Sep	\$2,795
Single Supplement	\$275

NEW TOUR



Drummond Castle

## Gardens of Perthshire and the Scone Palace Fair

4 DAYS from \$1,325 | 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)

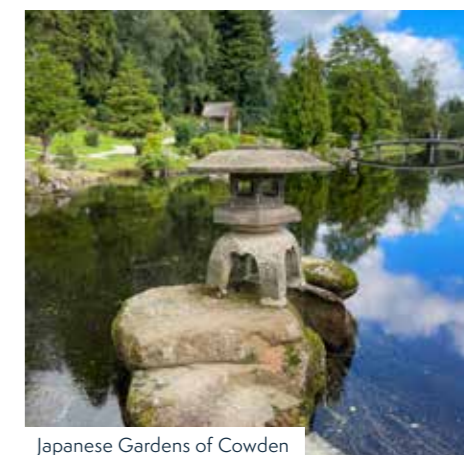
**Day 3** Today we will visit the splendid formal gardens of **Drummond Castle**. They were first laid out in the early 17th century and re-designed and terraced in the early 19th century. The gardens we see today were replanted during the 1950s preserving such features as the ancient yew hedges and 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



Scone Palace



Japanese Gardens of Cowden

### 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


29 May - 1 Jun	\$1,325
Single Supplement	\$170



Inverewe Gardens

## Gardens of Wester Ross

5 DAYS from \$1,675

 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. Highlights here include rhododendrons and azaleas as well as summer herbaceous plantings and shrubs. Features include a rockery, ponds, musical instruments, a stumpery and a new area of late summer colour. Later we will continue

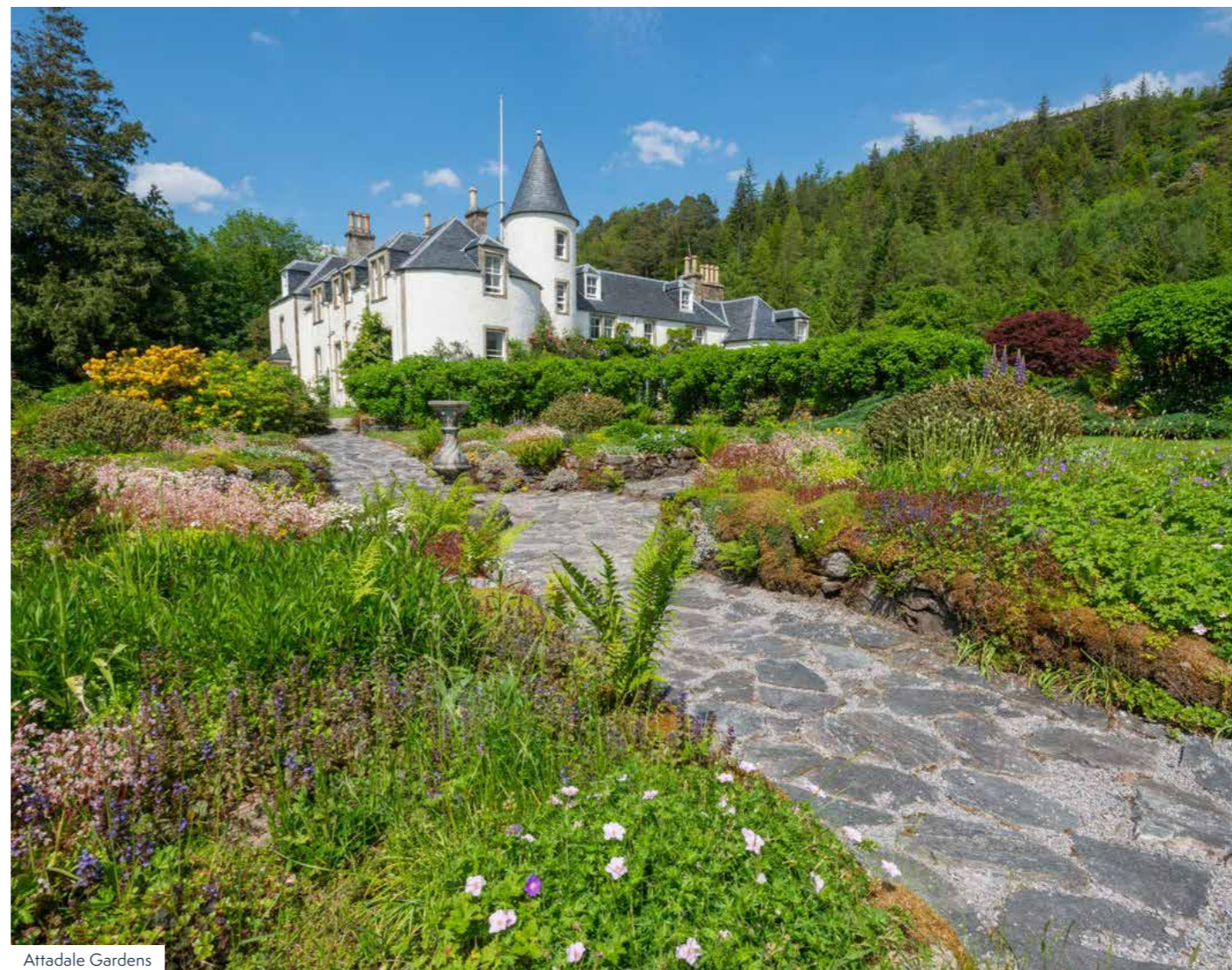
to our accommodation in Gairloch, pausing on the way for a brief visit to the spectacular **Corrieshalloch Gorge**. (*D*)

**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 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



Corrieshalloch Gorge

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 arboretum and a restored Victorian glasshouse. Our second visit of the day is to **Inverewe gardens**, unquestionably one of the most outstanding



Attadale Gardens

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 very scenic journey via Invergarry and Fort William, we reach the **Kinlochlaich Garden and Plant Centre** in Appin. Since it was opened 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 INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed and full breakfast at the Highland Lodge, Gairloch
- ▶ Light lunch at Attadale Gardens
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

5 - 9 Jun	\$1,675
2 - 6 Aug	\$1,605
Single Supplement	\$415





Castle Kennedy - Rhododendrons

## The Best Rhododendron Gardens in the World?

4 DAYS from \$1,325 | 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 **Corssock 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

### 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

7 - 10 May	\$1,325
Single Supplement	\$130



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. Our visit includes tea and shortbread. (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 Charles Jenks' **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

### 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

1 - 4 Jun	\$1,255
20 - 23 Jul*	\$1,255
14 - 17 Sep*	\$1,255
Single Supplement	\$275



Pitmuies Gardens

## Best of Angus Gardens featuring the Future Gardens Exhibition at the Dundee V&A

4 DAYS from \$1,115 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

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

The rich, fertile soil of Angus provides an ideal environment for gardening, so it's no surprise that within this historic county in North-East Scotland, there is a host of wonderful gardens to enjoy. We include access to the Garden Futures: Designing with Nature exhibition at the V&A museum, which highlights groundbreaking gardens by multiple visionaries.

The House of Pitmuies, with its lavishly planted herbaceous borders, is perhaps the star of the show. We see two grand gardens at Edzell Castle, which features a delightful formal garden, and at Glamis Castle, perhaps better known for its royal connections. Further highlights include a trip into the Braes of Angus to see an intriguing upland garden; the herbalist's garden at Logie House; traditional mixed borders at Dunninald, and Langley Park near Montrose, which features four separate walled gardens along with woodland and wildflowers.

**Day 1** We depart from our local pick-ups this morning and head to the walled gardens at **Logie House**, a herbalist's garden set amid a walled 18th-century garden and large Victorian greenhouse. Featuring more than 150 herbs, the physic garden is divided into eight rectangles including medicinal herbs for different body systems. We then continue to our accommodation at the Links Hotel, Montrose. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast we head to **Dundee** where we visit the **V&A museum** and enjoy access to the Garden Futures: Designing with Nature exhibition which explores the history of modern garden design. This exhibition highlights innovative work from leading artists, designers, and landscape architects, such as Jamaica Kincaid, Duncan Grant and William Morris. (B, D)

**Day 3** We begin today at **Edzell Castle**, which was once home to the Earls of Crawford. The garden is defined by the 'Pleasance' - a delightful formal garden with walls decorated with sculptured stone panels, flower boxes and niches for nesting birds. In the afternoon we visit gardens

close to our base in Montrose. Set overlooking the Montrose Basin, **Langley Park Gardens** include four walled gardens, woodland walks and a wildflower meadow with great views over Montrose and the hills beyond. We continue to **Dunninald**, which offers many attractive features including a beech avenue planted around 1670 and a walled garden planted with traditional mixed borders, vegetables, soft fruits, fruit trees and a greenhouse. (B, D)

**Day 4** Following breakfast, we check out of the hotel and visit the garden at **Pitmuies House**, near Forfar. The flower garden is situated behind the house, where in an old walled garden, lavishly planted borders are planned to maintain their flowering interest over a very long season. We continue to **Glamis Castle**, the ancestral home of the Earls of Strathmore. There are superb displays of rhododendrons and azaleas in early summer and a delightful Italian garden filled with the scent of flowers. Following this we continue our homeward journey. (B)

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



V&A museum



Edzell Castle Formal Garden

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

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

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

8 - 11 Jul \$1,115

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**



## Autumn Tints of Dumfries and Galloway

4 DAYS from \$1,185 | 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**, 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 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

### 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

26 - 29 Oct \$1,185

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**

## Autumn Tints of Arran

4 DAYS from \$1,395

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, Lamblash, 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, Lamblash, Brodick** - the capital of Arran; **Corrie** and **Sannox** under the shadow of Goat Fell and other mountains, and then down the west coast to **Catacol** 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

### 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

15 - 18 Oct \$1,395

Single Supplement \$350



Mount Stewart Gardens

## Private Gardens of Northern Ireland

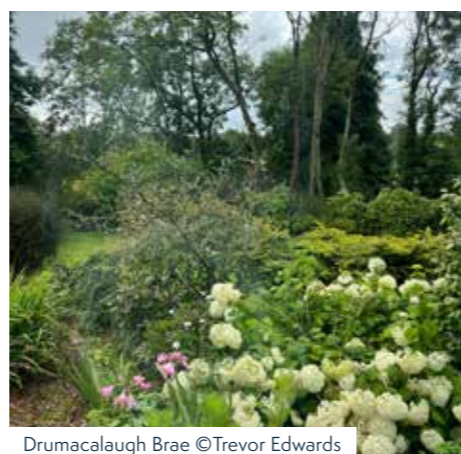
4 DAYS from \$1,535 | TOUR MANAGER: Trevor Edwards

 DEPARTURE POINT: London

Join our resident Gaelic gardening galivanter, Trevor as he shares some of the hidden gems on his home turf in Northern Ireland next autumn. We visit an eclectic mix of private gardens from rewilding habitats and classic cottage gardens to a sprawling prairie-style garden. No visit to Northern Ireland would be complete without a visit to Mount Stewart arguably one of the greatest gardens in the world. Other highlights include the historical gardens of Castle Antrim and a unique community garden in the small town of Randalstown. The majority of gardens featured on this new tour are members of the National Garden Scheme initiative which we are delighted to be able to support.

**Day 1** We depart from London on our flight to Belfast (flights from other regional airports may also be available at a supplement – please contact us for details). Upon arrival, we will join our coach and transfer to our first visit, the private garden of **Holly House**. Here we see a garden comprised of woodlands, herbaceous borders and an iris garden. There is an alpine bed, wildlife ponds and a newly planted shrub and woodland garden. We also find areas of contrast between traditional

garden styling and a more modern and contemporary approach. We then visit **Drumacalaugh Brae** which is spread over several acres including a mill dam and wallsteads that used to house a waterwheel. The garden was designed to complement the existing topography with the expert guidance of John Campbell of the neighbouring Landscape Centre. (D)



Drumacalaugh Brae ©Trevor Edwards

**Day 2** This morning our first visit is to **Iona Cottage Garden**, a relaxed, environmentally friendly country cottage garden which has been under development for several years. The garden, which includes herbaceous borders, a kitchen garden and a cut flower garden is pesticide free with wildlife friendly habitats such as a pond, log piles, bird boxes and a meadow. Some natural exposed rock areas and slightly uneven terrain. Our next visit is to **Mount Stewart**, the



Antrim Castle Gardens

dazzling and idiosyncratic gardens which bask in the micro-climate of low rainfall and humid coastal air that exists here. The Italian Garden south of the house is in the form of a giant parterre, edged in startling golden thuja or smouldering purple berberis and filled with plantings of carmine, yellow and scarlet on one side, with cooler blue, lavender and grey on the other. Elsewhere, there is a Spanish garden with huge eucalyptuses looming in the woods behind, and an exuberant and formal sunken garden surrounded by a fine pergola planted with clematis, honeysuckle and roses. The entrance façade of the house overlooks an entirely different landscape, a scene of serenity with noble trees leading gently uphill to a lake. East of the lake are blood-red and orange rhododendrons, and the banks of the lake are planted with long drifts of arum lily. Before we return to the hotel we visit another charming private garden, **Ivydene**. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today we depart for **Brockagh Wood** a rewilding habitat created during lockdown in 2020. This 15-acre site includes a two acre pond, native wildflower meadows, marginal plants, water lilies, moorhens, mallard ducks and little grebes. The one-mile undulating walk around the perimeter of Brockagh Wood helps us to reconnect with Mother Nature and enjoy all that she has to offer. Next we visit **Benvarren** historic estate near the North Antrim Coast consisting of a wonderfully preserved period house, a mature walled garden and beautiful landscaped grounds on the bank of the River Bush with a unique Victorian cast-iron bridge. The walled

garden covering 2 acres is divided into a flower garden and a vegetable and fruit garden and is described as one of the few fully maintained walled gardens in Ireland and one of the best in private hands. Our final visit today is to **Billy Old Rectory Peace Garden**, a mature three-acre garden in front of the Georgian rectory home to a large lawn with mature trees, an ancient well and a developing woodland garden with a small fernery. To the rear of the rectory is another large lawn with contrasting herbaceous borders, shrubs and a pond area. There are also kitchen, greenhouse, herb, vegetable and fruit gardens, a large old orchard and area with wildflowers and annuals. (B, D)

**Day 4** Our final day begins with a visit to **Antrim Castle Gardens** which are bursting with botanical beauty and heritage - you will find nothing like these 400-year-old gardens anywhere else in Northern Ireland. Highlights include the magnificent 17th Century Anglo Dutch style canals, ponds and avenues, a 12th Century motte; Victorian Pleasure Garden, Large Parterre Gardens and the Platinum Jubilee Clockwork Garden. Following this, we head to Northern Ireland's answer to New York's 'The High Line' – **Randalstown Viaduct Community Garden**. This former railway viaduct which spans the River Maines has been transformed by leading garden designer Johnny Knox into a relaxing space which brings year-round floral interest, bee corridors, seeds and berries for birds and also shelter for hibernating species. Finally, we visit **Clayburn**, a private prairie-style garden which is

nestled in a fold of moorlands south of Slemish Mountain. Taking advantage of the surrounding landscape, the mass planting of native trees and layers of colourful herbaceous plants add to the spectacular views. We then make our way back to Belfast airport in time for our return flight to London. (B)

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

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER TREVOR EDWARDS



Our resident Irish expert shares some of the hidden garden gems of his home country.

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- Four nights' dinner, bed and full breakfast at the 4-star Dunadry Hotel, Antrim
- Flights from London to Belfast
- Comfortable coach travel throughout
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of horticulturalist Trevor Edwards as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

24 - 27 Sep	\$1,535
Single Supplement	\$210

# Gardens of Jersey

5 DAYS from \$2,144

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 is 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)

**Day 2** Three private gardens await this morning, starting 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 then continue 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)

**Day 3** Today is free for us to explore all that Jersey has to offer. Alternatively, join our optional 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)

**Day 4** This morning we visit the privately owned **Samarès Botanic Gardens**, a development of 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)

**Day 5** After breakfast our tour concludes. (B)

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



Mont Orgueil

### 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

14 - 18 May	\$2,144
3 - 7 Sep	\$2,284
Single Supplement	\$415

# Gardens of Guernsey & Sark

5 DAYS from \$2,445 | 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 scenic tour before visiting **Castle Cornet**, where there is a profusion of plants both ancient and modern. Later, we visit the private garden of **Magnolia Lodge**, where tea and gâche (the local fruit loaf) will be included. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast we travel to the Victorian walled garden at **Saumarez Park**. The garden has gained several first prizes in the Northern Agricultural and Horticultural Society's annual show. We then visit the **Folk and Costume Museum**, where we will enjoy a guided tour. Our final visit is to **Sausmarez Manor** where we have some time to explore the Subtropical Gardens and Sculpture Park. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning we begin with a stop by the **Little Chapel**. Covered in shells and pieces of china, it is potentially one of the smallest chapels in the world. We then visit **Bruce Russell & Son**, a workshop and showroom where they craft traditional

silverware, gold, and platinum jewellery. Next we visit **Candie Gardens**, which have given pleasure to many since they were left to the people of Guernsey in 1887. After lunch (not included) we will enjoy the short walk to **Les Cotils**, to enjoy this private garden with stunning views of the bay. (B, D)

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

**Day 5** Today we visit the **Guernsey Millennium Tapestry**, a project that involved the whole community. It illustrates 1000 years of local history in ten panels of embroidered canvas work. We will then visit Victor Hugo's Garden at **Hauteville House and Oatlands Village**, before we transfer to the airport where our tour concludes (B)

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



La Seigneurie Gardens

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed & breakfast at the 3-star La Barbarie 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

12 - 16 Sep	\$2,445
Single Supplement	\$555
Optional Excursions: Sark	\$135



Quantock Hills

# Somerset's Secret Gardens

4 DAYS from \$1,185

**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 at a time when they will be looking at their absolute best.

We begin with a visit to **Watcombe**, an idyllic rural garden with a sublime mix of thoughtful planting. The same can be said of **Batcombe House**, an outstanding plantswoman's garden in two parts, one a riot of colour, the other an oasis of contemporary calm. After some free time in the cathedral city of **Wells** we visit **Stoberry**, a sympathetically planted garden with breathtaking views over the Vale of Avalon. Closer to our base in North Petherton we call in at **Bradon Farm**, a classic formal garden with good use of structure and later we visit the Grade I registered garden of **Iford Manor** with its romantic design and architecture.

Finally, after a scenic drive through the **Quantock Hills**, we visit the **Walled Gardens of Cannington**, which have both classic and contemporary features.

**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 **Stoberry Garden**, which provides a stunning combination of vistas accented with wildlife ponds, water features and sculpture. (B, D)

**Day 3** We begin 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



Stoberry Garden



Wells Cathedral

### 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

5 - 8 Jul	\$1,185
Single Supplement	\$275



Dyffryn Fernant Garden

## Gardens of South and West Wales

5 DAYS from \$1,815 | 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. Following this we return to our original departure points. (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.



### 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

11 - 15 Apr	\$1,815
Single Supplement	\$415



Italian Gardens, Trentham Estate

## RHS Garden Bridgewater and Gardens of the North West

4 DAYS from \$1,045 | 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 was 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

### 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

24 - 27 May	\$1,045
2 - 5 Aug	\$1,045
Single Supplement	\$170



RHS Chelsea Flower Show

## The RHS Chelsea Flower Show and Classic English Gardens

7 DAYS from \$2,725

 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, exclusive early bird entrance to 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 deployed in the setting of a splendid old site, rich in fine trees against a backdrop of other plants, all impeccably labelled. (D)

**Day 2** 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 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

### 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

22 - 28 May	\$2,725
Single Supplement	\$555



Tresco

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

5 DAYS from \$3,005

 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. Later 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.



### 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

1 - 5 Apr	\$3,005
Single Supplement	\$415



RHS Garden Rosemoor



Highgrove ©Robert Smith

## 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 Tremeneere 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 **Tremeneere 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

### 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

23 - 29 Jun	\$3,215
Single Supplement	\$555
Optional Excursion - Tresco	\$470

## Highgrove and the Cotswolds

4 DAYS from \$1,325 | 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**, 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

### 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

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

30 May - 2 Jun	\$1,325
27 - 30 Jun	\$1,395
1 - 4 Aug	\$1,325
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.



Harewood House

## Gardens of Yorkshire

4 DAYS from \$1,395 | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

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

Explore the wonders of Yorkshire and visit 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 of the classic walled garden of Littlethorpe Manor, which features the impressive apothecary 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. During our visit, we enjoy a guided tour, giving us a personal insight into the continued development of this landmark garden.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and travel to **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. We have the chance to explore the house's impressive art 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 a white rose parterre and herbs and a brick pergola. 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**. 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. (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. 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



Newby Hall



RHS Harlow Carr

### 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

30 Jun - 3 Jul \$1,395

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**

## Stately Homes and Seaside Castles of Norfolk

5 DAYS from \$2,095 | 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.

**Day 1** We depart from our designated pick-up points and head to **Oxburgh Hall**, built in 1482 at the peak of the War of the Roses by the Bedingfeld family. We continue to Castle Rising, one of the best preserved keeps in England. (D)

**Day 2** We begin at **Blickling Estate**, a Jacobean mansion surrounded by magnificent gardens and historic parklands 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 the British monarchy. 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. This afternoon we take the short journey to **Hindringham Hall**, a delectable little moated manor house that looks as though it has been plucked straight from a

storybook. 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. 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**. We have an in-depth tour of the house and the garden followed by some light refreshments. (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 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

### 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

1 - 5 Jun \$2,095

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**

## Highlights of Northumberland

5 DAYS from \$1,675 | 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 especially when paired with visits to historic houses, castles and Roman ruins.

Highlights include **Bamburgh Castle**, a trip to the holy island of **Lindisfarne** including visits to both the castle and priory, **Belsay Hall** 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. 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**.

**Day 1** We depart from London Kings Cross by train to **Newcastle**. On arrival, we join our coach and travel to the house and gardens of **Belsay Hall**, built in the 19th Century in Greek revival style to the design of its owner, Sir Charles Monck. (D)

**Day 2** We travel north along the coast to **Bamburgh Castle**, an impressive fortress that has stood for over 1400 years. 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. After the castle, we will also visit Lindisfarne Priory. (B, D)

**Day 3** We depart for a full day at **Alnwick Castle and Gardens**. It has been in the possession of the Percy family since 1309 and houses an

exquisite collection of art treasures. 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** We begin our day at **Hadrian's Wall** before heading to **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** We check out of the hotel and travel to **Wallington House**. Dating back to 1688 Wallington House was home to many generations of the Blackett and Trevelyn families. The house is set in magnificent grounds with lawns, lakes and woodlands, 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



Alnwick Garden

### 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 can be arranged and upgrades are also available 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

7 - 11 Jun \$1,675

14 - 18 Sep \$1,675

Single Supplement \$275

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





Mary Rose ©

## The Mary Rose: A Tudor Tale

4 DAYS from \$1,325 | 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 Cleves 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**, 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 Vyne**. Originally built as a great Tudor 'power house', The Vyne 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

### 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

10 - 13 Oct \$1,325

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**



Tresco Abbey Gardens

## The Isles of Scilly

6 DAYS from \$3,425 | TOUR MANAGER: Mike Nelhams

DEPARTURE POINT: Land's End Airport

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.'

The wonderful Abbey Gardens on the island of Tresco are home to more than 3,000 species and magnificent vistas, colours and scents. 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 post and a relaxing lunch at the 3AA Rosette restaurant at the Hell Bay hotel, the only restaurant of this calibre in the Scilly Isles.

**Day 1** Travel independently to Penzance. 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**. 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**. (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**. This afternoon you are then free to explore Tresco at leisure. 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 Eggnis**, owner of **Hillside Farm** for a **guided tour**. The farm is a working mixed farm situated to the southern end of Bryher. In addition they also have a small herd of 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 the 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. (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



Great Bay on the Island of St Martin's

### 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!



### 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 Horticulturalist Mike Nelhams as tour manager
- ▶ Presentation and Q&A session with Mike Nelhams on Abbey Gardens

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

7 - 12 May \$3,425

Single Supplement \$735

# In the Footsteps of Gertrude Jekyll

6 DAYS from \$2,935

 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 **Knights Hayes 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 **Yann**, 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

### 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

3 - 8 Jun	\$2,935
Single Supplement	\$695

# The Gardens of Kent and Sussex

4 DAYS from \$1,395

 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



Scotney Castle

### 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

20 - 23 Jun	\$1,395
15 - 18 Aug	\$1,395
Single Supplement	\$275



Powerscourt Gardens

# The Irish Rover

8 DAYS from \$3,215 | 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.

**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



Powerscourt Gardens

### 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.



### 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

12 - 19 Jun	\$3,215
30 Aug - 6 Sep	\$3,215
Single Supplement	\$835



Burren

## Gardens and Wildflowers of the Burren

5 DAYS from \$1,990 | 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 Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, set in 26 acres of unspoilt Co. Clare countryside.



Aran Islands

**Day 1** On arrival in **Shannon** where we are met by our coach and tour manager and transfer to the 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, echium and



Moher Coastline

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, where he will be in his element in his back yard.



### 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

3 - 7 Jun	\$1,990
Single Supplement	\$225



Westonbirt ©Paul Groom

## Highgrove and Autumn Tints of the Cotswolds

4 DAYS from \$1,255

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

The highlight of this short break is a guided tour of the gardens of Highgrove, the country home of His Majesty The King. This will be a rare opportunity to see these fascinating gardens which are cultivated using wholly organic methods.

As we walk through Westonbirt, the National Arboretum, we will see the first tints of autumn colour, as the leaves adorning over 15,000 trees from all around the world begin to turn. There are more sylvan delights to enjoy at Batsford Arboretum, which contains over 1500 trees with species from all over the world.

**Day 1** We depart from our pick-up points and head for a visit to the unique **Snowhill Manor**. Laid out theatrically, the Manor is literally packed to the rafters with 22,000 or so unusual objects. The Manor is surrounded by an intriguing terraced hillside garden designed in the Arts & Crafts style and, like so many of the gardens here is split into a number of different 'rooms'. The garden and the valley running alongside typically put on a lovely display of autumn colour. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast this morning we will transfer to **Highgrove**. Since buying the property in 1980 His Majesty the King sought the advice of a friend, Lady Salisbury, who was an experienced organic gardener, and Miriam Rothschild, and together they created an experimental wildflower meadow which already boasts around 32 different varieties of endangered native plants including ox-eye daisies, yellow rattle, common spotted orchid, meadow crane's bill and ragged robin. After our visit we will enjoy a delightful **lunch at Highgrove** making this a truly memorable, once in a lifetime visit. Later, we travel to **Painswick Rococo Garden**. The last of its kind in the country, follies nestle in a hidden valley surrounded by magnificent Cotswolds views and a large Kitchen Garden produces many crops that are used in the garden's own restaurant. Among the plants looking at their best are beech trees, the Japanese maple, the Sedum 'Autumn Joy' and Cyclamen hederifolium. (B, D)

**Day 3** This morning, following breakfast, we visit **Sezincote**, an Indian-style house with an eastern 'Hindu' garden. Graham Stuart Thomas advised on the planting design. Thomas Daniell, famous as a painter of Indian scenery, designed the Indian Bridge and the Indian Temple. In the afternoon, we will enjoy a visit to **Batsford Arboretum**, which contains over 1500 trees with species from all over the world. The collections cover a wide range of plants particularly from the Far East, all of which can be expected to put on a fine display of autumn hues. The landscaping includes rockeries, streams and waterfalls, a lake, statues and a hermit's cave. On our way back to the hotel we will detour via the picturesque Cotswold villages of **Upper Slaughter, Lower Slaughter** and **Bourton-on-the-Water**. (B, D)

**Day 4** This morning our final visit is to **Westonbirt**, the National Arboretum which is perhaps the most important and widely known arboretum in the United Kingdom. It comprises some 15,000 trees and shrubs, over an area of approximately 600 acres. Following our visit we will return to our original pick-up points. (B)

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

**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.**



Sezincote



Batsford Arboretum

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

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

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

9 - 12 Oct	\$1,255
Single Supplement	\$275



Dartmoor National Park

## Autumn Tints of Devon

4 DAYS from \$1,115

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

Join us for a jaunt to the 'English Riviera' where from our base in Torquay we explore some of Devon's most beautiful gardens as they metamorphose with the rich tapestry of colours the Autumn brings. Highlights include the enchanting woodland garden of Stone Lane, situated on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park, Lukesland Garden, said to be one of the best in this corner of Britain and Bicton Botanical Gardens, home to a collection of British champion trees and fine Victorian glasshouses. We will also visit Killerton, home to impressive gardens as well as a collection of period costumes and the Garden House, a suitably romantic garden, with delightful views over surrounding countryside.

**Day 1** We depart from our pick-up points and head for our first visit to the house and gardens of **Killerton**. The estate is 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, magnolias, Stewartias and maples. An impressive rock garden formed in an old quarry sparkles with hellebores, hostas and geraniums among mossy rocks under a canopy of old camellias and maples. (D)

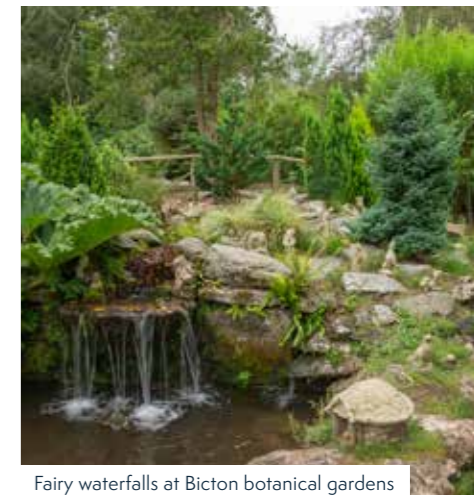
**Day 2** This morning, we make our way to the edge of **Dartmoor National Park** where we find **Stone Lane**, an enchanting woodland and water garden famous for national collections of birch and alder trees. This afternoon is at your leisure to explore **Torquay**. Meander through the town centre for a spot of shopping, or perhaps visit Potent Plants Garden which is a fascinating collection of plants inspired by the writings of Agatha Christie. (B, D)

**Day 3** We head for **Lukesland Gardens**, said to be one of the finest gardens in the Southwest that stretches across 24 acres. In the Autumn the huge variety of trees and shrubs make the garden visually stunning. The shelterbelts of beech trees turn glorious shades of gold while the more exotic acers, azaleas and ginkgo trees turn fiery shades of red.

This afternoon we visit **The Garden House**, near the village of Buckland Monachorum. Here Lionel Fortescue created a suitably romantic garden, built on precipitous terraces from which there are lovely views over the garden and surrounding countryside. Clematis and roses scale the old walls that surround the garden and there is a wonderful richness of plants. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today we depart Torquay and head for our final visit to **Bicton Botanical Gardens** where we spend some time enjoying the 60 acres of beautiful gardens. Home to many rare and endangered species from around the world and one of the finest tree collections in Britain the gardens are carefully looked after by a team of dedicated gardeners. Bicton gardens is also home to 25 champion trees, signifying the tallest, largest or best of their kind within Britain. The feather in their cap is the Grecian fir at 46 metres being the tallest of its kind ever recorded. The Palm House is one of the most charming buildings in the garden and dates back to c1825 comprising 18,000 overlapping glass panes. Here you can see one of the garden's rarest species, the Madagascan triangle palm. Before we head for home we enjoy an **early afternoon tea** and then we board the coach to make our way back to our original pick up points. (B, AT)

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



Fairy waterfalls at Bicton botanical gardens



Torquay harbour

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

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

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

13 - 16 Oct	\$1,115
<b>NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT</b>	

# Europe

Europe is home to a variety of breathtaking destinations, all conveniently reachable by air or rail.

Why not start your adventure in the elegant gardens of southern France, where you can stroll beneath the fragrant blooms and admire the meticulous landscape design that reflects centuries of artistry? Feel the warmth of the spring sun on your skin as you explore the sun-soaked island of Sicily, renowned for its picturesque coastal views and historic sites.

In Italy, take a moment to wander through the awe-inspiring gardens of Ninfa, often referred to as the 'Pompeii of the garden world.' This hidden gem boasts lush foliage, ancient ruins and tranquil waters.

If you are looking for a winter escape, Malta is a fantastic choice with its rich heritage and captivating culture. Discover the fascinating combination of historical influences that shape this Mediterranean paradise, from its prehistoric temples to its vibrant cities.

For those seeking a bit more adventure, the bustling markets and enchanting gardens of Marrakesh offer a sensory overload. Immerse yourself in the vibrant colours and intoxicating scents as you navigate the labyrinthine streets filled with local artisans and delicious cuisine.

Don't overlook Croatia, where you can uncover hidden gardens just waiting to be explored. Each site offers a tranquil retreat, surrounded by the stunning natural beauty of the country's coastline and countryside.

Whichever European adventure you choose, be prepared to create lasting memories and experience the very best of what this diverse and enchanting continent has to offer.



Isola Bella in Taormina

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A-ROSA VIVA

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

8 DAYS from \$4,195 | 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 enthral countless visitors more than 90 years after his death.

Other garden highlights include the Château de Mirosmesnil, 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. We also enjoy a visit to France's most iconic palace, the Château de Versailles.

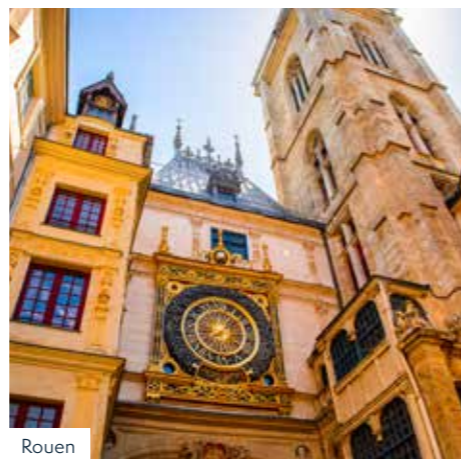
Waking up to a new view every day (without having to pack and unpack) is always a lovely experience and combined with these wonderful gardens this promises to be an unforgettable cruise holiday.

**Day 1** We depart from London St Pancras International by Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord. (First Class upgrades and regional connections also available on request). On arrival we will be met by our local coach and transfer to **Musée de l'Orangerie des Tuileries**, before continuing to our ship on the banks of the river Seine. (D)

**Day 2** As we sit down to breakfast this morning the ship will sail towards Rouen. 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 3** After breakfast we depart for the first of two garden visits today, **Château de Mirosmesnil**, 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



Rouen

was restored forty years ago by the Comtesse de Vogüé, grandmother of the present owners. Separated by alleys made of grass, the squares are ordered with vegetables and flowers that contrast with the profusion of annual flowers on the sides. The surrounding park is dominated by a cedar of Lebanon, several centuries old, and there are also fruit trees and a huge collection of clematis. 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. 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. Its informal design with paths, woodlands, glades and immaculate grass walks leading temptingly in all directions, contains a richness of flora in a variety of settings all year round. We will rejoin the ship at Rouen before sailing Caudebec. (B, PL, D)



Château de Canon

**Day 4** After breakfast we depart for a visit to the **Pegasus Bridge Memorial Museum**, which pays tribute to the Anglo-Canadian 6th Airborne Division who captured and liberated the bridge here during the D-Day Landings of June 1944. We then continue to the garden at **Château de Canon** at Meziidon-Canon, which was redesigned by a barrister who knew Horace Walpole. The layout is best understood as a French interpretation of the Augustan Style. Like Chiswick Park, it has an axis leading from the house across a grass parterre and an axial woodland ornamented with small temples, including The Temple de la Pleureuse and a Chinese pavilion. We conclude today at the famous Calvados house of **Père Magloire**. Welcomed by the hostesses who will accompany us to the Museum of Calvados and Old Trades, 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.



Les Andelys

Dinner is served on board in the evening as the ship sails for Les Andelys. (B, PL, D)

**Day 5** Today this morning is at your leisure as the ship is docked in the town of Les Andelys. During the early afternoon the ship sails to Vernon. On arrival, 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 time to explore this marvellous garden at your leisure. (B, L, D)

**Day 6** Today is spent cruising the Seine enjoying the panoramic scenery and the on-board facilities of our ship. (B, L, D)

**Day 7** After breakfast we depart for one of France's most iconic palaces, the **Château de Versailles**. We have a full day to explore the Royal Apartments, the Hall of Mirrors with 357 mirrors, where courtiers and illustrious guests were received at the time of Louis XIV; the Chapel, the Royal Opera and the Museum of the History of France. Outside, the world-famous gardens, which were designed by André le Nôtre, are also the largest museum of outdoor sculptures in the world, with a total of 221 pieces. The waterbed comprises two large pools which reflect light and illuminate the façade of the Hall of Mirrors. The Northern Parterre is divided into two, each side centred around a circular pool. (B, PL, D)

**Day 8** After breakfast on board, we disembark and transfer to the Gare du Nord for our Eurostar train back to London where we expect to arrive in the evening. (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 \$695pp

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.

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Seven nights in a lower deck cabin on the A-Rosa Viva 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

24 - 31 Jul	
Main deck	\$4,195
Upper Deck Supplement	\$315
Single Supplement	\$835



Keukenhof Gardens

## Dutch Bulbfields in Spring

5 DAYS from \$2,305

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 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 **Museum Van Loon**, a magnificent 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.

#### 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

14 - 18 Apr	\$2,305
Single Supplement	\$555
Middle Deck Supplement	\$140
Upper Deck Supplement	\$185
Optional Excursion: Amsterdam canal cruise	On request

2026 DEPARTURE



Menton Lemon Festival parade

## Gardens of the French Riviera - Menton Lemon Festival -2026 and International Rose Festival - 2025

6 DAYS from \$2,480

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 will 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

#### 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

#### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

<b>Menton Lemon Festival</b>	
12 - 17 Feb 2026	\$2,480
Single Supplement	from \$490
<b>International Rose Festival</b>	
8 - 13 May 2025	\$3,075
Single Supplement	\$820

# Iceland Northern Lights

5 DAYS from \$3,250 | 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 Keflavík 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 **Pingvellir 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 Keflavík where our tour concludes. (B)

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



Aurora borealis, Reykjavik

**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**

9 - 13 Nov \$3,250

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 \$1,605 | 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; **Faġar 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



Valletta

**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**

4 - 8 Nov \$1,605

**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT**

Sea View Supplement \$70

Optional Excursions:  
 Gozo \$205  
 Southern Malta \$120



Villa Giulia

# Gardens and Villas of Sicily

8 DAYS from \$3,475 | 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



Etna volcano and Taormina town

**YOUR TOUR MANAGER**

**TREVOR EDWARDS**  
 Join Trevor as he explores one of his favourite European destinations. Experience a wide variety of gardens in the company of a world renowned expert.



**YOUR TOUR INCLUDES**

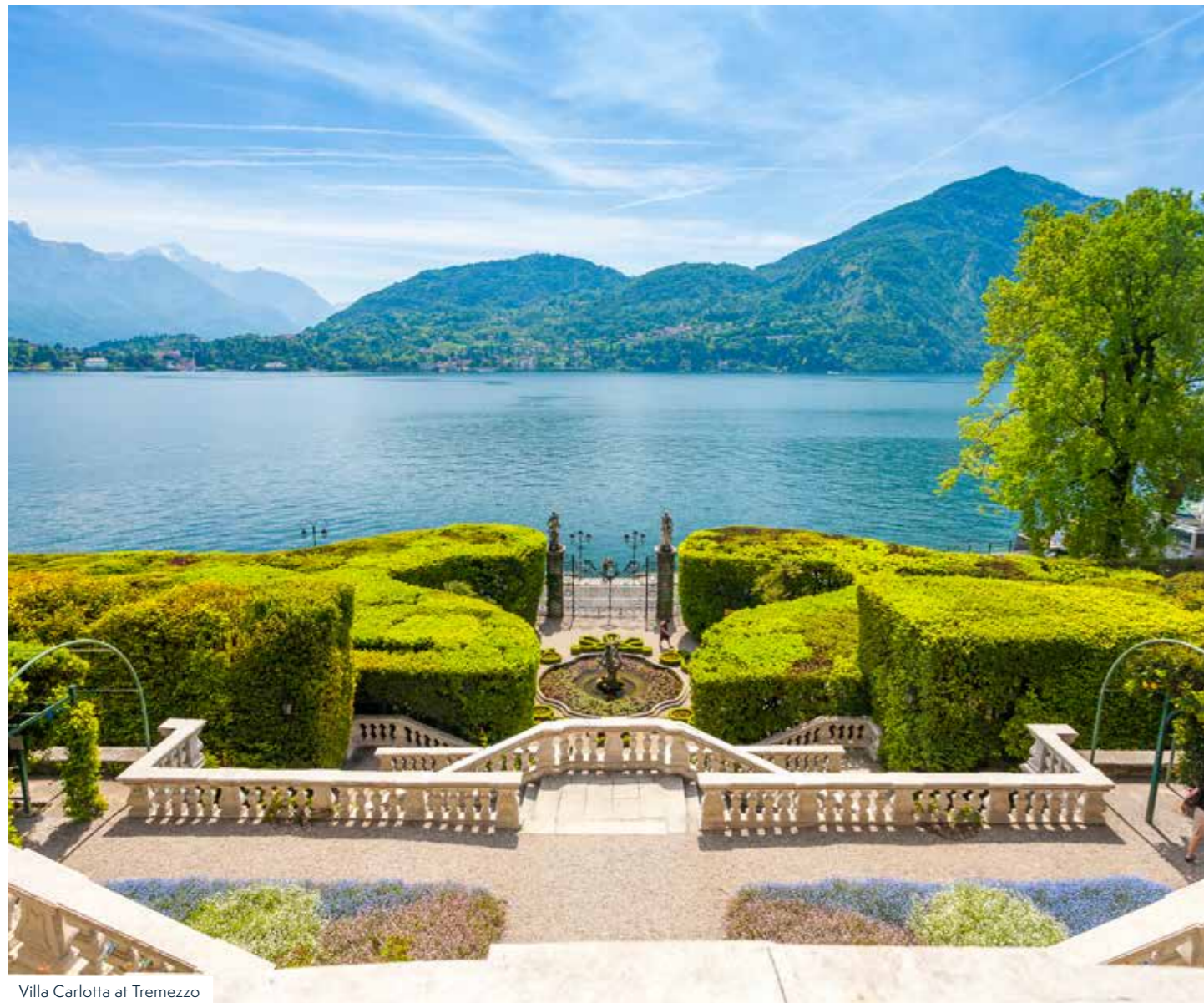
- ▶ Seven nights' dinner including wine, bed & breakfast: three nights in Giardini Naxos; two nights in Ragusa; two nights in Palermo
- ▶ Three lunches
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel throughout
- ▶ All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of horticulturalist Trevor Edwards as tour manager and a local guide

**DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON**

13 - 20 May \$3,475

Single Supplement \$555





Villa Carlotta at Tremezzo

## Villas and Gardens of the Italian Lakes

8 DAYS from \$3,530 | TOUR MANAGER: Kate Williamson

The fabulous scenery and benign climate of the northern Italian lakes have attracted aristocrats and the wealthy for years, and today their elegant villas and lush gardens perfectly complement the natural landscape.

From our bases on the Gulf of Borromeo on Lake Maggiore and at the foot of Lake Como we will explore a succession of villas and their gardens, all set against the breath taking backdrop of snow-capped mountains and glittering water. We begin with a real treat as we visit the private garden of the President of the Italian Camellia Society, which is home to a remarkable collection of over 500 plants, and where we will also enjoy a relaxed lunch in delightful surroundings. Nowhere captures the extravagant spirit of the lakeland gardens better than the three Borromeo islands, Bella, Madre and Pescatori, which feature sumptuous terraced gardens, shaded woodland walks, flowered terraces and elegant statuary. Other highlights during our stay on Lake Maggiore include Villa Taranto, filled with rare botanical specimens, and a visit to the ancient church on the little island of San Giulio on picturesque Lake Orta.

During our stay on Lake Como we will have a private tour with the owner of Villa Cicogna Mozzoni. Monumental trees and season blooms put on a dazzling display at Villa Carlotta while the manicured Villa Balbianello, whose garden is impeccably maintained, will be an undoubted highlight. In addition we enjoy a free day to relax and shop in Como town.

**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Milan** we transfer to our hotel for the next four nights, the 4-star Hotel **Milan Speranza au Lac**, located in the centre of Stresa on the shores of Lake Maggiore, overlooking the Borromeo gulf with its enchanting colours. The bedrooms are decorated in a classic and timeless style and are equipped with air conditioning, satellite TV, safe, hair dryer, complimentary toiletries and free WiFi. (L, D)

**Day 2** We start with a visit to the gardens of **Villa Taranto**. Flourishing with rare botanical examples, the early 20th century concept of a garden as both an aesthetic experience and a scientific adventure reaches its height of perfection in the grounds of Villa Taranto. In 1931, Captain Neil McEachern bought the estate with the intention of creating an English-style garden where he could grow plants from all over the world. Today you can appreciate a very important botanical collection with a wide range of plants. In the afternoon we drive to charming little **Lake Orta** with free time for lunch (not included) in the picturesque old town of **Orta San Giulio**. In the afternoon we will take a private boat trip over to the tiny island of **San Giulio** to visit the ancient church here. Returning to the



Isola Madre

mainland we visit an interesting **private garden** on the hillside above the lake. (B, D)

**Day 3** Today, after breakfast, we spend a full day exploring the famous Borromeo 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 that were inspired by the 'Hanging Gardens of Babylon'. Out into the gardens, we find an ornate parterre with low box hedges and brilliantly coloured flowers, a pond adorned with blue and pink water lilies during the summer and lush plantings of citrus fruits and more. We then continue to **Isola Pescatori**, the 'island of fishermen', with its narrow cobbled streets and pretty harbour. The island was thought to be first inhabited in the 10th century and there are fewer than 50 residents. Finally we visit **Isola Madre**, which in contrast to Isola Bella has a simple, unspoilt aspect, where according to the seasons tropical and Mediterranean plants, citrus fruits, crape myrtle, hibiscus, bougainvillea, protea and agaves all flourish. The English romantic feel is due to re-working of the former Renaissance terraced gardens. (B, D)

**Day 4** Today, following breakfast, we start with a real treat by visiting the **private garden** of the **President of the Italian Camellia Society**. The site is above the shores of Lake Maggiore surrounded by mountains and facing the south east. Since the 1950s due to the combination of acid ground, a mild climate and frequent rainfall the garden has housed a remarkable collection of camellias. The camellia collection includes 500 plants and 318 cultivars. The garden provides the perfect backdrop to our delicious and relaxed lunch here. Following our visit we have the afternoon free in **Stresa**. (B, L, D)

**Day 5** Today, following breakfast and hotel check out, we will head for **Villa Cicogna Mozzoni**, situated in what were ancient hunting grounds for the nobility, in the foothills between Varese and Lake Lugano. Here we will enjoy a private guided tour with the owner. The most pleasant characteristic of the villa, apart from its surprisingly intact frescoes, is its merging with the garden. A two-flight stairway with a brook running in between leads directly to the halls of the Villa. The walled garden is a typical example of formal Italian garden with box hedges, water basins, fountains and a grotto.

We continue to the town of **Como** where we will check into our lakeside hotel, the **Barchetta Excelsior** for the next three nights. The hotel is situated in the heart of Como and is only accessible on foot or by horse-drawn carts. (B, D)

**Day 6** Today we have a free day for you to shop and sightsee at leisure. Our guide will be on hand to assist with suggestions in Como or around the lake. (B, D)

**Day 7** Today we enjoy an enchanting day on Lake Como. On arrival in Tremezzo we will have time to enjoy the elegant 18th century **Villa Carlotta**, where, in the spring, azaleas and rhododendrons burst into a dazzling display. Imaginative planting includes twining climbers, jasmine and roses while in the more natural garden a dell of tree ferns, palms, eucalyptus, Japanese maples and cactus reveal the microclimatic conditions with banana and flowering orchids creating an exotic semi-tropical jungle effect. We then catch the ferry to visit the **Villa Balbianello** on the Lavedo point. Remote from lakeside tourism, in a sylvan setting of pine, cypress and oak, manicured lawns and flowerbeds, the garden is

maintained to an exceptionally high standard by the Italian National trust. (B, D)

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

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

### 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.

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the four-star Hotel Milan Speranza au Lac on Lake Maggiore; three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the four-star Hotel Barchetta Excelsior on Lake Como
- ▶ Two lunches
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ Services of officially accredited guide Kate Williamson as tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

26 Mar - 2 Apr	\$3,530
7 - 14 May	\$3,810
25 Jun - 2 Jul	\$3,810
24 Sep - 1 Oct	\$3,810
Single Supplement	\$695
Lake View Supplement	On request



Villa San Michele

## Gardens of the Neapolitan Riviera

7 DAYS from \$3,110 | TOUR MANAGER: Sue Pomeroy

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 clifftop 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** Arrive in **Naples** and en route to our hotel 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 km 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



Pompeii

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



Reggia di Caserta

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



Villa Cimbrone

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 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 clifftop 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

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 horticulturalist Sue Pomeroy as tour manager & local guides	
DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON	
11 - 17 Apr	\$3,110
Single Supplement	\$275
Optional Excursion: Sorrento Lemon, Olive Oil and Wine tasting tour	On request



Alberobello Trulli Houses

## White Cities of Puglia

8 DAYS from \$2,970 | 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 accommodation, 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



Gallipoli

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



Lecce

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)

Today after breakfast, we embark on a **guided tour**

**Day 6** 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. (B)

**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.



**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**

1 - 8 Oct	\$2,970
Single Supplement	\$555



Villa Barbarigo

## Palladian Villas of Veneto

5 DAYS from \$2,725

Veneto is one of Italy's wealthiest regions, reflected in the extravagance of the grand villas and their stunning gardens. Many of the grand 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 six glorious villas on tour, including the Villa Rotonda, Villa Valmarana and Villa Barbarigo.

**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



Botanical garden in Padua

### 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.



### 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

20 - 24 May	\$2,795
16 - 20 Sep	\$2,725
Single Supplement	\$275



Ninfa

## Rome, Ninfa and Castel Gandolfo

4 DAYS from \$2,095

Open by special arrangement, we are delighted to offer this rare opportunity to visit the ancient and beautiful gardens of Ninfa. Equally rare is the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the Popes as we visit the gardens of Castel Gandolfo, the traditional papal residence just outside Rome.

The romantic flower-covered ruins at Ninfa, just to the south of Rome, 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. Castel Gandolfo is the papal residence to the south of Rome, whose gardens Pope Francis only recently ordered should be opened to the public. The view from the balcony overlooking the Giardino del Belvedere, with its strict geometric parterres, edged by towering cypresses and umbrella pines, is a sight that will stay long in the memory.

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.

We shall also visit Viterbo, a medieval walled town which in its heyday rivalled Rome itself.

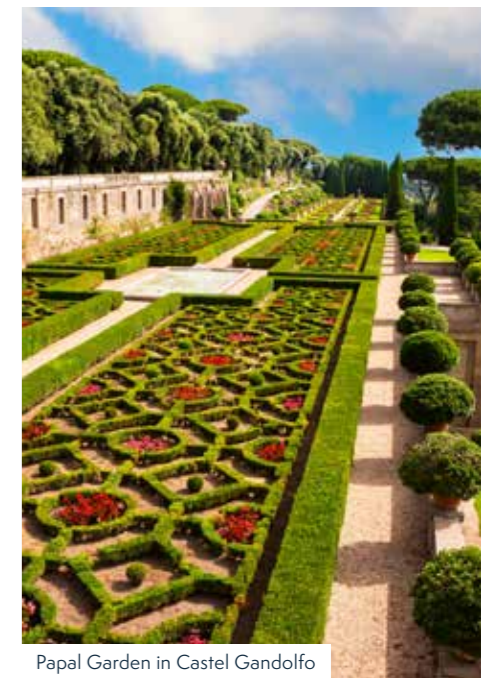
**Day 1** Upon arrival in **Rome** we have a short city tour, including sights such as the **Colosseum, St. Peter's Square and Basilica** and the **Spanish Steps**. (D)

**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



Papal Garden in Castel Gandolfo

### 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

13 - 16 May	\$2,235
2 - 5 Sep	\$2,095
Single Supplement	\$590

# Gardens and Architecture of Andalucía

8 DAYS from \$2,620

Andalucía 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



Alhambra Arch, Granada

### 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	
12 - 19 May	\$2,620
8 - 15 Sep	\$2,620
Single Supplement	\$555

# Gardens and Architecture of Mallorca

6 DAYS from \$2,270

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 Alfabia**, 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



Cathedral La Seu

### 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	
22 - 27 Apr	\$2,550
15 - 20 Oct	\$2,270
Single Supplement	\$555



La Majorelle Garden

# Gardens of Marrakech

5 DAYS from \$2,200

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

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



Gardens of Anima



El Bahia Palace detail



Menara Garden

### 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	
2 - 6 Apr	\$2,200
6 - 10 Oct	\$2,340
Single Supplement	\$560



Flower Festival

## Gardens of Madeira

8 DAYS from \$2,515

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 nicest 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. Our May departure is timed to coincide with Madeira's Flower Festival, when the streets are carpeted in flowers and colourful displays can be seen on every corner. Enjoy grandstand seating located along the main avenues of Funchal to watch this floral spectacle.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Funchal** we transfer to our hotel, where a welcome dinner is included this evening. (D)

**Day 2** Today we visit **Mercado dos Lavradores**, followed by the **Quinta Vigia**, a small garden which is part of the Presidential Palace, and the neighbouring **Santa Catarina Park**. We conclude at a tea house and enjoy some Madeiran specialities. (B)

**Day 3** The **Children's Parade** is a highlight of the Madeira Flower Festival where hundreds of children dressed in colourful costumes parade from Avenida Arriaga to Praça do Município. We later visit the **Madeira Botanical Garden**, an oasis of natural beauty. This lush garden is a veritable treasure trove of plant life from around the world. We then head to the **Quinta da Boa Vista Gardens**, renowned for its exceptional collection of orchids. (B)

**Day 4** Today we visit the **Quinta do Palheiro**, the gardens are most famous for their camellias, though there is something for everyone including a wonderful spread of agapanthus and arum and belladonna lilies in season. We then enjoy a gentle walk on the footpaths alongside the "levadas", which wind their way around the island. On our

May tour we later enjoy the **Flower Festival Parade** from one of the grandstands seats located along the main avenues of Funchal. The parade includes hundreds of participants, floats cross the city to the sound of music, displaying combinations of floral species. (B)

**Day 5** Today is at leisure or 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 **Ponta do Sol**. (B)

**Day 6** We take the 10-minute cable car ride from the centre of Funchal to Monte and visit the wonderful **Monte Palace Gardens**. In the afternoon we go to the famous **Reid's Palace Hotel** for a look around the lush gardens followed by afternoon tea. (B, AT)

**Day 7** Today is at leisure. 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



Botanical Garden Monte



Porto Moniz

### 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

1 - 8 May	\$3,145
24 Nov - 1 Dec*	\$2,515
Single Supplement	\$555

Optional Excursion: Island tour	\$135
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\*itinerary will vary slightly in November - please see website for details.



Claude Monet House

## The Genius of Monet

4 DAYS from \$1,885

**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

### 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

9 - 12 May	\$1,955
18 - 21 Jul	\$1,885
Single Supplement	\$415



Pula

## Croatia's Best-Kept Secret – Gardens and Parks of Kvarner and Istria

8 DAYS from \$3,565 | TOUR MANAGER: Julia Berg

Join us next June as we explore some of the hidden garden gems of Croatia in the company of Julia Berg, an experienced tour manager and the UK's expert on Croatia. This two-centre holiday explores the regions of Kvarner and Istria, visiting beautiful gardens, areas of outstanding natural beauty, flower farms dedicated to the production of natural cosmetics and essential oils together with places of historical importance. Highlights include the terraced American Gardens in Opatija, the island of Košljun home to a Franciscan Monastery, the historically significant city of Pula with its magnificent Roman monuments as well as a diverse array of plant species, including many of which are rare and protected.

**Day 1** On arrival in Pula, Croatia we transfer to our hotel in Opatija. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure to relax or explore. Dinner will be in the hotel this evening. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast, we begin our day at Angiolina Park, the most famous and historic park in Opatija. The park is home to a diverse collection of plants and trees from around the world. Here we can see bamboo and various species of palms, which thrive in Opatija's mild climate, as well as the Japanese Camellia (*Camellia japonica*) which has become a symbol of Opatija. The park's serene atmosphere is perfect for a leisurely walk along the famous 'lungomare' the seaside promenade where you can enjoy the sights and sounds of nature, as well as stunning views of

the Adriatic. Later, we head towards the American Gardens, a lesser-known yet equally enchanting Opatija green space. As we wander through the terraced gardens, we'll be surrounded by an array of Mediterranean and exotic plants. The garden's design includes winding paths, stone stairways and pergolas, all of which lead to breathtaking viewpoints of the sea and town below. (B, D)

**Day 3** We start our day in Krk Town, the island's historic and cultural heart. As we approach we will be greeted by the city's impressive medieval walls and fortifications, which have protected the city for centuries. The main attraction is the Frankopan Castle, a 12th-century fortress built by the powerful Frankopan family. We have some time here to explore before heading to the harbour of



Villa Angiolina

Punat, from where we take a short boat ride to the tiny Island of Košljun, a pretty islet located in the middle of Puntarska Draga Bay. We enjoy a walk through the island's beautiful park and gardens, which are meticulously maintained by the monks and specifically include Mediterranean herbs which the monks use in herbal medicine. The island is home to a diverse array of plants, over 400 species, including many of which are rare and protected. As we stroll through the peaceful grounds, we'll encounter statues and chapels that add to the spiritual ambience. Later, we visit the Immortelle Farm on Krk. Known as the 'everlasting flower', Immortelle is a key element in natural cosmetics and essential oils, celebrated for its anti-aging properties and distinctive fragrance. This visit to a local farm dedicated to cultivating this precious plant explains



Krk Island

the various growing and distilling processes, and we experience the unique environment where immortelle thrives. (B, D)

**Day 4** We leave the Kvarner region and move to Istria where we visit Veliki Brijun, the main island of the Brijuni National Park. Known for its crystal-clear waters, lush vegetation, and historical sites, Brijuni is one of Croatia's most unique destinations and is home to a rich and varied history, with evidence of human habitation dating back to the Neolithic period. To reach the island there is a short boat trip from the pretty port of Fažana. We travel on a small electric train and by foot in places for short periods as cars are not permitted. The island is also home to the oldest Olive Oil tree in Croatia at over 1,000 years old and still producing oil yearly. Plant species include myrtle, marine poppy and flowering ash. After our visit, we continue to our hotel in Pula. (B, D)

**Day 5** This morning we explore the city of Pula. We begin at the Pula Forum, the city's central square, which has been the heart of Pula since Roman times. Today, the Forum is still a bustling hub, lined with cafes, restaurants, and historic buildings. We walk along Sergijevaca Street leading to the Arch of the Sergii, a triumphal arch erected in the 1st century BC before arriving at the Twin Gates and the City Walls. Later we head to the famous Pula amphitheatre, locally called 'arena', the sixth largest Roman amphitheatre in the world. The arena dates back to the 1st century AD and could accommodate over 20,000 spectators. This afternoon, you may wish to return to your hotel for time at leisure or you may wish to join our optional excursion which visits to the village of Vodnjan. Following this, there is also a chance to visit an award-winning, local olive oil mill and enjoy a tutored tasting of various olive oils. (B, D)

**Day 6** We explore Rovinj north of Pula, one of the most picturesque towns on the Istrian Peninsula. We then continue to Histria Aromatica, a beautiful botanical garden and estate near the town of Bale, which grows a wide range of aromatic herbs and plants such as fennel, sage, pine, rosemary, lavender blended for use in natural oils and balms. We begin our visit with a guided tour of the botanical gardens, where we learn about the various aromatic and medicinal plants that are cultivated here. Explore the distillery, where the estate produces essential oils and other natural products. We conclude our visit with a tasting session, where you can sample local products such as herbal liqueurs, olive oils, and honey, all infused with the aromatic plants grown at the estate. (B, D)

**Day 7** Today is free to spend at leisure or join our optional excursion. Spend the day exploring the beautiful Istrian countryside, with a focus on the region's famous frescoes. Our tour begins in the small village of Beram, a hidden gem rich in history and culture. The highlight of Beram is the Church of St. Mary of the Rocks (*Sveta Marija na Škriljinah*), located just outside the village in a serene, wooded area. We continue to Draguč, a picturesque village often referred to as the 'Village of Frescoes', renowned for its wealth of historic churches adorned with beautifully preserved frescoes. With its cobblestone streets, and stone houses with rustic, red-tiled roofs, the village feels like a living museum - It's no wonder that Draguč often serves as a filming location for various historical films. Take a gentle stroll through the narrow streets, visiting several small churches dating back to the 12th and 15th centuries. Next, we take a short drive to Roc; a charming village known for its well-preserved medieval architecture. We visit the small Church of St. Anthony which dates back to the 12th century. Inside, we'll find a series of frescoes from the 14th century, depicting religious

scenes with a distinct medieval style. These frescoes, although modest in scale, are significant for their age and the insight they provide into the religious art of the time. Participate in a short, guided fresco painting class led by a local artist where we learn the basics of fresco technique and how to create a small fresco as a keepsake. (B, D)

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

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

**YOUR TOUR MANAGER**  
**JULIA BERG**  
 Julia Berg, an experienced tour manager and the UK's expert on Croatia.

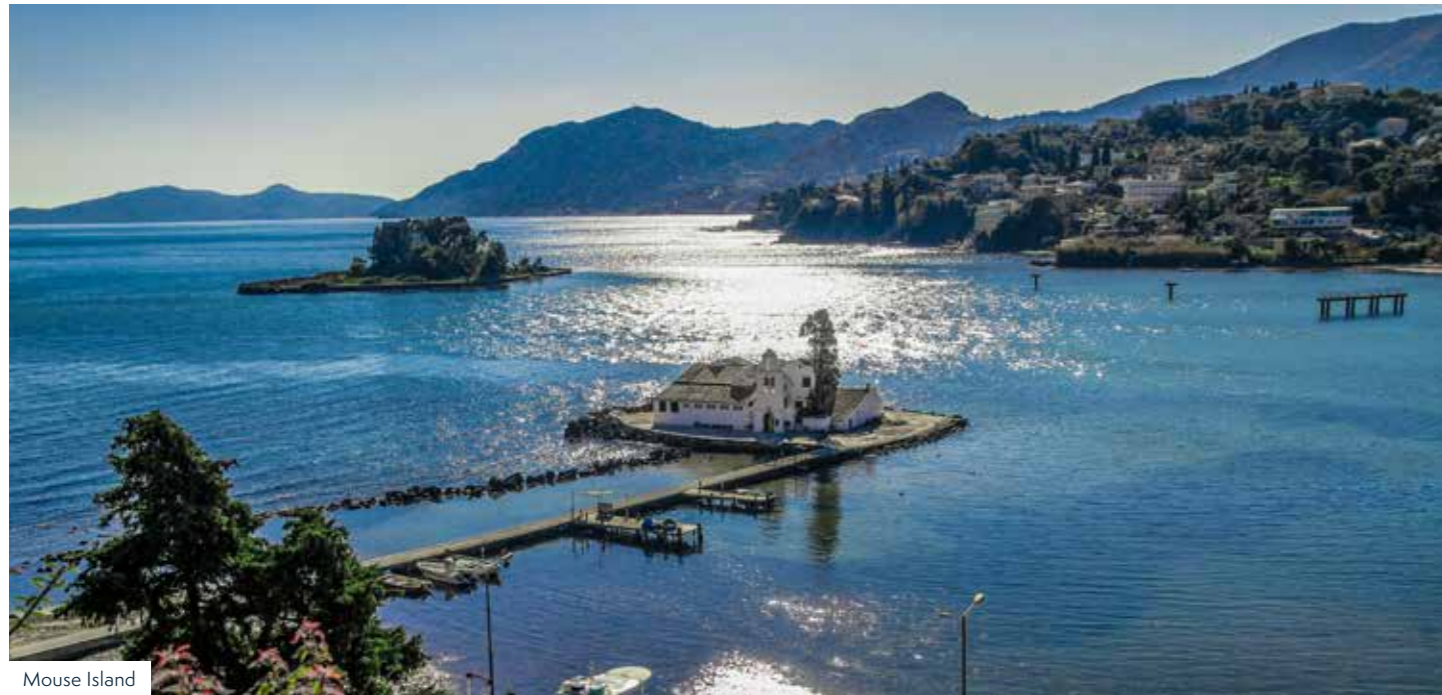


**YOUR TOUR INCLUDES**

- Seven nights' dinner, bed and breakfast: three nights' at the 4-star Hotel Admiral, Opatija (Superior Sea View Room) and four nights at the 4-star Park Plaza Histria, Pula (Standard Park View Room)
- Comfortable coach travel in Croatia
- All visits as outlined in the itinerary
- Services of Julia Berg as tour manager

**DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON**

31 May - 7 Jun	\$3,565
Single Supplement	\$415
Olive oil tasting near Vodnjan	\$50
The Frescoes of Istria	\$195



Mouse Island

## Discover 'The Durrells' Corfu with Lee Durrell

5 DAYS from \$2,220

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.

### 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

7 - 11 Oct	\$2,220
Single Supplement	\$315



Frederiksborg Palace

## Archaeology of Denmark & Sweden

8 DAYS from \$3,985 | 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 arrival in **Stockholm**, 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)



Ales Stenar in Sweden

**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



Skokloster

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER CLIVE WARSOP

Join Clive as he discovers the historical wonders of Denmark and Sweden. One of his most popular tours.



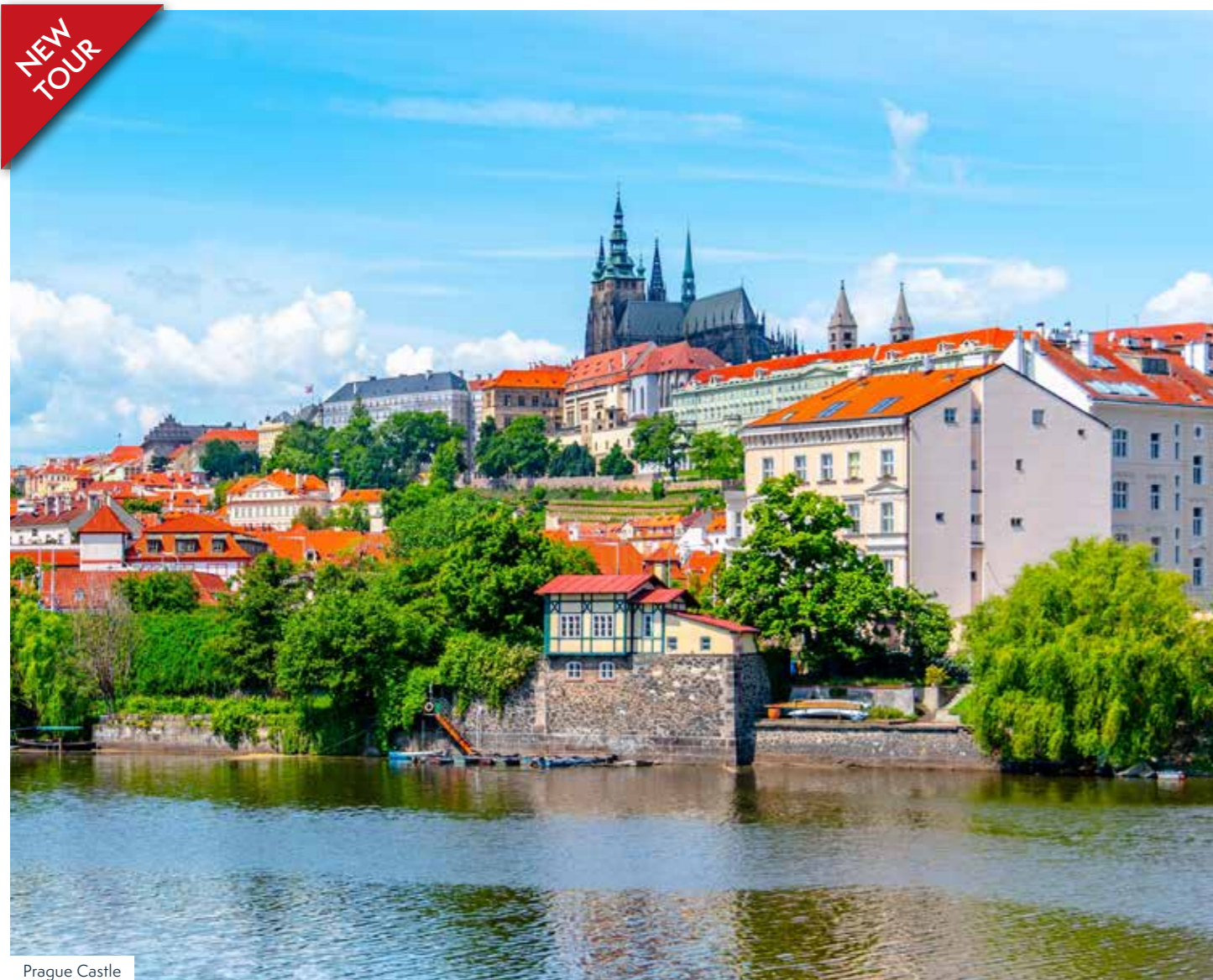
### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ 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

17 - 24 Sep	\$3,985
Single Supplement	\$695





Prague Castle

# History and Culture of the Czech Republic

9 DAYS from \$3,110 | 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



Punkevní cave

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)*



Litomyšl Castle

**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.



**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**

3 - 11 Sep	\$3,110
Single Supplement	\$555



Kato Pafos Archaeological Park

## The Archaeology of Ancient Cyprus

8 DAYS from \$2,515

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 **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



Limassol

### 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.

#### 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

25 Mar - 1 Apr	\$2,615
5 - 12 Nov	\$2,515
Single Supplement	\$455

## Albanian Archaeology

8 DAYS from \$2,585

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 Vloera** 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 **Asclepiion**, 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

#### 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

7 - 14 Oct	\$2,585
Single Supplement	\$414

## Crete Archaeology

8 DAYS from \$2,515

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)

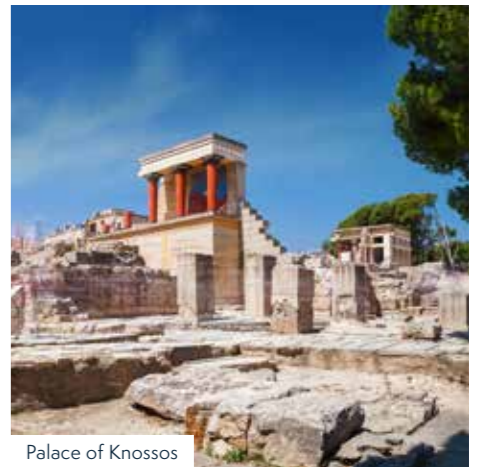
**Day 5** Enjoy a walking tour of **Rethymnon**, which is a mixture of Venetian and Turkish influences. Later, we travel to **Chania** to explore its historic centre and Venetian harbour. (B)

**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

#### 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

22 - 29 Apr	\$2,515
7 - 14 Oct	\$2,655
Single Supplement	\$630

Optional Excursions:	
Arkadi Monastery	\$170
Spinalonga	\$160



Grote Markt of Antwerp

## The Art & Architecture of Antwerp

5 DAYS from \$1,745 | 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. We have time to discover works by numerous Flemish masters. This afternoon

we have a guided tour at Snijders & Rockox Huis which showcase a collection of 16th and 17th century art, including works by Rubens, Jordaens and Van Dyck. (B)

**Day 4** This morning we depart for the Rubens Experience Centre and Gardens which delves into Rubens' life and work. This afternoon we visit the Plantin-Moretus Museum the original residence and workplace of the Plantin and Moretus publishing house. (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



Antwerp Central

### 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	
27 - 31 Mar	\$1,885
18 - 22 Jun	\$1,955
2 - 6 Oct	\$1,745

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT



Hagar Qim

## Malta's Archaeological Heritage

7 DAYS from \$2,305 | 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, and all out there to be discovered on this very special tour.

Arriving in Malta, with its golden limestone-cliff coasts, lucid seas, beautiful laid-back towns and heart-stirring views, you could be forgiven for thinking that you've already seen all there is to see. But take a peek beneath the surface, and no doubt you'll be astounded by the wealth of wonders to be found there.

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, the megaliths of Hagar Qim: these 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 Hagar 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 Hal Saflieni 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



Marsaxlokk

### 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	
6 - 12 May	\$2,585
4 - 10 Nov	\$2,305

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

Seaview Room Supplement	\$105
Optional Excursion: Gozo	\$205

# Worldwide

If you have a desire to explore more of our wonderful world, we are delighted to present you with an exceptional selection of worldwide holidays that cater to diverse interests and dreams. Imagine immersing yourself in the pristine wilderness of Hokkaido, Japan, where you can marvel at snow-capped mountains and vibrant flower fields that change with the seasons.

If you're dreaming of a serene beach getaway, imagine yourself on the warm sands of Barbados, an island paradise renowned for its rich biodiversity. Dive into crystal-clear waters, stroll through verdant rainforests, enjoy the sway of golden palm trees and visit beautiful private gardens, all while discovering UNESCO World Heritage Sites that highlight the island's unique history and culture.

Whichever holiday you choose, we are ready to welcome you on your worldwide adventure!



Butchart Gardens

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Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens



Ashikaga

## Gardens of Honshu and Hokkaido

12 DAYS from \$9,095 | 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 the centre of **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



Sapporo

will continue to our comfortable hotel by **Lake Kussharo**. (B, D)

**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.



### 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

5 - 16 May	\$9,095
Single Supplement	\$1,395

2026 departures now available



Mount Fuji

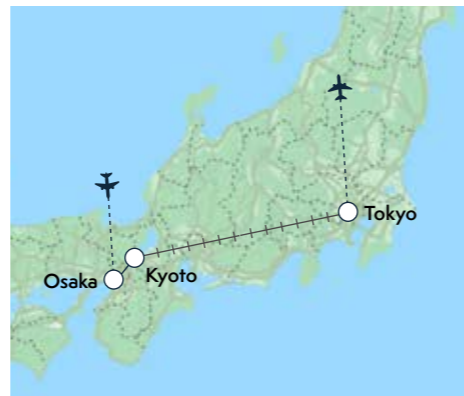
## Seasonal Gardens of Japan

12 DAYS from \$8,465 | 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)



Ginkaku-ji temple

**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 **Kyufurukawa**, 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:** 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.



2026 departures now available

### 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 an expert tour manager (horticulturalist Colin Crosbie in 2025\*) and local guides

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

25 Mar - 5 Apr**	\$8,465
3 - 14 Nov	\$8,605
23 Mar - 3 Apr 2026**	\$8,465

Single Supplement from \$1,750

Optional Excursion: Hiroshima On request  
\*\*Cherry blossom departure



Iguaçu Falls

## Brazil's Gardens and Natural Wonders

15 DAYS from \$13,155 | 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** We 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.



Pantanal



Hyacinth Macaws

The "sítio" - a small farm - boasts a marvellous 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 **Iguaçu 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:** 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.



### 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

19 Oct - 2 Nov	\$13,155
Single Supplement	\$5,455
Optional BBQ dinner at Barra Brasa	On request
Optional Dinner Show	On request



Butchart Gardens

## Gardens and Wildlife of Western Canada

9 DAYS from \$7,205 | 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'Wayá'Sum Gardens spread over 12 hectares of gardens, forest and shoreline.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Vancouver** we 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 Park**. (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'Wayá'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 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:** 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.



### 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	
12 - 20 Sep	\$7,205
Single Supplement	\$1,815
Optional Excursion: Whale watching	\$135

2026 departures now available



Monteverde

## Gardens of Costa Rica - 2026

12 DAYS from \$6,155

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.

**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)

**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, 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)

**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)

**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, D)

**Day 7** After a **boat trip** on **Lake Arenal**, we head south to **Monteverde**. In the afternoon we visit an **orchid garden**. (B, 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. We also visit a **butterfly garden**, where we can expect to see myriad different species of these delicate, colourful creatures. (B, L)

**Day 9** This morning we depart for Manuel Antonio and on arrival the afternoon is at leisure. (B, L)

**Day 10** Explore the **Manuel Antonio National Park**, one of the most beautiful and bio-diverse areas in the world and visit **Villa Vanilla**, where we have a tour of the farm and can see a variety of spices such as vanilla, true Ceylon cinnamon and allspice. (B, L)

**Day 11** This morning we have another visit to an **orchid garden**. We later drive to the central valley to visit the **private garden** of Doña Esther's home in Ciudad Colón. (B, D)

**Day 12** We transfer to San José airport where our tour concludes (B)

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



### FOUR-DAY MANUEL ANTONIO BEACH EXTENSION FROM \$1045pp

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.

2026 departures now available

### 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 Volcano Inn, Arenal; two nights at the 3-star Los Pinos, Monteverde; two nights at the 3-star La Foresta, Quepos (or similar)
- ▶ Five dinners and six lunches
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all visits
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON	
8 - 19 Feb 2026	\$6,155
Single Supplement	\$1,395





Yosemite National Park

## California – In the footsteps of John Muir

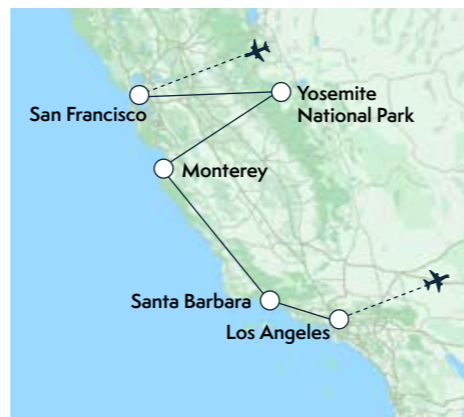
14 DAYS from \$9,095 | TOUR MANAGER: Mike Nelhams

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)



Ruth Bancroft 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. The afternoon is 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 cycads 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)

**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:** 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.



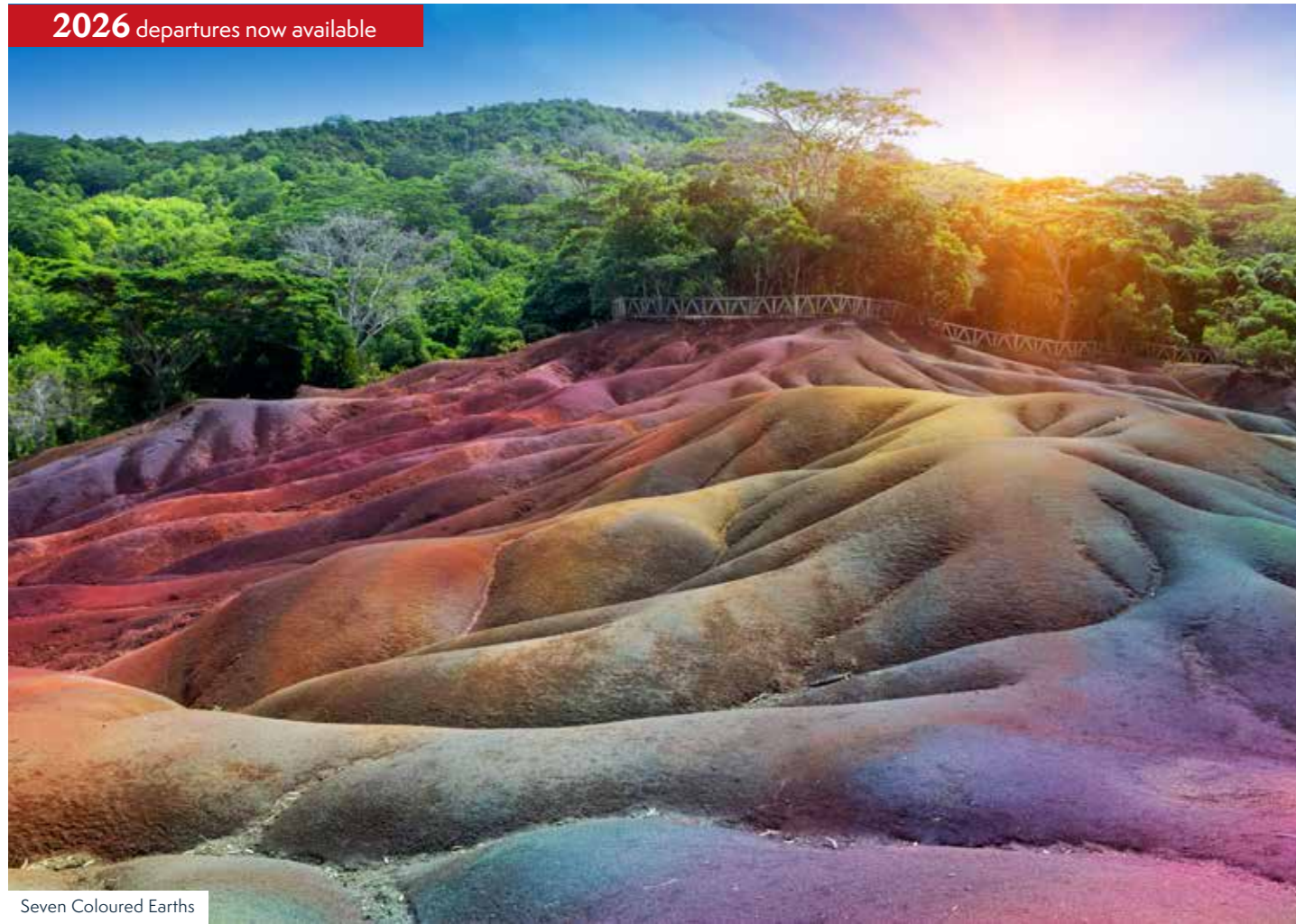
### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ 14 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

23 Sep - 6 Oct	\$9,095
Single Supplement	\$2,655
Optional Excursion: Alcatraz	\$85

2026 departures now available



Seven Coloured Earths

## Gardens of Mauritius

10 DAYS from \$5,105 | 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.

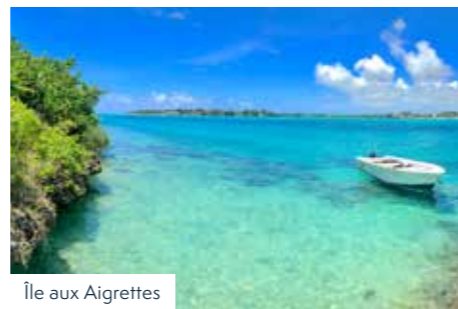


Caudan Waterfront

**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



Île aux Aigrettes

meet 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



Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden

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:** 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.



Pink Pigeon (Nesoenas mayeri)

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER SUE POMEROY

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



2026 departures now available

### 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 an expert tour manager (horticulturalist Sue Pomeroy as tour manager in 2025\*) and local guides

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

27 Mar - 5 Apr*	\$5,105
13 - 22 Nov*	\$5,245
19 - 28 Mar 2026	\$5,245
Single Supplement	\$1,115
Superior Ocean View Supplement	from \$190

2026 departures now available



Hunte's Botanical Garden © Trevor Edwards

## Gardens of Barbados

8 DAYS from \$4,265 | TOUR MANAGER: David Hurrion\*

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)

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



### YOUR TOUR MANAGER DAVID HURRION

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.

2026 departures now available

### 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 an expert tour manager (horticulturalist David Hurrion in 2025\*)

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

3 - 10 Nov*	\$4,265
5 - 12 Feb 2026	\$4,405
Single Supplement	\$1,115
Ocean View Suite	from \$295
Deluxe Ocean View Suite	from \$1,175
Optional Excursion: Catamaran Cruise	\$170



Starlings

## Birdwatching and Wildlife Safaris in Tanzania

10 DAYS from \$6,155 | TOUR MANAGER: Sue Pomeroy

Join us in the wilderness of Tanzania, where in the shadow of Africa's highest mountain we embark on a truly unique wildlife experience. This tour offers not only the chance of wonderful birdwatching but also other exceptional wildlife experiences. We have the chance to glimpse a vast array of endemic and migratory avian species and also witness some of Africa's finest game viewing. The Ngorongoro Conservation Area and the Serengeti National Park are home to over two million large mammals and some 500 species of birds including ostriches, secretary birds, black eagles, lark and kori bustards to name but a few. The Rift Valley Soda Lake Manyara is a haven for wildlife and a key habitat for over 300 bird species, and the Tarangire National Park is home to the highest number of bird species of all of Tanzania's national parks.

**Day 1** Upon arrival, we transfer to **Arusha** and have lunch at our lodge. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. (L, D)

**Day 2** Following breakfast, we drive to **Tarangire National Park**, the sixth largest national park in Tanzania spanning 2,600 square kms and home to a staggering 550 different species of birds. We may also see some of the park's other residents, including buffalo, lion, antelope and a large herd of elephants. (B, L, D)

**Day 3** We have another full day exploring the **Tarangire National Park** and the abundance of wildlife it has to offer. (B, L, D)

**Day 4** This morning we travel to **Lake Manyara National Park**. The shores are fringed with vast flocks of pink flamingos who head to the shallow shorelines of the lake for feeding, along with numerous other species. (B, L, D)

**Day 5** A long but rewarding day as we make our way from Lake Manyara to the **Serengeti National Park**. Spanning over 30,000 square kilometres the park is home to an impressive number of animals. Bird species include the wonderful Lilac-breasted Roller and three endangered Tanzanian species: Grey-rumped Spurfowl, Fischer's Lovebird and the Rufous-tailed Weaver. (B, L, D)

**Day 6** We have a full day's game drive in the **Serengeti National Park** today where we may have the chance to see some other interesting birdlife such as ostrich, secretary bird, black eagle and kori bustard to name but a few. There are also frequent sightings of lion, cheetah and leopard in the area. (B, L, D)

**Day 7** Journey to the **Ngorongoro Conservation Area** and spend the afternoon at leisure. (B, L, D)

**Day 8** Descend into the **Ngorongoro Crater**, the world's largest caldera. The crater is a paradise for birdwatchers with annual migratory birds from Europe and Asia, grassland birds, ground-nesting birds, tree nesting birds, water birds and birds of prey. (B, L, D)

**Day 9** After breakfast we drive back towards **Arusha**. (B, D)

**Day 10** Today we head to the airport where our tour concludes.. (B)

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



Lion in Serengeti National Park

### YOUR TOUR MANAGER SUE POMEROY

Sue is looking forward returning to Kenya in search of native birds and endemic flora.



### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Eight nights accommodation on a full board basis: one night at Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, two nights at the Tarangire Safari Lodge, one night at the Lake Manyara Serena, two nights at the Serengeti Serena and two nights at the Ngorongoro Serena (hotels subject to change)
- ▶ One night dinner room only in Arusha at a four-star hotel.
- ▶ Transport in 4x4 safari land cruiser with the services of an English-speaking guide
- ▶ Entry fees to all parks and reserves included in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of Sue Pomeroy as tour manager
- ▶ Field Guide to Birds of East Africa

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

7 - 16 May	\$6,155
Single Supplement	\$4,050

2026 departures now available



Giza Pyramids

## Gardens and Temples of Ancient Egypt

12 DAYS from \$6,225

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 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. A highlight in Cairo is a visit to the newly opened Grand Egyptian Museum which displays never seen before artefacts and is now one of the largest museums in the world. We will also see the Step Pyramid, the Temple of Luxor and Karnak Temple, the Valley of the Kings, and Edfu Temple, one of the best-preserved shrines in Egypt. We also enjoy four nights aboard a Nile river cruise ship.

**Day 1** On arrival in **Cairo** we transfer to our hotel. (D)

**Day 2** After breakfast we begin our full day of discovery in the company of a local expert Egyptologist visiting Pharaonic Cairo, **Saqqara**, arguably the best-preserved ancient burial-ground in Egypt. This is also the site of **The Step Pyramid**, the first proper pyramid built for King Zoser in the 27th-century BC by the architect Imhotep. Lunch will be served at a local restaurant. Later we discover **The Great Pyramids & Sphinx of Giza**. Rising from the desert the three Pyramids erected by King Cheops and guarded by the mysterious Sphinx are considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World and one of the most important sites in Egypt. (B, L, D)

**Day 3** Today we visit the newly opened **Grand Egyptian Museum** which sits on the edge of the Giza plateau. The Museum boasts over 750,000 sqm in floor size, 12 exhibition halls and thousands upon thousands of artefacts and is now one of the largest museums in the world. **The Citadel of Salah Al-Din** was built between 1176-1182 AD and this Citadel fortress provides a panoramic view of Cairo from the Moqattam Hills. We then visit the **Al-Orman Garden** – a stunning botanical garden which dates from 1875 and the reign of Khedive Ismail Pasha. Today, the garden contains a herbarium building, a rock garden, a rose garden, cactus gardens, and probably the most notable feature, the lotus pond. Later we visit **Khan El-Khalili bazaar** where treasures include spices, perfumes, gold and silver, leatherwork, glass, ceramics and Egyptian cotton. (B, L, D)



Grand Egyptian Museum

**Day 4** Today we transfer to Cairo airport and fly to **Luxor**. On arrival, we head to the **Sofitel Winter Palace Luxor** for a unique tour. The hotel has a history of hosting royalty and celebrities throughout the years, the interiors feature grand staircases, high ceilings and lounge areas that are appointed with antique furniture and beautiful flower arrangements. Relax and socialise as you enjoy French cuisine with the latest fusion dishes from around the world. We enjoy lunch at the hotel before transferring to our hotel for the evening. (B, L, D)

**Day 5** This morning we enjoy a private half-day tour in Luxor on the **East Bank**. One of the first stops must be the **Temple of Luxor** built by Amenophis III and which was originally connected to the **Karnak Temple** via a long stone processional street called a dromos. The well-preserved dromos was built by Nectanebo I and was originally lined on either side by sphinxes. We later transfer to our 5-star river vessel and enjoy lunch on board. The afternoon is free to relax. Dinner tonight is followed by entertainment. (B, L, D)



Luxor

**Day 6** A full day visiting the **West Bank** today. Here we will discover a variety of tombs starting with **The Valley of the Kings** which has tombs from the 18th and 19th Dynasties. Some tombs can still be seen as we head towards the **Temple of Seti I**. The road winds westward until reaching the **Valley of Asasif**. These are 25th and 26th Dynasty tombs and at the foot of a cliff named **Deir el-Bahri** is a spectacular complex of temples. The **Temples of Mentuhotep I, Hatshepsut and Thutmose II** here must be seen. We return to our river vessel for lunch, before cruising overnight to Esna. (B, L, D)

**Day 7** We begin with a tour of **Edfu Temple** - one of the best-preserved shrines in Egypt. The temple was built in the Ptolemaic Kingdom between 237 and 57 BC. The inscriptions on its walls provide important information on language, myth and religion during the Hellenistic period in Egypt. After lunch onboard we visit **Kom-Ombo Temple**. This temple is dedicated to two gods, Sobek the crocodile god and Haroeris - the falcon god Horus. (B, L, D)

**Day 8** Today we cruise to Aswan where we begin with a private tour visiting the **High Dam**. It contains 43 million cubic metres of material and 11,000 cubic metres per second of water can pass through. Abandoned thousands of years ago in the quarries of Aswan, the **Unfinished Obelisk** is a granite would-be monument that was never finished. It is one of the most important archaeological finds in Egypt for the insight it has provided into ancient stonemasonry methods. We then proceed to visit **Philae Temple** on the tiny island of Philae, a mere 450 metres long and less than 150 metres wide. It was famed for its beauty

and was known as the 'Pearl of Egypt'. Plants and palm trees grew from the fertile deposits that had collected in the crevices of the granite bedrock. We return to our river vessel and after lunch take a **Felucca** around Aswan Islands then visit the Botanical gardens.

Covering 6.8 hectares, the **Aswan Botanical Garden** is home to thousands of birds and many exotic plants imported from many parts of the world, offering a beautiful and unique escape from the city. Dinner on board tonight is followed by a Nubian Show. (B, L, D)

**Day 9** This morning we have the opportunity of an optional excursion to **Abu Simbel** by air, a temple built by Ramesses II in ancient Nubia, where he wished to demonstrate his power and his divine nature. Four colossal (20 metres high) statues of him sit in pairs flanking the entrance.

We continue to our hotel in Aswan and later enjoy a late afternoon tea at the historic **Old Cataract Hotel** where Agatha Christie wrote *Death on the Nile*. Delight in an authentic **High Tea** experience and revel in the stunning views overlooking the Nile and Elephantine Island. We return to our hotel for dinner. (B, AT, D)

**Day 10** Free time to relax before we transfer to Aswan airport for our flight to Cairo where we transfer to our hotel. (B, D)

**Day 11** Today we head to **Alexandria** for a full but most enjoyable day exploring the **Catacombs of Kom El-Shouqafa** and the **Roman Amphitheatre**. Lunch will be served at a local restaurant. Afterwards we visit **Montazah Palace Gardens** which are located at the eastern edge of

Alexandria on the north coast of Egypt. The complex, which cover 360 acres in size, is a beautiful property that overlooks Al Montaza and encompasses palm-tree lined walkways, several greenhouses and semi-private beach. We return to Cairo for dinner at our hotel. (B, L, D)

**Day 12** Transfer to the airport where our tour concludes. (B)

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

2026 departures now available

### 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

6 - 17 Nov	\$6,365
5 - 16 Feb 2026	\$6,225
Single Supplement	from \$1,815
Optional Excursion: Abu Simbel	from \$665



Namaqualand

## Spring Flowers of Namaqualand

13 DAYS from \$6,435 | 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 to drop off our luggage. We will then enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before departing 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**. **Boulder's Beach** is 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)



Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens



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 **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:** 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.



### 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

30 Aug - 11 Sep	\$6,435
Single Supplement	\$695
Optional Excursions:	
Whale watching	\$125
Robben Island	\$55

# Your 2025 Calendar



## March

Seasonal Gardens of Japan  
25 Mar - 5 Apr  
The Archeology of Ancient Cyprus  
25 Mar - 1 Apr  
Gardens of Mauritius  
27 Mar - 5 Apr  
Villas and Gardens of the Italian Lakes  
26 Mar - 2 Apr  
Art and Architecture of Antwerp  
27 - 31 Mar  
The Architecture of Glasgow and Edinburgh  
28 - 31 Mar

## April

Great Gardens of Cornwall in the company of Mike Nelhams  
1 - 5 Apr  
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  
An Archaeologist's View of Orkney & Shetland  
14 - 19 Apr  
Dutch Bulbfields in Spring  
14 - 18 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  
Crete Archaeology  
22 - 29 Apr  
Gardens and Architecture of Mallorca  
22 - 27 Apr  
A Classic Scottish Steam Break  
24 - 27 Apr

## May

Gardens of Madeira  
1 - 8 May  
Gardens of Honshu and Hokkaido  
5 - 16 May  
Orkney & Shetland by Air  
5 - 9 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

Birdwatching and Wildlife Safaris in Tanzania  
7 - 16 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  
Gardens & Architecture of Andalucia  
12 - 19 May  
Highlights of Orkney and Shetland  
12 - 17 May  
Gardens and Villas of Sicily  
13 - 20 May  
Rome, Ninfa and Castel Gandolfo  
13 - 16 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  
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 Leicestershire and Lincolnshire  
30 May - 2 Jun  
Highgrove and the Cotswolds  
30 May - 2 Jun

## June

Gardens of Dumfries & Galloway  
1 - 4 Jun  
Stately Homes and Seaside Castles of Norfolk  
1 - 5 Jun  
Castles, Palaces and Abbeys of Eastern Scotland  
3 - 6 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 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

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

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

24 - 31 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

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

Scotland's Northern Edge

19 - 23 Aug

Highlights of Orkney and Shetland

20 - 25 Aug

A Classic Scottish Steam Break

21 - 24 Aug

An Archaeologist's View of Orkney & Shetland

25 - 30 Aug

### Scenic Scottish Railways

27 - 30 Aug

Spring Flowers of Namaqualand

30 Aug - 11 Sep

The Irish Rover

30 Aug - 6 Sep

## September

Ancient Stones of the Outer Hebrides

2 - 6 Sep

Gardens of Jersey

3 - 7 Sep

Highlights of Orkney & Shetland

3 - 8 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 Andalucía

8 - 15 Sep

Gardens of Guernsey & Sark

12 - 16 Sep

Gardens and Wildlife of Western Canada

12 - 20 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 - 6 Oct

Scenic Scottish Railways

24 - 27 Sep

Highlights of Orkney and Shetland

29 Sep - 4 Oct

## October

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

Gardens of Marrakech

6 - 10 Oct

Albinian Archaeology

7 - 14 Oct

Discover the Durrell's Corfu with Lee Durrell

7 - 11 Oct

Scotland's Extreme North West

7 - 10 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

Gardens and Architecture of Mallorca

15 - 20 Oct

Scenic Scottish Railways

15 - 18 Oct

Brazil's Gardens and Natural Wonders

19 Oct - 2 Nov

Scotland's Extreme North West

21 - 24 Oct

Autumn Tints of Dumfries and Galloway

26 - 29 Oct

## November

Seasonal Gardens of Japan

3 - 14 Nov

Gardens of Barbados

3 - 10 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 Mauritius

13 - 22 Nov

Gardens of Madeira

24 Nov - 1 Dec

## February 2026

Gardens of Barbados

5 - 12 Feb

Gardens and Temples of Ancient Egypt

5 - 16 Feb

Gardens of Costa Rica

8 - 19 Feb

Gardens of the French Riviera and the Menton Lemon Festival

12 - 19 Feb

## March 2026

Gardens of Mauritius

19 - 28 Mar

Seasonal Gardens of Japan

23 Mar - 3 Apr







you will be responsible for meeting any claims (including legal costs) subsequently made against us as a result of your actions together with all costs we incur in pursuing any claim against you.

We cannot be held responsible for the actions or behaviour of other guests or individuals who have no connection with your booking arrangements or with us.

### 15. Our Responsibilities

(1) We will accept responsibility for the arrangements we agree to provide or arrange for you as an "organiser" under the Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018, as set out below and as such, we are responsible for the proper provision of the travel services specifically included in your package, as set out in your confirmation invoice and the information we provided to you regarding the services prior to booking. Please note that we shall not be responsible for any additional services provided to you, whether provided by the travel service providers or otherwise, which are not set out in your confirmation invoice and the information we provided to you regarding the services prior to booking.

(2) We will not be responsible or pay you compensation for any personal injury or death unless you are able to prove that it was caused by our negligence or the negligence of our suppliers.

(3) We will not be responsible or pay you compensation for any injury, illness, death, loss, damage, expense, cost or other claim of any description if it results from:

(a) the acts and/or omissions of the person affected; or  
(b) the acts and/or omissions of a third party unconnected with the provision of the services contracted for and which were unforeseeable or unavoidable; or

(c) Events Beyond Our Control (as defined in condition 10).

(4) **We limit the amount of compensation we may have to pay you if we are found liable under this clause:**

(a) **loss of and/or damage to any luggage or personal possessions and money:** the maximum amount we will have to pay you in respect of these claims is an amount equivalent to the excess on your insurance policy which applies to this type of loss per person in total because you are required to have adequate insurance in place to cover any losses of this kind.

(b) **Claims not falling under (a) above and which don't involve injury, illness or death:** the maximum amount we will have to pay you in respect of these claims is up to three times the price paid by or on behalf of the person(s) affected in total. This maximum amount will only be payable where everything has gone wrong and you or your party has not received any benefit at all from your booking.

(c) Claims in respect of international travel by air, sea and rail, or any stay in a hotel:

i) The extent of our liability will in all cases be limited as if we were carriers under the appropriate Conventions, which include The Warsaw/ Montreal Convention (international travel by air); The Athens Convention (with respect to sea travel); The Berne/Cotif Convention (with respect to rail travel) and The Paris Convention (with respect to hotel arrangements). You can ask for copies of these Conventions from our offices. Please contact us. In addition, you agree that the operating carrier or transport company's own 'Conditions of Carriage' will apply to you on that journey. When arranging transportation for you, we rely on the terms and conditions contained within these international conventions and those 'Conditions of Carriage'. You acknowledge that all of the terms and conditions contained in those 'Conditions of Carriage' form part of your contract with us, as well as with the transport company and that those 'Conditions of Carriage' shall be deemed to be included by reference into this contract.

ii) In any circumstances in which a carrier is liable to you by virtue of EC 261/2004 (denied boarding and flight disruption), any liability we may have to you under our contract with you, arising out of the same facts, is limited to the remedies provided under the Regulation as if (for this purpose only) we were a carrier.

iii) When making any payment, we are entitled to deduct any money which you have received or are entitled to receive from the transport provider or hotelier for the complaint or claim in question.

(5) Subject to these Booking Conditions, if we or our suppliers negligently perform or arrange those services set out in the confirmation invoice and the information we provided to you regarding the services prior to booking and we don't remedy or resolve your complaint within a reasonable period of time, and this has affected the enjoyment of your holiday you may be entitled to an appropriate price reduction or compensation or both. **You must inform us without undue delay of any failure to perform or improper performance of the travel services included in this package.** The level of any such price reduction or compensation in respect of any claim for damages or compensation whatsoever will be calculated taking into consideration all relevant factors such as but not limited to: following the complaints procedure as described in these Booking Conditions and the extent to which ours or our employees' or suppliers' negligence affected the overall enjoyment of your holiday. Please note that it is your responsibility to show that we or our supplier(s) have been negligent if you wish to make a claim against us.

(6) It is a condition of our acceptance of liability under this condition that you notify any claim to us and our supplier(s) strictly in accordance with the complaints procedure set out in these conditions.

(7) Where any payment is made, the person(s) receiving it (and their parent or guardian if under 18 years) must also assign to us or our insurers any rights they may have to pursue any third party and must provide ourselves and our insurers with all assistance we may reasonably require.

(8) Please note, we cannot accept any liability for any damage, loss or expense or other sum(s) of any description:

(a) 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;

(b) relate to any business;

(c) indirect or consequential loss of any kind.

(9) We will not accept responsibility for services or facilities which do not form part of our agreement or where they are not advertised in our brochure. For example any excursion you book whilst away, or any service or facility which your hotel or any other supplier agrees to provide for you.

(10) Where it is impossible for you to return to your departure point as per the agreed return date of your holiday, due to "unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances", we shall provide you with any necessary accommodation (where possible, of a comparable standard) for a period not exceeding three nights per person. Please note that the 3 night cap does not apply to persons with reduced mobility, pregnant women or unaccompanied minors, nor to persons needing specific medical assistance, provided we have been notified of these particular needs at least 48 hours before the start of your holiday. For the purposes of this clause, "unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances" may include warfare, acts of terrorism, significant risks to human health such as the outbreak of serious disease at the travel destination or natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes or weather conditions which make it impossible to travel safely back to your departure point.

### 16. Excursions

Excursions or other tours that you may choose to book or pay for whilst you are on holiday are not part of your contracted arrangements with us. For any excursion or other tour that you book, your contract will be with the operator of the excursion or tour and not with us. We are not responsible for the provision of the excursion or tour or for anything that happens during the course of its provision by the operator.

### 17. Insolvency Protection

We provide financial security for flight-inclusive (packages and ATOL protected flights) by way of our Air Travel Organiser's Licence number 4498, issued by the Civil Aviation Authority, Gatwick Airport South, West Sussex, RH6 0YR, UK, telephone 0333 103 6350, email: claims@caa.co.uk.

When you buy an ATOL protected product 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. For further information, visit the ATOL website at [www.atol.org.uk](http://www.atol.org.uk). The price of our flight inclusive arrangements includes the amount of £2.50 per person as part of the ATOL Protection Contribution (APC) we pay to the CAA. This charge is included

in our advertised prices. Not all holiday or travel services offered and sold by us will be protected by the ATOL Scheme. ATOL protection extends primarily to customers who book and pay in the United Kingdom.

We, or the suppliers identified on your ATOL Certificate, will provide you with the services listed on the ATOL Certificate (or a suitable alternative). In some cases, where neither we nor the supplier are able to do so for reasons of insolvency, an alternative ATOL holder may provide you with the services you have bought (at no extra cost to you). You agree to accept that in those circumstances the alternative ATOL holder will perform those obligations and you agree to pay any money outstanding to be paid by you under your contract to that alternative ATOL holder. However, you also agree that in some cases it will not be possible to appoint an alternative ATOL holder, in which case you will be entitled to make a claim under the ATOL Scheme (or your credit card issuer where applicable).

If we, or the suppliers identified on your ATOL certificate, are unable to provide the services listed (or a suitable alternative, through an alternative ATOL holder or otherwise) for reasons of insolvency, the Trustees of the Air Travel Trust may make a payment to (or confer a benefit on) you under the ATOL scheme. You agree that in return for such a payment or benefit you assign absolutely to those Trustees any claims which you have or may have arising out of or relating to the non-provision of the services, including any claim against us, the travel agent (or your credit card issuer where applicable). You also agree that any such claims may be re-assigned to another body, if that other body has paid sums you have claimed under the ATOL scheme.

The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT) provides financial protection for our non-flight inclusive tours under The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 for Brightwater Holidays Limited, member number 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 Limited.

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>

You can find out more about ABTOT here: <https://www.abtot.com/>

If you book arrangements other than package holidays from us, your monies will not be financially protected. Please ask us for further details.

### 18. Entry, Passport, Visa & Immigration Requirements, Safety & Health Formalities

We can only provide general information regarding entry, passport, visa, immigration requirements and safety and health formalities applicable to your package itinerary. It is your responsibility to check such requirements (in good time before departure), in order to make your decisions to fulfil such requirements regarding your destination and/or the country(ies) through which you may be transiting through.

Such information which you may need to check includes (but is not limited to) passport requirements including how valid your passport must be after return date, whether your passport must be machine readable or which visas/waivers may be required for entry such as ESTA for USA travel, ETIAS for EU travel and or the UK ETA if you are entering and exiting the United Kingdom.

You must check requirements for your own specific circumstances with the relevant bodies as applicable. We have provided a few useful resources below, though it is your responsibility to check and see if such a body would be relevant to yourself.

- the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office ("FCDO", <https://www.gov.uk/travelaware>) (applicable to UK residents);
- UK Passport Office (0870 5210410 or <https://www.gov.uk/browse/citizenship>).
- Embassies, High Commission and/or Consulates;
- own doctor.

For UK residents booking European travel, you should obtain a UK Global Health Insurance Card (UK GHIC) prior to departure unless you are able to rely upon an existing European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). For travel to Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, UK GHIC and EHIC can not be used for medical treatment. Passengers to these destinations should obtain comprehensive medical insurance prior to departure, including cover for emergency medical treatment and associated costs.

We do not accept any responsibility if you cannot travel, or incur any other loss because you have not complied with any entry, passport, visa, immigration requirements or health formalities. You agree to reimburse us in relation to any fines or other losses which we incur as a result of your failure to comply with any entry passport, visa, immigration requirements or health formalities.

### EES – European Entry and Exit system

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 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.

### 19. Conditions of Suppliers

Many of the services which make up your holiday are provided by independent suppliers. Those suppliers provide these services in accordance with their own terms and conditions which will form part of your contract with us. Some of these terms and conditions may limit or exclude the supplier's liability to you, usually in accordance with applicable International Conventions. Copies of the relevant parts of these terms and conditions are available on request from us or the supplier concerned.

### 20. Prompt Assistance

If, whilst you are on holiday, you find yourself in difficulty for any reason, we will offer you such prompt assistance as is appropriate in the circumstances. In particular, we will provide you with appropriate information on health services, local authorities and consular assistance, and assistance with distance communications and finding alternative travel arrangements. Where you require assistance which is not owing to any failure by us, our employees or sub-contractors we will not be liable for the costs of any alternative travel arrangements or other such assistance you require. Any supplier, airline or other transport supplier may however pay for or provide refreshments and/or appropriate accommodation and you should make a claim directly to them. Subject to the other terms of these Booking Conditions, we will not be liable for any costs, fees or charges you incur in the above circumstances, if you fail to obtain our prior authorisation before making your own travel arrangements. Furthermore, we reserve the right to charge you a fee for our assistance in the event that the difficulty is caused intentionally by you or a member of your party, or otherwise through your or your party's negligence.

### 21. Delays, Missed Transport Arrangements & Other Travel Information

If you or any member of your party misses your flight or other transport arrangement, it is cancelled or you are subject to

a delay of over 3 hours for any reason, you must contact our head office and the airline or other transport supplier concerned immediately.

Under UK Law, you have rights in some circumstances to refunds and/or compensation from the airline in cases of denied boarding, cancellation or delay to flights. Full details of these rights will be publicised at UK airports and will also be available from airlines. If the airline does not comply with these rules you should complain to the Civil Aviation Authority at [www.caa.co.uk/passengers](http://www.caa.co.uk/passengers). Reimbursement in such cases is the responsibility of the airline and will not automatically entitle you to a refund of your holiday price from us. If, for any reason, you do not claim against the airline and make a claim for compensation from us, you must, at the time of payment of any compensation to you, make a complete assignment to us of the rights you have against the airline in relation to the claim that gives rise to that compensation payment. A delay or cancellation to your flight does not automatically entitle you to cancel any other arrangements even where those arrangements have been made in conjunction with your flight.

We cannot accept liability for any delay which is due to any of the reasons set out in condition 10 of these Booking Conditions (which includes the behaviour of any passenger(s) on any flight who, for example, fails to check in or board on time).

The carrier(s), flight timings and types of aircraft shown in this brochure or on our website and detailed on your confirmation invoice are for guidance only and are subject to alteration and confirmation. We shall inform you of the identity of the actual carrier(s) as soon as we become aware of it. The latest flight timings will be shown on your tickets which will be despatched to you approximately two weeks before departure. You should check your tickets very carefully immediately on receipt to ensure you have the correct flight times. If flight times change after tickets have been despatched we will contact you as soon as we can to let you know.

Please note the existence of a "UK Air Safety list" (available for inspection at <https://www.caa.co.uk/commercial-industry/airlines/licensing/requirements-and-guidance/third-country-operator-certificates/>) detailing air carriers that are subject to an operating ban within the UK.

This website/brochure is our responsibility, as your tour operator. It is not issued on behalf of, and does not commit the airlines mentioned herein or any airline whose services are used in the course of your travel arrangements.

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.

Some of our tours involve transfers or transport between, for instance, mainland and an island. Where ferries, and similar, are disrupted you may need to engage your travel insurance dependent upon the situation.

### 22. Advance Passenger Information

A number of Governments are introducing new requirements for air carriers to provide personal information about all travellers on their aircraft to the Authorities before the aircraft leaves the UK. The data will be collected either at the airport when you check in or in some circumstances when, or after you make your booking. Accordingly, you are advised to allow extra time to check in for your flight. Where we collect this data, we will treat it in accordance with our privacy policy.

### 23. 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.**




*"Excellent! Loads of interesting places visited and of course the experience of seeing Up Helly Aa. Very well organised thanks to Alastair when plans had to change due to the weather."*

Guest - January 2024

## Up Helly Aa - Shetland's Festival of Fire - 2026

 5 DAYS from \$1,815pp

 **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.



Vikings march the streets of Lerwick



Vikings march the streets of Lerwick

### YOUR TOUR INCLUDES

- ▶ Four nights' dinner, bed and full breakfast at the Scalloway Hotel
- ▶ Two nights' accommodation in two-berth cabins on Serco Northlink Ferries Hrossey or Hjalaland with dinner and full breakfast
- ▶ Visits include: Scalloway, Jarlshof and Sumburgh Head, Yell and Unst, Foula, Sandness and a full day in Lerwick at the Up Helly Aa festival
- ▶ Comfortable coach travel and all ferry crossings
- ▶ Services of an expert tour manager

### DEPARTURES & PRICES PER PERSON

25 - 29 Jan 2026	\$1,815
Single Supplement	On request
Outside cabin supplement	\$80
Shetland Hotel supplement	On request