

## UK Castles & Gardens - 06 nights / 07 days

**07 DAYS 06 NIGHTS – OXFORD & COTSWOLDS ADD-ON**

**07 DAYS 06 NIGHTS – KENT & SUSSEX ADD-ON**

**These programmes are designed for a leisurely paced look at the Castles & Gardens of southern England.**

**No day should involve more than three hours total time spent on board the coach.**

**Each programme is modular and can be taken as a stand-alone trip or combined with the others.**

**There are no lunches or dinners included but these can be added as desired.**

**Please add GBP £ 19 per person for a typical two course British pub lunch with 1 drink included**

**Please add GBP £ 32 per person for a good three course restaurant dinner (Drinks not included)**

**If you feel the need to shorten any of the modules this can easily be done.**

**Just let us know which day(s) you wish to take out and we can make them into 5/4/3 nights.**

### **Day 1 – ENROUTE LONDON**

Upon arrival at London meet and greet by your tour manager and transfer to your London hotel for check-in  
Hotel rooms are normally only available from 3pm onwards

If flight arrival is 12.30pm or later then transfer straight to the London hotel for check-in.

If flight arrival is 12 Noon or earlier then a visit will be made to Chiswick House & Gardens first.

After check-in the afternoon is free at leisure to freshen-up, rest or take a local walk.

Chiswick House is among the most glorious examples of 18th-century British architecture and makes a fascinating day out in West London. The third Earl of Burlington, who designed this noble Roman-style Palladian villa, drew inspiration from his Grand Tours of Italy.

The Gardens - birthplace of the English Landscape Movement - are open following a major restoration which has revealed the original vistas and repaired the statues and garden buildings.

Explore classical landscapes, sweeping vistas, fragrant formal gardens and a woodland wilderness.

Overnight Stay in London



## Day 2 – FULL DAY ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS & LONDON WETLANDS CENTRE

Board the coach and depart for the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew

Kew Gardens is a UNESCO World Heritage site spread over 326 acres in south-west London. The gardens employ 1,100 people and runs on an annual budget of £ 66 million. Depart Kew and drive the short distance (3.5 miles, 5.6km) to the London Wetlands Centre. London Wetlands is an urban oasis in the city centre, filled with lakes, ponds and gardens. A haven of tranquility for both wildlife and people, it is the perfect place to walk away an afternoon.

Overnight Stay in London

**Meals: Breakfast**



## Day 3 – FULL DAY RHS GARDENS AT WISLEY AND HAMPTON COURT PALACE & GARDENS

Board the coach and depart for the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens at Wisley

RHS Wisley ranks as one of the world's great gardens, packed with horticultural inspiration at every turn.

Depart Wisley and drive the short distance (10.5 miles, 17km) to Hampton Court Palace & Gardens

Hampton Court, Henry VIII's grand palace on the Thames takes you back to the glory days of the Tudor period. Your ticket includes the visit to the Palace and of course also the magnificent gardens. 60 acres of formal gardens, 750 acres of historic parkland, all set along the banks of the River Thames. Highlights include the world's oldest maze, the Great Grape Vine, the East Front Gardens and the Privy Garden.

Overnight Stay in London

**Meals: Breakfast**





#### Day 4 – FULL DAY GARDEN MUSEUM AND ELTHAM PALACE & GARDENS

The history behind the Garden Museum dates from the medieval era to the present day. The Garden Museum was founded by Rosemary and John Nicholson in 1977 in order to rescue the abandoned church of St Mary's at Lambeth, which was due for demolition. The church is the burial place of John Tradescant (c1570 – 1638), the first great gardener and plant-hunter in British history. His magnificent and enigmatic tomb is the centrepiece of the Sackler Garden, designed to reflect Tradescant's life and spirit.

Depart the Garden Museum and drive the short distance (10 miles, 16km) to Eltham Palace & Gardens

Once a favoured medieval palace and then a Tudor royal residence, Eltham Palace was transformed into a striking Art Deco mansion by eccentric millionaires Stephen and Virginia Courtauld. 19 acres of gardens feature both 20th century and medieval elements. These include a rock garden sloping down to the moat, a medieval bridge and a stunning herbaceous border. Garden highlights include spring bulbs and the wisteria cascading over the classical pergola in summer.

Overnight Stay in London

**Meals: Breakfast**



#### Day 5 – FULL DAY DOWN HOUSE AND CHARTWELL

Today enjoy visits to the homes of two of the most famous Englishmen and their gardens –

Down House, home of Charles Darwin and Chartwell, home of Sir Winston Churchill

Board the coach and depart for Down House in south-east London

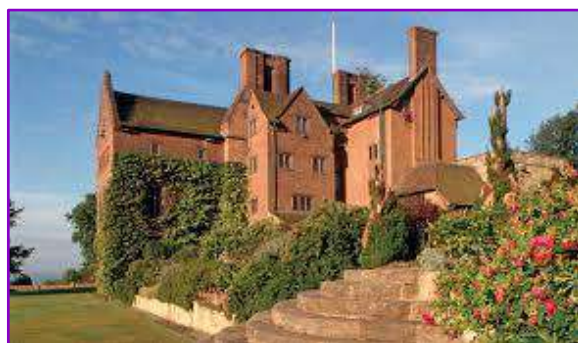
With its unique place in the history of science and evolution, Down House, the family home of world-renowned scientist Charles Darwin, is a must-see. Stand in the study where Darwin wrote 'On the Origin of Species', stroll through the gardens that inspired him, and discover his recreated bedroom which overlooks the gardens.

Depart Down House and drive the short distance (7.5 miles, 12km) to Chartwell

Chartwell was the much loved home of the Churchill family from 1922 and the place from where Sir Winston drew his inspiration until the end of his life in 1965 over 40 years later. The rooms remain much as they were when he lived here with his pictures, books and personal mementoes evoking the career and wide ranging interests of this great statesman. The hillside gardens reflect Sir Winston's love of the landscape and nature. They include the lakes he created, the kitchen garden and the expansive woodland with its looped natural trails.

Overnight Stay in London

**Meals: Breakfast**



## Day 6 – MORNING AT CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN / AFTERNOON FREE

Today a special treat, a visit and guided tour of the wonderful Chelsea Physic Garden.

Tucked away beside the Thames, Chelsea Physic Garden is the oldest Botanic Garden in London. It houses around 5,000 different medicinal, herbal, edible and useful plants.

The garden was founded in 1673 by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries because of its direct access to the river and its south facing location giving warm air currents and creating its own microclimate.

The Physic Garden Café is a delightful place to take lunch on a sunny afternoon overlooking this special garden.

This afternoon is free on your own for last minute exploring or shopping for souvenirs or gifts to take home.

If not done on the first afternoon the visit to **Chiswick House & Gardens** can be done this afternoon for those who would like to.

Overnight Stay in London

**Meals: Breakfast**



## Day 7 – DEPARTURE FROM LONDON OR ADD-ON TOUR

For those heading home board your coach for transfer to London Heathrow airport and your flight

**Meals: Breakfast**



## For those taking a tour extension meet the coach to depart for Oxford & Cotswolds or Kent & Sussex

### **Day 7 – LONDON / GREAT COMP / LEEDS CASTLE / MAIDSTONE**

**TOTAL DRIVING: 52 Miles (98km) – Approx. 2hrs 15 mins total time on the coach**

Today enjoy visits to Great Comp Gardens & Leeds Castle before arriving at your Maidstone hotel.

Board the coach and depart for Great Comp Gardens: (30 miles, 56km – 1hr 25 min)

Great Comp is an exceptionally beautiful seven acre garden surrounding an early 17<sup>th</sup> century manor house. It was developed by Roderick and Joyce Cameron in the 1950's. The skilful design of sweeping lawns, winding woodland paths and formal areas entices the visitor to explore around every corner. Romantic ruins combine with luxuriant planting to great effect allowing panoramic views of the garden while creating the perfect microclimate for the extensive range of exotic plants.

Depart Great Comp and drive the short distance (16 miles, 26km) to Leeds Castle

Often referred to as "the loveliest castle in the world" Leeds Castle is one of the most iconic castles in the UK. Built by the Normans and listed in the Domesday Book, come and discover 900 years of history amid stunning gardens and grounds.

Depart Leeds Castle and drive by coach to your Maidstone hotel for arrival and check-in

Overnight Stay in Maidstone

**Meals: Breakfast**



### **Day 8 – FULL DAY SISSINGHURST AND GREAT DIXTER**

**TOTAL DRIVING: 50 Miles (80km) – Approx. 2hrs total time on coach**

Today enjoy visits to the stunning Sissinghurst Castle Gardens and the superb Great Dixter Gardens

Board the coach and depart for Sissinghurst:

Gardens lovingly created by the poet Vita Sackville-West and her husband, the author Harold Nicholson, Sissinghurst is one of England's most famous gardens and listed as Grade 1 by Historic England.

Depart Sissinghurst and drive the short distance (12 miles, 19km) to Great Dixter

Great Dixter was created by the renowned gardening writer and expert Christopher Lloyd. Built around a 15<sup>th</sup> century manor house the gardens have become a place of pilgrimage & education for gardeners from across the world.

Overnight Stay in Maidstone

**Meals: Breakfast**



## Day 9 – FULL DAY PASHLEY MANOR AND SCOTNEY CASTLE

**TOTAL DRIVING:** 45 Miles (72km) – Approx. 2hrs total time on coach

Today enjoy visits to Pashley Manor Gardens and the Scotney Castle Gardens

Board the coach and depart for Pashley Manor

At Pashley you will discover 11 acres of beautiful borders and vistas - the culmination of a lifetime of passion for gardening and an admiration of the tradition of the English Country garden. These award-winning gardens are family owned and maintained - visitors often express delight at the attention to detail displayed throughout and the intimate, peaceful atmosphere.

Depart Pashley Manor and drive the short distance (8 miles, 12km) to Scotney Castle

A fourteenth century moated castle with a garden that is a prime example of picturesque aesthetic ideas applied to garden design. From 1952 to 1970 it belonged to Christopher Hussey, author of an excellent book on The Picturesque, which traces the ideas to Price and Knight. The author's grandfather, Edward Hussey, was an amateur artist and had the new house built with a terrace, designed by William Sawrey Gilpin, and a transition to the picturesque castle garden. The latter is planted with exotic plants, in the picturesque manner. Lanning Roper designed a circular herb garden near the bridge.

Overnight Stay in Maidstone

**Meals: Breakfast**



## Day 10 – MAIDSTONE / PENSHURST PLACE GARDENS / HEVER CASTLE / BRIGHTON

**TOTAL DRIVING:** 61 Miles (98km) – Approx. 2hrs 25 mins total time on the coach

Today enjoy visits to Penshurst Place Gardens & Hever Castle before arriving at your Brighton hotel.

Board the coach and depart for Penshurst Place: (19 miles, 31km – 55 min)

The gardens at Penshurst Place offer an abundance of variety in form, foliage and bloom throughout the year. From spring flowering bulbs, through fragrant summer roses and exuberant herbaceous borders to mellow orchard fruits.

Depart Penshurst and drive the short distance (6 miles, 10km) to Hever Castle

Dating back to the 13th century, Hever Castle was once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, second wife of Henry VIII and Mother of Elizabeth I. It formed the unlikely backdrop to a sequence of tumultuous events that changed the course of Britain's history, monarchy and religion. Its panelled rooms house fine furniture, tapestries, antiques and what is regarded as 'one of the best collections of Tudor portraits after the National Portrait Gallery'.

Depart Hever Castle and drive by coach to your Brighton hotel for arrival and check-in

Overnight Stay in Brighton

**Meals: Breakfast**





### Day 11 – FULL DAY DENMANS, WEST DEANS GARDENS AND ARUNDEL CASTLE

**TOTAL DRIVING: 73 Miles (116km) – Approx. 2hrs 40 mins total time on coach**

Today enjoy visits to Denmans Gardens, West Dean Gardens and Arundel Castle & Gardens

Board the coach and depart for Denmans Gardens:

The former home and garden of the late **John Brookes MBE**, one of Britain's most influential landscape designers, Denmans Garden features dry riverbeds, gravel gardens, a walled garden, a conservatory, and unusual plants from around the world. The contemporary 4-acre garden was converted from market garden to ornamental garden by plantswoman Joyce Robinson.

Depart Denmans and drive the short distance (10 miles, 16km) to West Dean Gardens

Nestled at the foot of the South Downs, West Dean Gardens in West Sussex is one of the greatest restored gardens open to the public today. Visitors can explore a wide range of historic features on a gentle walk around the grounds. From surreal trees to the restored walled garden, West Dean Gardens presents its rich creative and social heritage.

Depart West Dean and drive the short distance (14 miles, 23km) to Arundel Castle Historic.

There are nearly 1,000 years of history at this great castle, situated in magnificent grounds overlooking the River Arun in West Sussex and built at the end of the 11th century by Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Arundel. The oldest feature is the motte, an artificial mound, over 100 feet high from the dry moat, and constructed in 1068: followed by the gatehouse in 1070. Under his will, King Henry I (1068-1135) settled the Castle and lands in dower on his second wife, Adeliza of Louvain. Three years after his death she married William d'Albini II, who built the stone shell keep on the motte. King Henry II (1133-89), who built much of the oldest part of the stone Castle, in 1155 confirmed William d'Albini II as Earl of Arundel, with the Honour and Castle of Arundel.

Today the stunning and inspirational walled gardens include the internationally renowned Collector Earl's Garden, The Stumpery; the hot and cool Herbaceous Borders with contrasting foliage plants; and the Cut Flower Garden and Organic Kitchen Garden that supply the Castle with fresh fruit, vegetables and cut flowers.

A rare lean-to peach house and vinery, originally built in 1850 by Clarke & Hope, has been restored to its former glory and houses exotic fruit and vegetables.

Overnight Stay in Brighton

**Meals: Breakfast**



## Day 12 – FULL DAY WAKEHURST, NYMANS AND BRIGHTON

**TOTAL DRIVING: 51 Miles (83km) – Approx. 1hr 45 mins total time on coach**

Today enjoy visits to Wakehurst Gardens, Nymans Gardens and free time in Brighton

Board the coach and depart for Wakehurst Gardens:

Explore our wild botanic garden, home to the Millennium Seed Bank and over 500 acres of the world's plants in the heart of Sussex. Over 200 years, the residents of Wakehurst's Mansion acquired plants from all over the world, surrounding the estate with beautiful gardens. Enjoy visiting the Winter Garden, the Walled Garden, the Mansion Lawn & Pond, the Water Gardens, the Iris Dell and of course, the Millennium Seed Bank.

Depart Wakehurst and drive the short distance (9 miles, 15km) to Nymans Gardens

**Nymans Garden, in Sussex is one of the National Trusts finest gardens.** In the late 1800's Ludwig Messel bought the Nymans Estate in the Sussex High Weald to make a dream family home. Inspired by the wooded surroundings he created a garden with plants collected from around the world.

Return to Brighton for free time to explore the town – see The Lanes, the pier and the Royal Pavilion

Overnight Stay in Brighton

**Meals: Breakfast**



## Day 13 – DEPARTURE FROM LONDON

Board your coach for transfer to London Airport and your flight

**\*\* From Brighton the best airport is London Gatwick (27 miles, 44km). But London Heathrow is also possible but is 37 miles further away (64 miles, 102km) \*\***

**Meals: Breakfast**