



Spring in Southern England

April 13 - 22, 2006

Castle Keeps and Glorious Gardens

From the medieval beauty of Canterbury to the charming market towns scattered throughout the rolling countryside of Kent to the vibrant character of London itself, *Spring in Southern England* takes you behind the usual tourist façade.

London is a living history book, and we begin our travels with several days in this lively capital. A panoramic sightseeing tour gives an overview of the major sites including Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, while free time allows you to explore places that spark your own interest, be it an exhibit at the Royal Academy, a tour of the Tate Modern, or a ride on the London Eye. We'll also attend an evening theater performance in the West End—rightly considered to be the theater capital of the world. As Dr. Samuel Johnson famously said, "The man who is tired of London is tired of life!"



Gardens at Vita Sackville-West's Sissinghurst

Following in the footsteps of Chaucer, we then head southeast, toward Canterbury, past country villages and toward the Channel. Caught between the capital and the sea, the southeastern region of Britain presents a multitude of faces—from Kent with its pretty landscapes and cozy villages, to the chalk cliffs surrounding resort towns near the sea, to the Norman echoes in Battle Abbey.

Medieval Canterbury serves as the first resting stop on our itinerary—we'll explore its grandly gothic Cathedral, and take a day trip to Dover, famed for its Roman past and the legacy of WWII. From our second stopping place, in Battle, we'll visit a number of

beautiful towns and villages, including Ashford and Rye, and stroll the glorious gardens of Sissinghurst Castle. We'll also take in the beauty of Lewes, with its gorgeous Norman castle, marvel at the intriguing mystery of the Long Man of Wilmington, and dip into literary tradition, with drives through Jane Austen and Chaucer country and visits to homes made famous by Henry James and Nobel Prize winner Rudyard Kipling.

All against the backdrop of glorious spring. Nowhere in the world is the passion for planting expressed more wholeheartedly than in Britain, from great country estates to postage-stamp-sized gardens. Here, in the midst of a region often considered to be the "Garden of England" we'll experience the best of both history and horticulture during *Spring in Southern England!*

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is:

Land only (no airfare included): **\$2660**
Single supplement: **\$350**

Airfares are available from many U.S. cities. Please call for details.

The following services are included:

- Hotels:** 8 nights accommodation in first-class hotels. All hotel taxes and service charges included.
- Coaching:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Meals:** Continental breakfast daily; 5 table d'hote dinners.
- Guides:** Discover Europe tour director throughout.
- Expenses:** Portage of one large suitcase per person.
- Entrances:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.
- Insurance:** Complete travel insurance including cancellation coverage.





Thursday, April 13. Evening departure from U.S. for the overnight flight to London.

Friday, April 14. Morning arrival at the airport. You'll be met by Discover Europe's representative for transfer to our hotel where you'll have time to unpack and relax. A welcome dinner at the hotel rounds out a full day. **(D)** **Overnight: London**

Saturday, April 15. Our sightseeing tour of London begins in Westminster where our guide introduces us to 1,000 years of English history before we continue on to the Albert Memorial and St. Paul's Cathedral, covering the city from Chelsea to Bloomsbury. The rest of the afternoon is free—visit the Tower of London or take a stroll through the Tate Modern. In the evening, sample a local restaurant before we gather to attend a theater performance. **(B, D)** **Overnight: London**

Sunday, April 16. Leaving London we head east toward Canterbury. Rich in atmosphere, the ancient city is dominated by its remarkable Cathedral, the final destination on the Pilgrims' Way and infamous scene of Thomas Becket's demise. After settling in to our hotel we'll meet for an afternoon walking tour of the Cathedral and its mysterious crypt, and view the marvelous medieval stained glass. We'll also explore the dramatic ruins of St. Augustine's Abbey, founded in 597, and the vestiges of St. Pancras church, a one-time pagan temple. With Chaucer's inspiration all around us, we'll meet for dinner at the hotel. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Canterbury**



Big Ben from Boadicea's statue

Monday, April 17. A full day's excursion from Canterbury to the busy harbor town of Dover, Britain's gateway to the Continent, characterized by the famous White Cliffs.



Canterbury Cathedral

The starting point of the great Roman road to London, Dover has been besieged and pillaged throughout its history, and more recently during WWII endured constant shelling between 1940 and 1944. After a tour of WWII bunkers, we'll turn our attention to the Castle, where our exploration encompasses the Pharos (remains of a 50 AD Roman lighthouse that may be the oldest standing building in England) and Henry II's splendid Keep. Returning to Canterbury, try out one of the local restaurants for dinner. **(B)** **Overnight: Canterbury**

Tuesday, April 18. Heading southwest, through Jane Austen country, we stop in Ashford, an ancient market town filled with charming old houses, and then continue through Romney Marsh to the attractive village of Rye, perched on a hill overlooking the salt marshes. Here we'll visit Henry James' house; you're then free to wander the town's narrow, cobbled streets and lunch in a local restaurant. We'll complete the short drive to Battle, named for the Battle of Hastings in 1066, and visit its Abbey, founded by William the Conqueror, before checking in to our hotel, where we'll have a relaxing dinner. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Battle**

Wednesday, April 19. A full-day excursion includes a visit to Vita Sackville-West's garden at Sissinghurst—one of the most acclaimed gardens in the country. After, you're free to lunch before we continue on to Bodiam Castle, a striking, ruined fortress built in 1385. Returning to Battle, you have a free evening to dine out. **(B)** **Overnight: Battle**

Thursday, April 20. Our first stop is Bateman's, a 17th-century ironmaster's house that was the former home of Nobel Prize winner Rudyard Kipling. Continuing on, we come to Lewes, a beautiful country town filled with architectural delights. You'll want to explore handsome High Street with its beams, bricks, and stucco, and find a cozy lunch spot before we move on to Alfriston (its 14th-century parsonage was the first building acquired by the National Trust) and the intriguing Long Man of Wilmington, a 240-foot-tall figure carved into the chalk downs. Back in Battle, we'll meet for dinner at the hotel. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Battle**

Friday, April 21. Returning to London, we make our way via Royal Tunbridge Wells, nestled in the moors between Kent and Sussex, and a health resort since 1601. The Pantiles—a wonderful pedestrian area that dates from the 17th century—is the perfect place to find last-minute treasures. In London, we'll have a final farewell dinner. **(B, D)** **Overnight: London**

Saturday, April 22. Transport to the airport for returning flights to the U.S. **(B)**



Bodiam Castle