



# Treasure Houses of Southern England

## Great Britain's Architectural Glories

June 24 - July 3, 2010

History comes to life as we embark on an exploration of the *Treasure Houses of Southern England*, a collection of magnificent stately homes, private houses, and castles. Each edifice has its own unique charms, offering visitors a glimpse of living history; taken as a whole, the structures combine to provide a fascinating insight into English life over the centuries.

Some Treasure Houses are still home to the great families who've owned them for generations, and a number contain some of the most important art collections in the world, with works from such artists as Van Dyck and Gainsborough. Connoisseurs of fine furniture, porcelain, and china will find priceless examples of Chippendale, Wedgwood, and Meissen. And most are offset by beautiful parklands and gardens.

From either of London's airports you'll be brought to Windsor and its stunning castle, an official residence of The Queen and the largest occupied castle in the world. It sets the tone for a journey that takes us to Salisbury and its glorious cathedral, the beautiful gardens of Stourhead, the Restoration beauty of Kingston Lacy, and the grand ruins of Corfe Castle. At the other end of the architectural spectrum we'll visit a collection of cottages and manors with literary associations—Clouds Hill (T.E. Lawrence), Thomas Hardy's Cottage, and Jane Austen's house at Chawton.

Together our small group (maximum 15 participants) will explore the hills and dales, villages and towns, at a relaxed pace that will allow you to appreciate the full glory of Britain's Treasure Houses set against the backdrop of a glorious full-blown English spring. Why not join us in discovering the *Treasure Houses of Southern England*?



Windsor Castle



Hardy's Cottage



Kingston Lacy

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

Land only (no airfare included): **\$4190**  
Single supplement: **\$650**

*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:** Full breakfast daily; 1 lunch; 4 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, June 24.** Evening departure from U.S. for overnight flight to London.

**Friday, June 25.** Upon arrival at London’s airport, you’ll be met for the transfer to the town of Windsor, dominated by its castle. There will be time to unpack, relax, and begin to explore before we meet for a welcome dinner at the hotel. **(D) Overnight: Windsor**

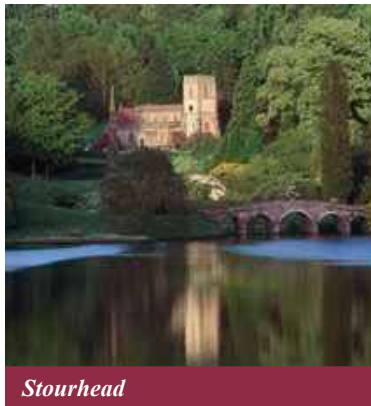
**Saturday, June 26.** Our day begins with a guided tour of Windsor Castle, the largest occupied castle in the world. A royal home and fortress for over 900 years, the castle remains a working palace. We’ll tour the state apartments, an extensive suite of rooms at the heart of the palace, where furnishings include treasures from the Royal Collection—paintings by Holbein, Rubens, Van Dyck, and Lawrence; fine tapestries and porcelain; and sculptures. The afternoon and evening are free to explore the town and sample a local restaurant. **(B) Overnight: Windsor**

**Sunday, June 27.** Leaving Windsor, we wind toward Salisbury, stopping at Jane Austen’s home, an attractive 17<sup>th</sup>-century house in the pretty village of Chawton, where Austen wrote and revised her novels, including *Pride and Prejudice*. The museum houses an interesting collection of furniture, jewelry, and needlework, and the lovely garden contains various plants and herbs common to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Continuing on, we stop at the World heritage site of Stonehenge before we arrive in Salisbury, beautifully situated on the banks of the River Avon. We’ll have time to unpack and relax before meeting for dinner. **(B, D) Overnight: Salisbury**



Salisbury Cathedral

**Monday, June 28.** This morning we’ll explore Salisbury. A short walk from our hotel brings us into the cathedral close, where we’ll visit Mompesson House, an elegant 18th-century house that featured in the film version of *Sense and Sensibility*, and the King’s House Museum, known for its archeological collections as well as its fine art. The afternoon and evening are free to explore Salisbury: stroll the lovely medieval streets, visit the Antiques Center on Catherine Street, or see one of the four surviving originals of the Magna Carta in the Cathedral. If the weather is fine, your guide may suggest a short excursion to the original settlement of Old Sarum. **(B) Overnight: Salisbury**



Stourhead

**Tuesday, June 29.** From Salisbury, we head toward Stourhead and the magnificent Stourhead Gardens surrounding a peaceful lake in the middle of a 2,650-acre estate nestled among rolling hills. Continuing on to Blandford Forum, we’ll check in to our hotel and have time to stroll around the center of this charming country market town before we meet in the evening for dinner at our hotel. **(B, D) Overnight: Blandford Forum**

**Wednesday, June 30.** Often referred to as “Thomas Hardy country,” Dorset is an area of quiet back roads and quaint cottages. Today we’ll visit Dorchester and stop at Thomas Hardy’s birthplace, a charming thatched cottage built by Hardy’s great-grandfather in 1800. Little has been altered externally—casement windows peer out from the overhanging thatch, and roses, honeysuckle, and japonica climb the walls. We’ll gather for lunch before continuing on to Max Gate, an attractive Victorian villa designed by Hardy (an architect by trade), where he lived until his death and wrote some of his most popular and enduring novels, including *Jude the Obscure* and *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*. You’re free this evening to sample a local restaurant. **(B, L) Overnight: Blandford Forum**

**Thursday, July 1.** This morning, we have a private tour of Kingston Lacy, a Restoration mansion designed to replace the earlier seat of Corfe Castle, which was ruined in the Civil War. Over time, the house has been transformed into an Italianate palazzo containing an extensive collection of paintings including works by Rubens, Velazquez, Titian, and Van Dyck, as well as a fine collection of Egyptian artifacts from 3000 BC. Kingston Lacy is surrounded by 250 acres of park, landscaped in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and now grazed by a herd of Red Devon cattle. Around lunchtime we’ll stop at Corfe Castle, a fixture on the Dorset landscape for more than 1,000 years and one of Britain’s most majestic ruins (the National Trust Tearoom in the town of Corfe Castle is one of the nicest in Dorset!). Then we step into the world of T.E. Lawrence, visiting Clouds Hill, where the writer purchased a brick and tile cottage and found the peace he needed to produce *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, published in 1926. The tiny rooms are just as Lawrence left them, with simple furnishings, some of which the writer made himself. Back in Blandford, you have a free evening to sample a local restaurant. **(B) Overnight: Blandford Forum**

**Friday, July 2.** This morning we drive north east up to the capital. After checking in to our London hotel, the rest of the afternoon will be free. This evening we gather for a farewell dinner. **(B, D) Overnight: London**

**Saturday, July 3.** Morning transport to London airports for returning flights to the U.S. **(B)**



Corfe Castle

Key to included meals: **B** - breakfast, **L** - lunch, **D** - dinner