



The Gardens of Cornwall

From London to Land's End

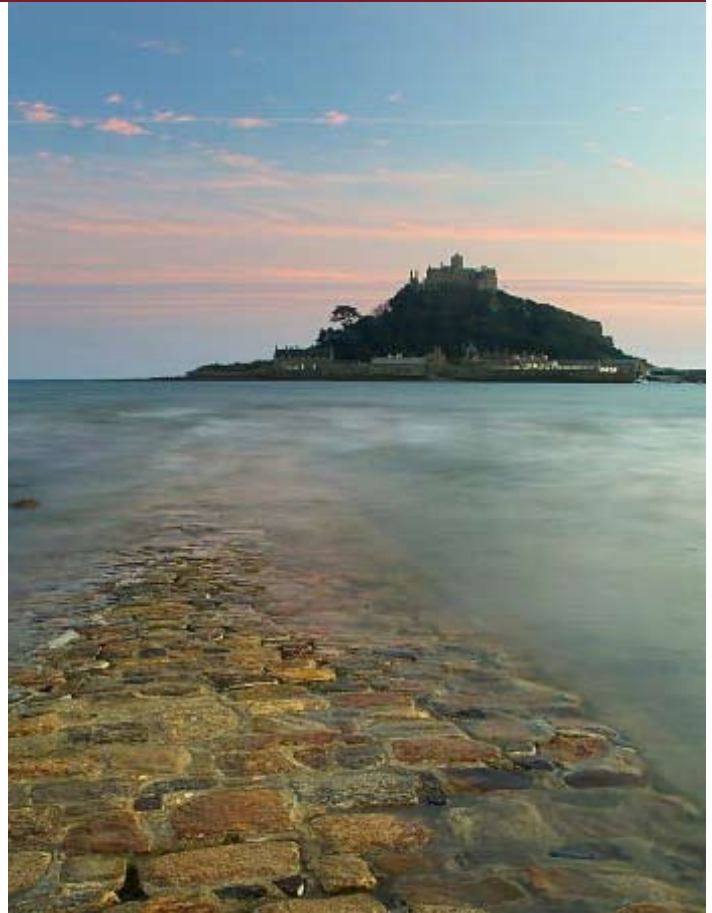
September 17 - 26, 2009

The southwest peninsula of England, made up of the counties of Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset, is known as "The West Country." It is an ancient land, rife with myth and legend, and staunchly independent from the "mainland" of England. This journey through the mists of the Celtic past brings to life many of those ancient legends.

Part of the region's uniqueness comes from its climate, one that attracts English holidaymakers during the summer season. Washed by the warming currents of the Gulf Stream, the peninsula enjoys its own microclimate that allows palm trees to grow along the coast at a latitude equivalent to that of Nova Scotia on the North American continent!

We'll cover the longest distance, from London to Land's End in speed and comfort on the intercity train and then wend a leisurely route back by private motorcoach. We'll visit gardens, castles, cathedrals, and ancient unspoiled towns and villages, and see areas of unparalleled natural beauty.

And through it all will run the theme of the Arthurian legends. From Arthur's birthplace at Tintagel, through the lost land of Lyonesse, and on to Avalon and Arthur's (alleged) grave site in the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, this ancient tale will keep cropping up on our travels through this beautiful part of England. Why not join us in *The Gardens of Cornwall*?



St. Michael's Mount



The Ruins of Tintagel Castle

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

Land only (no airfare included): **\$3790**
Single supplement: **\$580**

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.
- Trains:** First-class rail from London to Penzance.
- Coaching:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Meals:** Full breakfast daily, 5 dinners.
- Courier:** *Discover Europe* tour director throughout.
- Expenses:** Porterage of one large suitcase per person.
- Entrances:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.
- Insurance:** Complete travel insurance including cancellation coverage.





Thursday, September 17. Evening departure from the city of your choice.

Friday, September 18. Morning arrival in London, where you will be met by a *Discover Europe* representative and transported to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to unpack and relax before we meet up in the evening for dinner at the hotel. **(D) Overnight: London**

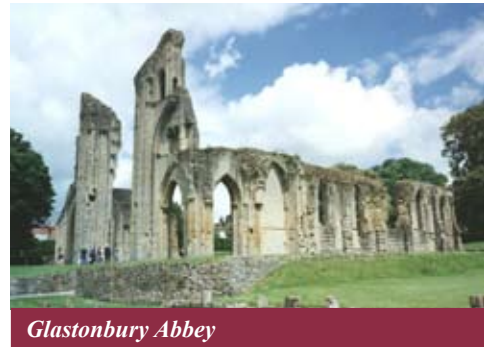
Saturday, September 19. A sightseeing tour that encompasses many of London's major treasures, from the Tower of London to Buckingham Palace. In the afternoon you may continue your exploration of famous landmarks, or take the underground to Westminster Abbey, the most ancient of London's great churches. In the evening you are free to sample one of the many superb restaurants in the neighborhood. **(B) Overnight: London**

Sunday, September 20. Transfer via coach to Paddington Station for a first-class train to the ancient market town of Penzance, "capital" of West Cornwall and the towns of the Land's End Peninsula. Set in beautiful Mount's Bay, a body of water dominated by St. Michael's Mount, Penzance is surrounded by majestic cliffs, wild moors, and secluded beaches, with a history of smugglers that inspired Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance*. On arrival we'll check in to our hotel and then have free time to explore the

lively town center, stroll the attractive seaside promenade, and admire the subtropical flowers and palms that abound. In the evening we'll gather again for dinner at our hotel. **(B, D) Overnight: Penzance**

Monday, September 21. Our excursion today to Land's End takes us through an area of ancient Celtic culture and outstanding natural beauty. Crystal-clear seas vie with the heather of the moors, and prehistoric stone circles are scattered over the Peninsula. We return to Penzance for a visit to the jewel in the crown of Mount's Bay: the island castle of St. Michael's Mount, possibly part of King Arthur's lost land of Lyonesse, with its 11th-century monastery and 15th-century fort. The evening is free to sample the restaurant of your choice. **(B) Overnight: Penzance**

Tuesday, September 22. This morning we have a full day's excursion to the highly acclaimed millennial Eden Project—a "gateway into the world of plants and people." Giant, bubble-like conservatories simulate tropical and temperate climate zones, and are planted with species from around the world. Then we visit the Lost Gardens of Heligan—termed "the garden restoration of the century" by *The Times*. At the end of the 19th century, the 1,000 acres of this mysterious estate were at their zenith; a few years later, bramble and ivy were drawing a veil over this "Sleeping Beauty." Today the award-winning restoration is internationally praised. Dinner is included this evening, and we'll gather at a local restaurant. **(B, D) Overnight: Penzance**



Glastonbury Abbey



Tintagel's "old" post office

Wednesday, September 23. Leaving Penzance, we journey back in time to Tintagel Castle, legendary birthplace of King Arthur. Set on a wild and windswept headland, the ruins of this 13th-century castle were preceded by an Iron Age castle and settlement. From here we strike deep into the West Country moors—Bodmin, steeped in Arthurian legend, and Dartmoor, one of the last true wildernesses in England. On to Exeter, where much remains of the city's Roman and medieval walls, for a visit to the stunning Exeter Cathedral, England's finest example of decorated Gothic architecture, with its magnificent nave and the longest Gothic vault in Europe. In the evening we dine in Taunton at the Castle Hotel, our home for the next two nights. **(B, D) Overnight: Taunton**

Thursday, September 24. Our day trip takes us along the North Devon coast, with stops in Minehead, Porlock, and Lynmouth. The picturesque harbor in the seaside resort of Minehead lies below the old village, where steep lanes lead up to a 14th-century church. The quaint villages of Porlock and Lynmouth fall within the confines of Exmoor, some of the finest countryside in Britain. We'll end our day back in Taunton, where the evening is free. **(B) Overnight: Taunton**

Friday, September 25. We wend our way toward Glastonbury, to tour the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, said to be the burial place of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere, and see the Glastonbury Thorn, rumored to have sprung from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea when he brought the Holy Grail here after the crucifixion. Next we visit Wells, a magnificent cathedral city sheltered beneath the beauty of Mendip Hills. Before heading on to London, we stop in Bath, an outstanding architectural showpiece with its mix of ancient remains (including extensive Roman Baths) and elegant Georgian buildings. This evening we have a farewell dinner together back in London. **(B, D) Overnight: London**

Saturday, September 26. Airport transfers this morning to one of London's major airports for your return flight to the USA. **(B)**



The Eden Project

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