



## TALES OF WESSEX

### EXPLORING HARDY COUNTRY AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT

OCTOBER 10<sup>TH</sup> - 18<sup>TH</sup> 2019

Originally derived from the “West Saxons,” who lived here after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the name “Wessex” for this region of south central England was popularized by the late Victorian novelist, Thomas Hardy. Such was his influence that, even though there is no county in England called Wessex (although we still have Essex for the East Saxons and Sussex for the South Saxons), the name has lived on in current usage.

Though technically not a part of the region, the Isle of Wight is so close, that it would be a shame to miss this opportunity to pay it a visit. A favorite haunt of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, their patronage turned the island into a popular destination for English holidaymakers for many decades. Nowadays, of course, the English tend to forsake their own seaside for warmer Mediterranean shores, leaving the island a very tranquil place, even in the summer – and one that not many American visitors get the chance to explore.

Our tour of the region encompasses all its varied aspects; from the ancient to the modern, from the historical to the literary, country pubs to stately homes, charming village churches to great Gothic cathedrals, but throughout run the gentle green rolling hills that are the hallmark of this beautiful area. Please come and join us this fall and enjoy the *Tales of Wessex*.



CORFE CASTLE



OSBORNE HOUSE

THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED):      **\$3880**  
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:                              **\$ 960**

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

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

**HOTELS:** 7 nights' accommodation in first-class hotels, including all hotel taxes and service charges  
**COACHING:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary  
**MEALS:** Breakfast daily, 5 dinners  
**BAGGAGE:** Portage of one large suitcase per person  
**ENTRANCES:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary  
**GUIDES:** Fully qualified Discover Europe tour guide throughout

*Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour.  
Insurance information will be mailed to each registration on receipt of deposit.*

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**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10<sup>th</sup>** - Departure from your chosen US gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11<sup>th</sup>** - Upon arrival at London Heathrow airport, you will be met and transported to our hotel in royal Windsor. After time to unpack and relax, the rest of the day is free to unwind and recover from the overnight flight. In the afternoon, your guide will conduct an orientation meeting and lead a short optional tour to points of local interest. This evening we gather for a welcome dinner at our hotel. **(D) OVERNIGHT: WINDSOR**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12<sup>th</sup>** - A day spent paying our respects to another great novelist, Jane Austen. Our first stop this morning will be in the village of Chawton, where we'll visit the Jane Austen House Museum, where she lived and worked towards the end of her life. We'll continue to Winchester where we'll stop for lunch. This afternoon there will be a tour of Winchester Cathedral. It has the longest nave of any Gothic cathedral in Europe and houses the grave of Jane Austen. From Winchester it is a short drive to Southampton where we board the ferry to take us down the Solent to the Isle of Wight. Dinner will be awaiting us at our hotel. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: ISLE OF WIGHT**

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13<sup>th</sup>** - Our first stop today will be at Carisbrooke Castle. Built on the site of a Roman Fort, the present castle is of Norman origin and is famous as the place of imprisonment of King Charles I in 1648, the year prior to his execution. From here we will spend the rest of the day at Osborne House, a favorite residence of Queen Victoria. Originally built as a "holiday home" it was designed in the Italianate style by Thomas Cubitt, and, it is said, with help from Prince Albert. Victoria spent her last years here and died at Osborne House in 1901. We return to our hotel for a free evening. **(B) OVERNIGHT: ISLE OF WIGHT**



**MONDAY, OCTOBER 14<sup>th</sup>** - We return to the mainland this morning via the ferry from Yarmouth to Lymington, in the New Forest. We'll drive through the forest, stopping for lunch, to our afternoon visit, the striking 17<sup>th</sup>-century house of Kingston Lacy. Built for the Bankes family, who lived here for over 300 years, the house is now owned by the National Trust and houses a spectacular collection of fine art, furniture and porcelain. From here we continue to our hotel in the delightful market town at Wareham, where we'll have time to settle in and freshen up before dinner at the hotel this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: WAREHAM**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15<sup>th</sup>** - Often referred to as "Thomas Hardy country," the county of Dorset is an area of quiet back roads and quaint cottages. Today we'll visit Dorchester (Hardy's "Casterbridge") and stop at 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*. There will be free time in the town to have lunch and visit the Dorset County Museum. On our way back to Wareham we'll stop at Stinsford Church, where Hardy's heart is buried, and at Thomas Hardy's birthplace, a charming thatched cottage built by his 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. The evening is free in Wareham. **(B) OVERNIGHT: WAREHAM**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16<sup>th</sup>** - We'll continue our explorations of Wessex today with a visit to the Isle of Purbeck. Not really an island, this is the name given to the area bounded by the sea on the south and east and by Poole Harbour on the north. We'll begin in Wareham, where parts of the ancient Saxon walls still remain around the town, and board a steam train for a beautiful ride through the Purbeck Hills to the seaside town of Swanage. There will be time to have lunch and explore the town before we return by coach. On the way back we'll stop at Corfe Castle for a visit. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: WAREHAM**



**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17<sup>th</sup>** - A leisurely drive this morning through the Wessex countryside, takes us via the ancient Saxon capital of Shaftesbury to Salisbury. We'll stop here for lunch and a visit to the magnificent cathedral which houses an original copy of the Magna Carta. We continue this afternoon to our country house hotel where we will gather for a memorable farewell dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: WINDSOR AREA**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18<sup>th</sup>** - This morning there will be transfers to the airport for returning flights to the U.S. **(B) OVERNIGHT: HOME**