



LONDON AND THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

Combine the iconic landmarks of London, one of the most visited cities in the world, with the scenic Cotswolds, home to some of England's most picturesque villages and prettiest rural landscapes.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



Europe, England



8 days from AU\$17,790 pp



Private

Journey Overview

Combine the iconic landmarks of London, one of the most visited cities in the world, with the scenic Cotswolds, home to some of England's most picturesque villages and prettiest rural landscapes. You'll gain a unique perspective on the history of London and both its time-honoured and more recent sites before venturing through the glorious English countryside to Oxford and onto the Cotswolds, visiting honey-coloured towns, imposing castles and grand gardens en route.

Journey Highlights

- Experience England, both town and country, as you view highlights of London and tour charming villages in the Cotswolds
- Take in London's most recognisable monuments from the back of an iconic black cab including Big Ben, Trafalgar Square and the Shard
- Tour the legendary Tower of London with an iconic Yeoman Warder guide, known as "Beefeaters"
- Explore majestic Windsor Castle, the oldest and largest continuously inhabited castle in the world
- Walk in the footsteps of literary greats in Oxford, the 'City of Dreaming Spires'
- Visit Winston Churchill's home, magnificent Blenheim Palace and Gardens
- Uncover scenic countryside and picturesque villages like Bourton-on-the-Water or Stratford-upon-Avon
- Dive into idyllic rural life with optional activities such as baking, cheese-making and ale brewing



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive London

Meet your A&K Guardian Angel on arrival and transfer to your hotel in central London.

Located just a few minutes from The British Museum, Covent Garden, Soho, and Oxford Street, The Bloomsbury is set in London's literary heartland – the historic and vibrant 18th century Bloomsbury neighbourhood. It is housed in a stunning 1930s 'listed neo-Georgian building, and features chic guestrooms and new luxury suites offering contemporary décor charmingly blended with period architectural detail.

As a tireless innovator of art and culture, and deeply immersed in history, it is not hard to see why London is one of the most visited cities in the world. Its landmarks like the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, and Big Ben are renowned, complemented by modern marvels like the Shard and the London Eye. Yet, it's not just a cityscape; London boasts more green space than any global capital. From the Royal Observatory in Greenwich to Kew Gardens and historic Windsor Castle, there are ample retreats from the urban rush.

The Bloomsbury Hotel

Day 2: London

Take in London's amazing sights, hear its fascinating history and meet extraordinary characters from the comfort of an iconic black cab. Your "cabbie" is a professional driver-guide whose knowledge of the city is unsurpassed. Stop at several quintessential London must-sees, including Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park, Royal Albert Hall, St Paul's Cathedral, and St James's Palace amongst other notable sites and landmarks while your local guide shares interesting stories and history at each locale, as well as anecdotes along the way.

Depending on your interests, there are three options this afternoon (additional cost):

Take a literary tour of London with an A&K expert guide, discovering the world of some of England's greatest wordsmiths in the Charles Dickens Museum and British Library or Globe Theatre.

Take a fascinating London Pub walking tour in the vibrant borough of Southwark, where London's last remaining coaching inn still stands.

Enjoy a unique gin-making experience with a historical touch at the GInstitute. Learn about gin's history, taste botanicals during a tutored lesson in tasting and nosing various gin varietals, and create your own custom gin. Leave with a personalised bottle and the option to reorder your recipe for delivery.

The Bloomsbury Hotel | Meals: B

Day 3: London

Visit the Tower of London, an historic castle established by William the Conqueror in 1078. Explore with an iconic Yeoman Warder guide, known as "Beefeaters", and marvel at the dazzling Crown Jewels. Enjoy panoramic views of Tower Bridge before heading to Borough Market for a delectable lunch (own expense). Indulge in a wide array of fine foods, including rare-breed meats, charcuterie, and cheese, in this cosmopolitan culinary haven.

In the afternoon, admire the many treasures of the marvellous British Museum, which include the Rosetta Stone and a superb collection of Egyptian antiquities. Alternatively, you may wish to instead visit the Tate Modern, to marvel at artistic masterpieces from 1900 onwards, including works by Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol.

Another option is to step back in time aboard HMS Belfast to learn about life on board during WWII. Experience the interactive Operations Room and Gun Turret. Then, visit the Churchill War Rooms, the wartime bunker used by Churchill and his government during the Blitz.

Alternatively choose to take a deep dive into London's influential rock music scene, which reveals famous sites such as the jazz club where The Who and Jimi Hendrix once performed, as well as the zebra crossing featured on the cover of The Beatles' eponymous album, 'Abbey Road'.

The Bloomsbury Hotel | Meals: B

Day 4: London

Embark on a journey west from London with your guide and private vehicle to visit Windsor Castle, one of the world's oldest and largest inhabited castles. The castle has a colourful history of being the family home of British kings and queens for nearly a thousand years. Depending on availability, you may have the opportunity to explore the lavish State Apartments and St. George's Chapel, renowned for royal weddings like Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's in May 2018. From the castle ramparts, enjoy panoramic views of Eton College, a prestigious boarding school before taking a brief detour for a stroll around the college.

An alternative itinerary today includes a guided exploration of Westminster, beginning at the historic Westminster Abbey, known for royal coronations and burials. Continue to Trafalgar Square, home to Nelson's Column, and then pass by Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament. Conclude your day with a ride on the London Eye for breathtaking city views.

The Bloomsbury Hotel | Meals: B

Day 5: London - Oxford - The Cotswolds

Escape to the Cotswolds, a postcard-perfect patchwork of picturesque rural villages, lush green meadows and gently meandering waterways in England's central-southwest.

On the way, visit Oxford, known as the "City of Dreaming Spires" and home to England's oldest university. With your local guide, wander through the impressive university buildings, soaking in the architectural grandeur and historic significance of the colleges. Next, venture to Woodstock and make a stop at Blenheim Palace and Gardens. One of the grandest private residences in Britain, and the birthplace and home of Sir Winston Churchill, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is a magnificent example of English Baroque architecture with the beautiful grounds designed by Capability Brown. After a guided introduction to the palace, there is time to explore the estate on your own.

Afterwards, continue to your delightful hotel, steeped in over 600 years of fascinating history and located in the quintessentially English village of Broadway, the perfect base for discovery of this renowned region.

The Lygon Arms | Meals: B

Day 6: The Cotswolds

Today you will discover the delights of the Cotswolds, passing through charming villages distinguished by their iconic honey-coloured stone buildings and thatched cottages, rolling hills, and through stunning rural landscapes of rolling hills and meandering rivers. It is easy to see why this area is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Begin with a stroll along the pretty tree-lined High Street of Broadway, with its assortment of adorable stone buildings, quaint shops and traditional pubs. Continue to Bourton-on-the-Water, often referred to as the "Venice of the Cotswolds". Soak up the tranquillity from one of the five arched stone bridges that span the River Windrush.

Enjoy leisurely lunch options. Afterwards, you can visit nearby Stow-on-the-Wold, a historic market town with roots dating back to the Iron Age. Alternatively, head north to explore Hidcote Manor Gardens. Designed by horticulturist Major Lawrence Johnston, it features a series of distinctive outdoor "rooms" showcasing an array of perennial plants and rare shrubs, making it a standout among England's great gardens.

For a different view of the countryside and chance to stretch your legs, opt to cycle an e-bike from Broadway to the peaceful hamlet of Guiting Power. Tuck into a hearty pub lunch (payable locally) before returning via Stanway House and Stanton.

The Lygon Arms | Meals: B

Day 7: The Cotswolds

Unearth some of the Cotswold's hidden gems, starting with the enchanting chocolate box village of Chipping Campden, whose residents built considerable wealth through the wool trade in the Middle Ages. Stroll along its expansive High Street, marvelling at its architectural heritage. Nearby, don't miss the splendid Kiftsgate Court Gardens, perched on the edge of the Cotswold escarpment. Carefully curated across generations of women gardeners, it has been carefully planned to offer harmonious colour schemes.

Alternatively, venture into Warwickshire and visit the market town of Stratford-upon-Avon, hailed as Shakespeare's birthplace. Explore the 16th-century half-timbered house believed to be his birth site, then pay a visit to Holy Trinity Church where he rests. Lastly, head to the village of Shottery to visit the farmhouse where his wife Ann Hathaway grew up.

You may wish to enhance your experience today with one of three activities. Visit a 500-year-old organic dairy farm in the Cotswolds to see the cheesemaking process, sample award-winning cheeses and meet the cows. Tour a brewery established in 1865 to discover the traditional brewing process and enjoy ale tastings. Enjoy a baking experience at a historic Cotswold farmhouse, learning scone and cake-making secrets, then enjoy your creations in the charming setting.

The Lygon Arms | Meals: B

Day 8: Depart the Cotswolds

After breakfast, transfer to Heathrow Airport for your onward flight.

Meals: B

Map



Accommodation

The Lygon Arms



Soak up the period charm at this luxury coaching inn in the quintessential Cotswold village of Broadway. Chock full of antiques, this historic hotel dating to the 14th century exudes all the cosy comforts of a British country retreat right down to the open fireplaces, snug lounge areas and Floris bath products. This is your perfect base for exploring local boutiques and galleries, tramping through the idyllic countryside and simply enjoying traditional British hospitality.

The Bloomsbury Hotel, London



Located just a few minutes from The British Museum, Covent Garden, Soho, and Oxford Street, The Bloomsbury is set in London's literary heartland – the historic and vibrant 18th century Bloomsbury neighbourhood, known for its distinctive architecture, museums, cafés, bookstores and historical association with artists and academics.

Housed in a stunning 1930s listed neo-Georgian building, chic guestrooms and new luxury suites feature contemporary décor charmingly blended with period architectural detail.

With dining options for any time of day, guests are spoiled for choice. Guests can enjoy all-day dining including a sumptuous afternoon tea on the elegant and quintessentially English Dalloway Terrace – one of London's most aesthetically-famed restaurants.

In The Coral Room – a grand salon bar designed by the acclaimed Martin Brudnizki, coffee and light bites are served during the day while the evenings see a transformation into a lively cocktail bar with occasional live music sets. Meanwhile, the golden age of cocktails can be enjoyed in the intimate and atmospheric Bloomsbury Club Bar.

Abercrombie & Kent

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