

2016 Highlights of Britain - St Andrews to Land's End 15 Days / 14 Nights

Day 1: Heathrow Airport & Windsor Castle

Your vacation starts at your Windsor hotel at 2:30 pm when you meet your tour director. Close to your hotel, visit Windsor Castle, residence of The Queen and the largest inhabited castle in the world. See the lavishly decorated State Apartments and courtyards. In the evening meet your tour director and trip participants over a welcome drink to discuss your itinerary before dining in your hotel. After dinner take a brief walk around this compact and historic town with a local guide.

(D)

Day 2: Stonehenge & Salisbury

Drive to Salisbury Plain to marvel at the prehistoric circle of vast monoliths of Stonehenge and learn about the primitive builders who managed to create such an enduring monument. The Visitor Centre will give you background information on its creation. Stop in Salisbury, a charming old city that is dominated by the cathedral with the tallest spire in England. Arrive in Plymouth and check in to your hotel, close to the harbor where the Pilgrim Fathers sailed from in 1620.

(B, D)

Day 3: Lanhydrock House & Dartmoor

Today visit Lanhydrock House to explore this magnificent late-Victorian country house as you tour grand family rooms as well as the downstairs world. Drive through Dartmoor National Park, the largest and wildest area of open country in Southern England and renowned for its wonderful scenery. Have a look around one of the charming villages before returning to Plymouth in time for dinner.

(B, D)

Day 4: Cornwall & Land's End

Drive to the picturesque village of Marazion located on the coast with magnificent long, sandy beaches. From here view the majestic outline of St Michael's Mount, an important pilgrimage destination throughout the ages and provides a wonderful photo opportunity. Drive to Land's End, the most westerly point of Britain. Visit the Minack Theatre, an open-air arena for staging plays that was first opened in the 1930's. Enjoy the lovely views and gardens with their stunning blend of exotic and native plants. Return to Plymouth in time for dinner.

(B, D)

Day 5: Roman Baths & Cardiff Walk

Travel north to explore Bath, popular for its natural hot springs with the Romans 2,000 years ago. Tour the wonderfully-preserved Roman Baths and Pump Room, renowned for mineral-rich hot springs. Drive to Cardiff and for a sightseeing tour followed by a brief walking tour around the bay. Tour Cardiff Castle before sitting down for a Welsh evening with dinner and some lively Welsh music and entertainment.

(B, D)

Day 6: Hay-on-Wye & Shrewsbury

Drive through the Brecon Beacons National Park to view some majestic Welsh scenery. Stop in Hay-on-Wye, a town that specializes in second-hand books. You will see bookstores everywhere, making a browse around the town center great fun. Continue your drive north through the Shropshire Hills to Shrewsbury, a picturesque town that is close to the Welsh border with England. Take a walking tour with the town crier to see black-and-white buildings, gardens and learn about the history of the area. Travel through Cheshire to your hotel, located in Homes Chapel to the east of Chester.

(B, D)

Day 7: North Wales & Chester

Today drive through Llangollen and the Horseshoe Pass for wonderful vistas. Visit a farm to see trained dogs herding sheep and travel to Conwy, a medieval town dominated by a huge castle. Take a walking tour around the picturesque streets and see the smallest house in Britain. Drive to Chester where another walking tour will reveal medieval black-and-white buildings and Roman walls. Return to Holmes Chapel for dinner.

(B, D)

Day 8: Lake District & Scottish Evening

Travel through the glorious Lake District, associated with the children’s author, Beatrix Potter, and the poet, William Wordsworth. Stop in the charming village of Grasmere, where Wordsworth lived and is buried. Near the Scottish border stop at the Old Blacksmith’s Shop in Gretna Green, a popular shopping venue for quality Scottish goods. Check in to your hotel in Edinburgh and head out to a Scottish evening with special dishes and lively music.

(B, D)

Day 9: Edinburgh Castle & City Tour

Explore central Edinburgh this morning, starting in the 200-year-old “New Town” with its planned streets and elegant Georgian houses where many famous writers and inventors lived. See the Royal Mile where medieval houses are clustered and tour Edinburgh Castle to see the Crown Jewels of Scotland and the Stone of Destiny. The afternoon is free for independent activities. On Jul 31 to Aug 14 departures, experience the world-famous Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

(B)

Day 10: Excursion to St Andrews

Travel north to St Andrews, famously known as the “Home of Golf” and location of Scotland’s oldest university. Take a panoramic drive around the town and visit the picturesque ruins of St Andrews Castle and Cathedral. Spend some free time to have a browse around the town. Return to Edinburgh for an evening at leisure.

(B)

Day 11: Scottish Borders & York

Drive south from Edinburgh stopping in Jedburgh for a look around the town and see the picturesque ruins of

Jedburgh Abbey. Continue south to York for a walking tour to appreciate narrow streets, especially the Shambles, where the medieval houses almost touch from one side of the street to the other. Visit York Minster, which dominates the city center and is famous for its stained glass windows. In the evening dine in a centuries-old pub with plenty of atmosphere.

(B, D)

Day 12: Historic Train Ride & Castle Howard

Travel on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway by vintage locomotive. Discover the picturesque harbor, winding streets and quaint buildings of Whitby on a walking tour. Tour the elaborate chambers of Castle Howard, an imposing 18th century mansion where Evelyn Waugh's celebrated novel, "Brideshead Revisited," was filmed.

(B, D)

Day 13: Shakespeare's Birthplace & London

Travel through the Cotswolds to Stratford-upon-Avon to visit Shakespeare's Birthplace to see an exhibition about his life and work. 2016 marks the 400th anniversary of his death. Walk through the furnished house where he was born and take a look around before heading to your hotel in London.

(B)

Day 14: Tower of London & City Sightseeing

This morning take a panoramic tour of central London to see famous landmarks including Piccadilly Circus, Nelson's Column flanked by huge lions in Trafalgar Square, Westminster Abbey, Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. Visit the mighty Tower of London to see the many fortresses, Beefeaters, ravens and the priceless Crown Jewels. The afternoon and evening are free.

(B)

Day 15: Depart for Home

Your program ends after breakfast.

(B)

B: Breakfast; L: Lunch; D: Dinner