



Stonehenge



WELLS GRAY TOURS
a world to experience



Hampton Court Palace

ENCHANTING ENGLAND

July 13, 2023 – 17 Days

7 nights in London plus southern England

Each summer, Wells Gray Tours offers a different portion of the United Kingdom. There is so much to see and do that a combined tour of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales is not possible without devoting a couple of months to the itinerary. So here is the England tour, 15 days featuring London, Devon, and Cornwall. We fly in and out of Gatwick Airport. A British guide and our own tour director accompany you throughout this trip. In London, many icons are included – a Thames cruise, Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, Kew Gardens, and Windsor Castle, plus 3 theatrical shows. Some other highlights are Stratford-upon-Avon, the Cotswolds, Roman Baths, Glastonbury Abbey, Lost Gardens of Heligan, Dartmoor National Park, Agatha Christie’s Greenway House, and Stonehenge. It’s an amazing itinerary with so many memorable places.

Activity Level: 2



TOUR
25

26 Meals Included:

15 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 teas, 6 dinners

Fares per person:

\$10,590 double/twin; \$12,395 single

Tour is exempt from GST.

Early Bookers:

\$300 discount on first 8 seats; \$150 on next 6

Experience Points:

Earn 171 points on this tour.

Redeem 171 points if you book by April 3, 2023.

Departure from: Victoria



Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

ITINERARY

Day 1: Thursday, July 13

A transfer is provided to Victoria Airport and our WestJet flight leaves in the early afternoon for Calgary. The connecting flight is non-stop to London's Gatwick Airport.

Day 2: Friday, July 14

We arrive at Gatwick in mid-morning. **Welcome to England!** Move your watches eight hours ahead of Pacific Time. Our coach and British guide meet us at the airport and we drive into London. We take a **Thames River cruise** from Westminster downstream to the Tower of London, enjoying a riverside perspective on London's landmarks and bridges. Our hotel for the next seven nights in **London** is the Thistle Hyde Park Kensington Gardens, convenient to shops, restaurants, and the Underground. Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens are across the street. A get-acquainted dinner is included so you can meet your fellow travellers.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Thistle Hotel Hyde Park



Tower Bridge

Day 3: Saturday, July 15

We take a tour of the **Tower of London**, complete with stories and misconceptions of one of England's most historic sites, dating from 1066. This evening, we attend a show in the West End Theatre District. Since performances can change or close earlier than expected, we will not book a show until about three months prior. Three shows are included during our stay in London.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Thistle Hotel Hyde Park

Day 4: Sunday, July 16

We visit majestic **Hampton Court Palace**, acquired by the flamboyant King Henry VIII in the 1520s. Today it boasts over 1000 rooms, 60 acres of formal gardens, and 750 acres of royal parkland. This afternoon, we visit the fabulous **Kew Botanical Gardens**, created in 1759 and noted for the two massive Victorian greenhouses. The first hour is a guided walk, then there is free time to explore as you wish.

Note: You can opt out of these two attractions and have a free day if you wish. Fare reduction is \$77 each; please decide by final payment.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Thistle Hotel Hyde Park

Day 5: Monday, July 17

Breaking into two smaller groups with guides, we walk through the West End, hearing stories about the buildings and sights. The afternoon is free time. Our second show is in the evening.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Thistle Hotel Hyde Park

Day 6: Tuesday, July 18

A guided tour of **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre** is arranged with the opportunity to meet a theatre personality. This is the faithful reconstruction of the Elizabethan playhouse for which William Shakespeare wrote his plays. The original theatre was built in 1599, destroyed by fire in 1613, rebuilt, and then demolished in 1644. A traditional **British cream tea** is served. We return to the Globe Theatre for a performance.

Meals included: Breakfast, Tea

Accommodation: Thistle Hotel Hyde Park

Day 7: Wednesday, July 19

We tour spectacular **Windsor Castle**, summer home of the Royal Family for over 900 years. It ranks among the world's most beautiful residences and is also the world's largest inhabited castle. The State Apartments may be open for visiting, but are dependent on the Royal Family's schedule. Next is a backstage tour of a theatre which will be a fascinating explanation of how a show works behind the scenes.

Option: Another theatrical show is offered tonight; details available by final payment date.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Thistle Hotel Hyde Park

Day 8: Thursday, July 20

We take a full day drive into Kent to visit **Canterbury Cathedral**, one of England's most famous churches and a World Heritage Site. Founded in 597, the cathedral was completely rebuilt about 1070, then rebuilt in the Gothic style 100 years later to accommodate the flow of pilgrims visiting the shrine of Archbishop Thomas Becket who was murdered here in 1170. Next, we go to **Leeds Castle**, built on islands in a lake formed by the River Len. A castle has existed on the site since 857. In the 13th century, it was a favourite residence of King Edward I and, in the 16th century, King Henry VIII used it as a dwelling for his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. The present castle dates mostly from the 19th century.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Thistle Hotel Hyde Park

Day 9: Friday, July 21

We leave London and head to **Oxford University**. With the benefit of two guides, we take a walking tour of the campus and its many landmark buildings, including Christ Church Cathedral. There is evidence of teaching as early as 1096, making it the oldest university in English-speaking countries and the world's second-oldest university in continuous operation. We continue into the **Cotswolds**, a rural region of outstanding natural beauty, and savour another cream tea. Our destination is Stratford-upon-Avon, the home of William Shakespeare, where we stay two nights.

Meals included: Breakfast, Tea, Dinner

Accommodation: Doubletree Hotel

Day 10: Saturday, July 22

The day is devoted to **Stratford-upon-Avon** – Shakespeare's birthplace home and grave at Holy Trinity Church, and **Anne Hathaway's thatch-roofed cottage**. A tour with lunch at the **Royal Shakespeare Theatre** is included, then tonight we attend a performance.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Doubletree Hotel



Anne Hathaway's Cottage

Day 11: Sunday, July 23

We drive through the Cotswolds with a stop in the charming village of Chipping Campden. The High Street dates from the 14th century and is lined with buildings built from locally quarried limestone known as Cotswold stone, and boasts a wealth of vernacular architecture. Much of the town centre is a conservation area which has helped to preserve the original buildings. Nearby is **Hidcote Manor Garden**, noted for its linked "garden rooms" of hedges, rare trees, topiary animals and birds, and herbaceous borders. A countryside pub lunch is included. We continue to Bath for a two-night stay.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Abbey Hotel, Bath

Day 12: Monday, July 24

During a guided walking tour of **Bath**, we pass several historic sites such as Bath Abbey, one of England's grand cathedrals, built in the 12th century. We tour the **Roman Baths**, the Pump Room, and the elaborate spa dating to the 1st century. The hot springs produce a million litres of water per day at a constant temperature of 46 degrees C. The afternoon is free time.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Abbey Hotel, Bath



Day 13: Tuesday, July 25

Today's drive goes into southwestern England. We take a walk through the ruins of **Glastonbury Abbey** which was founded in the 8th century and became one of the richest and most powerful monasteries in England. From the 12th century, the Glastonbury area has been associated with the legend of King Arthur, a connection promoted by medieval monks who asserted that Glastonbury was Avalon. A guided tour of **Exeter Cathedral** shows several notable features, such as an early set of misericords, an astronomical clock, and the longest uninterrupted medieval stone vaulted ceiling in the world. We continue to **Plymouth** for a three-night stay.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: New Continental Hotel

Day 14: Wednesday, July 26

Our first stop is the **Lost Gardens of Heligan**. The original gardens were created and nurtured by the Cornish Tremayne family from the mid-18th century to the beginning of the 20th century. The gardens were neglected after World War I and forgotten, then rediscovered and restored in the 1990s. They include colossal rhododendrons and camellias, a series of ponds, highly productive flower and vegetable gardens, an Italian garden, and a wild area filled with subtropical tree ferns. After lunch at a countryside pub, our afternoon drive goes to **Land's End**, the westernmost tip of Cornwall, where the Atlantic Ocean crashes into sheer cliffs.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: New Continental Hotel

Day 15: Thursday, July 27

We head east from Plymouth to Buckfast Abbey, a modern church since it was completed in 1938, but built on the site of an abbey dating to 1018. Next, we drive through the stark uplands of **Dartmoor National Park**, known for its tors, peat bogs, and ancient standing stones. Our next stop is Dartmouth where we board a small vessel for a cruise up the majestic River Dart, past some of Devon's most picturesque scenery. We get off at **Greenway House**. Built in 1780, it is best known as Agatha Christie's home from 1938 until her death in 1976. Several of her mystery novels were set here.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: New Continental Hotel



Day 16: Friday, July 28

We tour **Salisbury Cathedral**, a fine example of gothic architecture which boasts the tallest spire in England at 122 metres. Next is the most celebrated megalithic monument in England, **Stonehenge**. Built between 3000 and 1000 BC, it consists of four concentric rings of standing stones. Its purpose is still a puzzle, but it could have been a Druid temple or an astronomical clock. Our last night is south of London near Gatwick Airport. A farewell dinner is planned.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: TBA

Day 17: Saturday, July 29

Our WestJet flight leaves in late morning for Calgary, then there is a connecting flight to Victoria. A transfer is provided to your pickup point.

Meals included: Breakfast

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transfers to/from Victoria Airport
- Flight from Victoria to London and return
- Current air tax, security fees & fuel surcharge
- Airline luggage fee for 1 suitcase per person
- Coach transportation in England for 15 days
- 15 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- British tour guide for 16 days
- Cruise on Thames River
- Tower of London
- 3 London theatre performances (shows TBA)
- Hampton Court Palace
- Kew Royal Botanic Gardens
- Guided walk in London West End
- Guided tour of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre
- Windsor Castle
- Backstage tour of a London theatre
- Canterbury Cathedral
- Leeds Castle
- Walking tour of Oxford University
- Christ Church Cathedral Oxford
- Shakespeare birthplace
- Anne Hathaway's Cottage
- Holy Trinity Church & Shakespeare grave
- Backstage tour of Royal Shakespeare Theatre
- Performance at Royal Shakespeare Theatre
- Hidcote Manor Garden
- Walking tour of Bath
- Roman Baths and Pump Room
- Glastonbury Abbey
- Exeter Cathedral
- Lost Gardens of Heligan
- Land's End
- Buckfast Abbey
- Dartmoor National Park
- Dartmouth to Greenway cruise on River Dart
- Greenway House – Agatha Christie's home
- Salisbury Cathedral
- Stonehenge
- Transfer from hotel to Gatwick Airport
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- Road and bridge tolls
- Gratuities to British guides and drivers
- **26 meals:** 15 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 teas, 6 dinners

TOUR NOTES

Tour director & guides: A Wells Gray tour director accompanies you throughout the tour. A British guide is with you for 16 days in England. Local guides are hired for some cities to provide in-depth commentary.

Passport is required for this tour and must be valid until your return to Canada. A Canadian citizen does not require a visa to enter the United Kingdom.

Itinerary and Fare Changes: As the world emerges from the pandemic, many of our suppliers such as hotels, restaurants, attractions, and transportation providers are struggling with shortage of staff, inflated costs, and supply line challenges. Sometimes we are notified about changes to the itinerary prior to departure and sometimes during the tour. We do our best to substitute a similar service if something cancels, but occasionally the only alternative is to provide a refund for the missed activity. Please note that if we are forced to cancel a component of an extensive tour due to an issue beyond our control, the current penalties still apply if you choose to cancel the entire tour. Fuel surcharges and changes to taxes, foreign currency exchange rates, or other tour costs can occur at any time, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up to departure.

Currency & Expenses: The currency in England is the British Pound and, as of December 2022, a Canadian dollar is worth about £0.62 (or a British Pound will cost you about \$1.66). You should order pounds from your bank 2-3 weeks before departure, or plan to use ATMs in England, or exchange funds after arrival. Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere. Costs for meals and attractions you choose yourself are generally higher than in Canada.


Flights: Do you prefer seating in business class? Do you want window or aisle seating? Do you want to stay longer and return independently? For all 3 preferences, WestJet does not allow changes to our group block, so please book your own flight and take our option of "No Flight" for a discount of \$1,450 per person.

Gratuities: Gratuities to British guide, local guides, and coach drivers are included in the tour fare. The customary gratuities to Wells Gray tour director and Canadian drivers are not included and are left to your discretion.

TOUR NOTES CONTINUED

Room types: British hotel rooms are often smaller than North American rooms. A twin room may be furnished with two single beds. Triples are not available on this tour due to the smaller size and different configuration of rooms.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. Some restaurants on this tour may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. We have been informed that food allergies should be honoured, but it is impossible to handle everybody's requests for food preferences. (An allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not.) For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.

 **Activity Level 2:** Due to the historic nature of many attractions, it may be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces, and walk up to 2 km at a time. Rooms in some hotels may be reached by some stairs after riding the elevator. There can be longer walks in the airports. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. The coaches cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. Please do not book this tour if you depend upon a walker. If Activity Level 2 could be challenging, you must bring a companion who is able to assist you. The tour director, British guides, and drivers have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. Please consider all these mobility challenges prior to booking this tour. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some tour days. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

TOUR 25 This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning the tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due April 3, 2023. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking, cheque, Visa or Mastercard (\$5,000 limit per person per booking on credit cards).

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$300 discount on first 8 seats and \$150 on next 6 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after April 3, 2023.

Cancellation Policy: Up to March 3, 2023, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From March 4 to April 3, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From April 4 to May 3, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From May 4 to June 2, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After June 2, there is no refund.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Home pickups may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and coach size. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

Photo Credits: Wikimedia (Stonehenge, Globe Theatre, Hathaway's Cottage), Visit Britain (Hampton Court), Roland Neave (Tower Bridge), Visit Bath (Roman Baths), Greenway Ferry (Greenway House)

Experience Points: This tour earns 171 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until April 3, 2023.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

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