

Highlights of England

Welcome to England! This seven-day tour is the perfect introduction to one of the world's most iconic destinations. It takes in UNESCO World Heritage sites, historic cities, stately homes, traditional English cuisine and our celebrated culture.



> London Eye and Big Ben, London



> Oxford, Oxfordshire



> Bicester Village



> The Shambles, York

Day 1 London

You could spend weeks in London and not see everything this world-class city has to offer, but with careful planning you can cover the very best bits in a day. Start with towering Big Ben and Westminster Abbey on Parliament Square. A gentle stroll across royal St James Park, where pelicans perch on the benches, will take you to Buckingham Palace for the Changing of the Guard ceremony.

Take the tube to Tower Hill and head along to the picturesque Dickens Inn in St Katherine's Dock for a traditional pub lunch then take a short walk to the Tower of London. Pass the Beefeater guards and be dazzled by some of the world's most famous gems. From there, a cruise along the River Thames will give you a fisheye view of the city. For your evening entertainment, book a pre-theatre supper in one of Covent Garden's alfresco restaurants before heading to Theatreland for a show.



> London Eye, Big Ben and the River Thames, London

Day 2 Windsor and Oxford

Travel to Windsor, home to the oldest and largest occupied castle in the world: Windsor Castle. It's an official residence of Her Majesty the Queen. Highlights include the magnificent state apartments and St George's Chapel, burial place of 10 British monarchs. Lunch in The Crooked House of Windsor whose 400-year-old wonkily leaning structure is one of Windsor's must-sees.

After lunch travel to a city famous for its academic leanings. Historic Oxford is home to the oldest university in the English-speaking world and its colleges are scattered through the city centre. You can explore them by yourself, taking in Christ Church's Great Hall, Magdalen's high street-dominating tower and the purple wisteria that drapes the old stone walls of Jesus College. Afterwards, soak up some local nightlife in The Eagle and Child.

Day 3 Blenheim Palace and shopping at Bicester Village

Only eight miles from Oxford is Blenheim Palace. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is home to the Duke of Marlborough and the birthplace of former prime minister Sir Winston Churchill. Tour the exquisitely baroque State Rooms and relive the colourful events of the last 300 years through the eyes of its household staff. Outside, the park and Formal Gardens are a great place to stretch your legs while families can let off steam in the Pleasure Gardens. After the peace and tranquillity of Blenheim Palace it is time to shop!

Pay a visit to Bicester, just north of Oxford, and indulge in some serious retail therapy in the Oxfordshire countryside. The Bicester Designer Outlet is packed with boutiques offering heavy discounts on designer brands normally only found in the world's most exclusive shopping streets. You can pick up everything from a Vivienne Westwood bag to a Burberry coat.

Day 4 York and Manchester

Spend the morning in York with its staggering Gothic cathedral, York Minster. Wind your way between the historical buildings lining The Shambles, a cobbled medieval street and one of the city's most popular attractions. This busy passage, once populated by butchers, is now home to some of the city's best shopping. York used to be the capital of a Viking kingdom, and this ancient heritage is tightly bound up in the unique character of the city. Visit the Jorvik Centre to learn about life under the rule of the Vikings 1,000 years ago.

In the afternoon travel to Manchester and visit Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United. The Old Trafford tour lets you see the stadium through the eyes of Manchester United greats, from the dizzy heights of the North Stand to Sir Alex Ferguson's pitch-side dugout spot and the atmosphere-soaked players' dressing room. Every experience will seem to carry the roar of 76,000 fans in your ears – none more so than the ultimate honour of emerging from the tunnel and following so many famous boots into the Theatre of Dreams. After the Stadium Tour take time to explore the city of Manchester and dine in its world-famous Chinatown.



> York Minster, York

Highlights of England



> Royal Shakespeare Company, Warwickshire



> The Roman Baths, Bath



> Designer shop, London

Day 5 Stratford-upon-Avon

From Manchester, travel to Stratford-upon-Avon, one of England's most famous towns and the birthplace of William Shakespeare. Join a City Sightseeing hop-on, hop-off bus tour of Stratford's many visitor attractions, including Shakespeare's Birthplace, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Mary Arden's House and The Royal Shakespeare Theatre. If you prefer JK Rowling to England's greatest bard, head to The Museum of Wizardology and Magic Alley on Henley Street to buy your own magical wares. It's just like stepping into the pages of a Harry Potter book!

In the evening catch one of Shakespeare's plays at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre or The Swan and dine in RSC Theatre's new Rooftop Restaurant, with superb views of the idyllic River Avon.

Day 6 Cotswolds and Bath

From Stratford-upon-Avon travel through the Cotswolds to Bath. The Cotswolds is a world-famous area of gentle hilly country occupying the area between Gloucester, Bath, Oxford and Stratford. It includes some of England's most historical markets towns and beautiful stone villages including Chipping Campden, Broadway, and Bibury.

After you have had lunch in one of the many quintessential pubs of the Cotswolds, travel to honey-coloured Bath Spa and spend the afternoon exploring the streets on foot. Bath's compact centre is a pleasant mix of Georgian crescents, squares and circuses sprinkled with Roman remains.

Day 7 Bath and Stonehenge

In the morning you can choose from bus, walking or chauffeur-driven tours – or download a themed MP3 audio tour from www.visitbath.co.uk for a self-guided walk. Highlights include Pulteney Bridge, Roman Baths, Bath Abbey and the Royal Crescent. Or you could book a session at Thermae Bath Spa; people have been enjoying the warm, mineral-rich waters of England's original and only natural thermal spa for over 2,000 years. For a truly Bath experience, buy a package that includes entry to the Roman Baths, two hours in Thermae and lunch in the Pump Room restaurant, where you can "take the waters" just like they did in Jane Austen's time. Finally browse many of the designer shops bath has to offer.

From Bath, travel to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Stonehenge, the world-famous icon of England. Spend a few hours wondering about the history of this unexplained monument. After visiting Stonehenge it is time to travel back to London for some last-minute shopping before returning home.



> Stonehenge

Other things to see and do

1 The British Museum, London

The British Museum has a unique collection of seven million objects covering the history of human cultures. The spectacular new glass ceiling that transformed the inner courtyard into Europe's largest covered public square was designed by world-renowned architect Norman Foster. There is also a calendar of exhibitions that attracts visitors from all over the world. www.britishmuseum.org



> Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

2 Eton College, Windsor

Eton College was established as a school for boys in 1440 during the reign of King Henry VI and contains some of England's finest historic buildings, such as the College Chapel. Former pupils include Hugh Laurie, George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, Percy Bysshe Shelley and the current British prime minister, David Cameron. The college allows visitors between March and October. www.etoncollege.com

3 The Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford

Founded in 1683 and transformed with a multi-million pound programme in 2009, the Ashmolean is one of England's most famous cultural attractions and places of learning. Britain's first public museum now has some 39 new galleries including space for blockbuster exhibitions. Some of the collection highlights include Powhatan's Mantel, The Heberden Coin Room and Jameel Centre for Islamic and Asian Art. www.ashmolean.org

4 Jane Austen Centre, Bath

The Jane Austen Centre is in 40 Gay Street, a magnificent Georgian town house. Visitors follow a permanent exhibition telling the story of the celebrated English author's visits to the city of Bath and the impact that it had on her writing during her all-too-short life. www.janeausten.co.uk

Highlights of England



> River Avon, Warwickshire

1



> Afternoon tea

2



> Castle Howard, North Yorkshire

3



Other things to see and do

5 Boating on the Avon River, Stratford-upon-Avon

Messing about on the River Avon is a popular pastime year round. People of all ages take to the water in hired punts, rowing boats and small motor boats or stroll along the banks. Those who simply want to take it easy can let someone else take the responsibility in a local cruise boat or join an evening dinner cruise.

www.shakespeare-country.co.uk

6 Castle Howard, York

Enjoy a beautiful day out at Castle Howard, Yorkshire's finest historic house and estate, originally designed by Sir John Vanbrugh for the 3rd Earl of Carlisle. Castle Howard, home to the Howard family for over 300 years, is a magnificent 18th-century residence set in 1,000 acres of beautiful landscaped grounds within the Howardian Hills, an area of outstanding natural beauty.

www.castlehoward.co.uk

7 Warwick Castle, Warwick

One of the Midland's leading visitor attractions. Warwick Castle dates back over 1,100 years. It plays host to a rolling calendar of events and entertainment, from world-class jousting tournaments to battling knights and spectacular birds of prey. Visitors can experience castle life and witness preparations for battle in Kingmaker, come face to face with the castle's darkest history in The Castle Dungeon and experience a Victorian Royal Weekend.

www.warwick-castle.co.uk

8 Afternoon Tea, Brown's Hotel, London

Taking a traditional English afternoon tea during a trip to London is an absolute must-do. Dating back to 1837, Brown's is London's oldest hotel. Choose from 17 different teas to accompany a sumptuous selection of sandwiches, scones, pastries and freshly baked cakes. Reservations are recommended!

www.brownsotel.com



> Warwick Castle, Warwickshire

food & drink



Dickens Inn

Marble Quay, St Katherine's Way,
London E1W 1UH
www.dickensinn.co.uk

The National Dining Rooms

Sainsbury Wing, the National
Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London
WC2N 5DN
www.thenationaldiningrooms.co.uk

The Crooked House of Windsor

51 High Street, Windsor SL4 1LR
www.crooked-house.com

The Eagle and Child

49 St. Giles St, Oxford OX1 3LU
www.nicholsonspubs.co.uk

The Olive Tree at The Queensberry Hotel

4-7 Bath Street, Bath BA1 2QP
www.thequeensberry.co.uk

Rooftop Restaurant, Royal Shakespeare Theatre

Waterside, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Warwickshire CV37 6BB
www.rsc.org.uk

Betty's York

6-8 St Helen's Square,
York YO1 8QP
www.bettys.co.uk

where to stay



The May Fair Hotel

Stratton Street, London W1J 8LT
www.themayfairhotel.co.uk

The Macdonald Randolph Hotel

Beaumont Street, Oxford,
Oxfordshire OX1 2LN
www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk

Brooks Guesthouse

(Boutique B&B)
1 Crescent Gardens, Upper Bristol
Road, Bath BA1 2NA
www.brooksguesthouse.com

The Arden Hotel

Waterside, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Warwickshire CV37 6BA
www.theardenhotelstratford.com

The Minster Hotel

60 Bootham, York YO30 7BZ
www.yorkminsterhotel.co.uk