



From
£9,479 GBP

Single Room
£11,609 GBP

Twin Room
£9,479 GBP

Prices valid until
30th December 2026

18 days

Duration

England, Scotland

Destination

Level 2 - Moderate

Activity

British Gardens Small Group Tour

Jun 06 2027 to Jun 23 2027

British Gardens | Small Group Tour

For several years, Odyssey has offered tours to the Chelsea Flower Show and its surrounding areas. Due to high interest in gardens and garden design, we are now delighted to offer a small group tour of British gardens, allowing you to explore with like-minded travellers.



The Itinerary: British Gardens Small Group Tour

Our small group tour of British gardens takes you to sites across Scotland and England. At each location, we meet with some of Britain's top horticultural and garden design guides, who will share stories from the era of Capability Brown, Britain's most famous landscape designer, through to contemporary garden design.

As with many Odyssey tours, this journey has an educational focus. By the end of the tour, you'll gain a deep understanding of three centuries of British garden design and an even greater appreciation for this enduring art form.

The tour begins with three nights in Edinburgh, then continues southeast to Alnwick, followed by Buxton (our base for four nights). From Buxton, we visit Chester and Stratford-upon-Avon, before spending three nights in Oxford, and finally concluding with four nights in London.

We have carefully selected the best gardens across the UK, many of which are under the stewardship of the National Trust. These gardens are critically acclaimed and recognized as some of the finest in the world. Along the way, we explore the work of key historical figures, including Capability Brown, Humphry Repton, and Gertrude Jekyll, and see garden design ranging from grand landscapes to the refined planting of the Nicholsons at Sissinghurst.

The History of Britain's Gardens

Britain is renowned worldwide for its gardens, many of which have rich and proud histories. This small group tour is designed for garden enthusiasts, visiting both grand and intimate gardens while benefiting from the expertise of local guides and talks from the gardeners

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themselves.

The diversity of British gardens is remarkable — from classical and contemporary, boldly baroque, to Italian-style designs — each with its own unique history. Our tour brings these stories and landscapes to life.

About This Tour

This British Gardens small group tour is part of Odyssey's suite of annual garden tours. It is designed especially for senior or mature travellers, and welcomes both couples and solo travellers.

To learn more about Britain, England, or Scotland, visit [Odyssey's country profiles](#), where you can also explore other tour departures. For more details about this tour, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above. To experience this tour, please call or email us, or simply fill in the booking form on the right-hand side of this page.

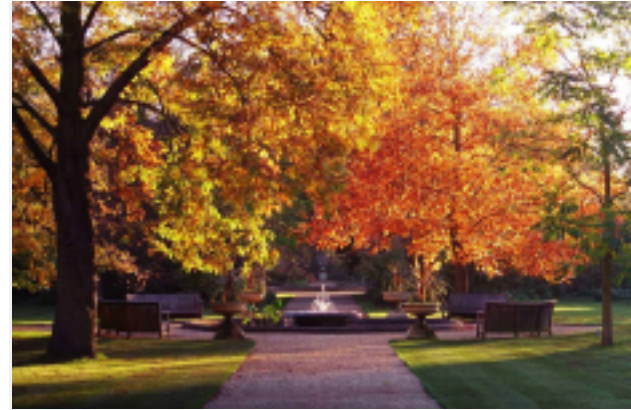
Articles about England

The following articles are either published by Odyssey Traveller for mature aged and senior travellers or carefully selected external sources to maximise their knowledge and enjoyment of England when visiting:

- [Great Britain Travel tips](#)
- [Understanding British Churches](#)
- [English Village History](#)
- [Britain's National Trust.](#)
- [Roman roads](#)
- [Gargoyles and Grotesques; an understanding.](#)
- [Victorian Country life](#)

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- [Jane Austen's England](#)
- [How to read the British landscape](#)
- [The Lake District for poets & Romantics](#)
- [History of England: – PODCASTS](#)
- [Tudor England](#)
- [Country life magazine articles](#)
- [Origin of Cotswold stone](#)

Highlights

1. Visit more than 30 gardens and parks with specialist local guides on this tour
2. Take in the remarkable baroque garden at Powis Castle, the last word in formal horticultural style.
3. Visit gardens and landscapes by Humphry Repton, Capability Brown & Gertrude Jekyll
4. Meet leading garden designer Roger Platts at his very own private garden
5. Visit Ascott House and its elegant gardens

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Edinburgh

Overview:

We arrive in Edinburgh and make our way individually to our hotel. We meet in the evening for orientation and a welcome dinner.

Accommodation:

Overnight Haymarket Hotel or similar



Day 2

Locations: Edinburgh

Overview:

We commence our tour of Britain's gardens with sites in and around Edinburgh. We visit the Royal Botanic Garden, which was founded in 1670 as a physics garden and maintains its scientific roots in the conservation of plants. We explore the medieval ruins of Dirleton Castle, which is renowned for its freshly rejuvenated gardens. The design boasts the world's longest herbaceous border. We marvel at the lochs, glens and cliffs of Holyrood Park as we make our way to Arthur's Seat. This rocky summit offers picturesque views of Edinburgh. It was described by Robert Louis Stevenson as "a hill for magnitude, a mountain in virtue of its bold design".

Accommodation:

Overnight Haymarket Hotel or similar

Day 3

Locations: Edinburgh

Overview:

We continue our tour of Edinburgh's historic gardens with visits to Scone Palace, Glamis Castle and Edinburgh Royal Castle.

The Edinburgh Castle is an historic fortress atop Castle Rock. The rock was settled as far back as the Iron Age. It is now in the care of Historic Scotland, an arm of the government, and is one of Scotland's premier tourist attractions. Glamis Castle is called Scotland's most beautiful. The extensive gardens change throughout the seasons, and include a walled garden, an Italian garden, a grass maze, and Monet-style fountains. The open grounds of Scone Palace boast the David Douglas pavilion, named for the palace's head gardener from 1799 to 1806.

Today with a specialist local guide with the tour for the day we visit and learn about 3 unique gardens in and around Edinburgh including Edinburgh Royal Castle, Scone Palace and Glamis Castle

Accommodation:

Overnight Haymarket Hotel or similar

Day 4

Locations: Alnwick

Overview:

Today, we make our way to Alnwick, England. Along the way, we visit Cragside House and gardens. This Victorian country house at the heart of Northumberland is a very popular spot. It was home to William Armstrong, a scientist and philanthropist who became known as the “Modern Magician”. Among his talents was an eye for landscape design, and he experimented with trees, plants and water to produce stunning gardens.

One arrival in Alnwick, we enjoy a short lecture on the work of Capability Brown at Alnwick Castle. We also visit the acclaimed contemporary Poison Garden in the grounds of the castle.

Dinner will be provided this evening.

Accommodation:

Overnight White Swan Hotel or similar

Day 5

Locations: Buxton

Overview:

We depart Alnwick for Buxton today. We pause at Northumberliandia, a huge land sculpture in the form of a reclining female figure – cheekily called “the Lady of the North”. Our local guide will provide insights into the design and approach to this significant piece of artwork. It was completed in 2012.

In the afternoon, we visit Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Garden.

Fountains Abbey is one of the largest and best preserved ruined Cistercian monasteries in England. Founded in 1132, the abbey operated for over 400 years. Up until 1539, when Henry VIII ordered the

Dissolution of the Monasteries.

We enjoy a group dinner this evening.

Accommodation:

Overnight White Swan Hotel or similar

Day 6

Locations: Buxton

Overview:

We spend today at the Chatsworth Royal Horticultural Society show: a flower show that blends tradition with the unexpected and innovative.

Accommodation:

Overnight White Swan Hotel or similar

Day 7

Locations: Buxton

Overview:

Today we visit Blakewell Gardens and Haddon Manor. Haddon Manor has been described as “the most complete and most interesting medieval house of its period in England”. Our specialist guide will share more of this story with you during your visit.

In the late afternoon, we join the gardener of Shugborough for a talk and walking tour through the estate of this acclaimed and wonderful garden.

Accommodation:

Overnight White Swan Hotel or similar

Day 8

Locations: Buxton

Overview:

The Yorkshire Sculptural Park is foremost on today’s itinerary. This open-air gallery shows work by British and international artists, including Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, set in attractive grounds. It is

regarded as a leading international centre for modern and contemporary art.

This afternoon, we visit Renishaw Hall for a guided tour. Renishaw Hall's gardens are Italian in design, and were laid out over 100 years ago by Sir George Sitwell. The garden is divided into 'rooms' with yew hedges, flanked with classical statues. These 'rooms' have been filled with an impressive collection of plants. The garden is set in acres of parkland with lakeside and nature walks alongside English herbaceous borders and ornamental ponds, a delight for garden enthusiasts.

Accommodation:

Overnight White Swan Hotel or similar

Day 9

Locations: Chester

Overview:

Today, we begin our sightseeing with a visit to visit Ness Botanical Gardens, overlooking the River Dee. Then we check out Bodnant Gardens, these stunning Gardens are famous for its Laburnum arch, but the Rhodendron collection and four national collections are just as impressive.

We enjoy dinner as a group this evening.

Accommodation:

Overnight BW Hallmark Hotel Chester Westminster or similar

Day 10

Locations: Stratford Upon Avon

Overview:

Today, we make our way to Stratford Upon Avon. We visit Powis Castle and Gardens, followed by Hidcote Manor and its lovely garden.

The 18th century saw a concerted reaction against the formality of garden design. Thankfully, Powis Castle has preserved a true Baroque

garden so that enthusiasts can appreciate this particular style.

Hidcote Manor boasts a famous Arts and Crafts garden, established around 1905. Its founder, Lawrence Johnston, was a keen garden designer, with a strong sense of artistic composition. He was influenced by the work of Alfred Parsons and Gertrude Jekyll, who created outdoor 'rooms'. Accordingly, yew, holly and beech hedges are used to define a series of garden rooms. One room is occupied only by a circular raised pool. The character of others is derived from the inspired planting itself.

A group dinner will be provided this evening.

Day 11

Locations: Oxford

Overview:

Upon our arrival in Oxford today, we visit the Oxford University Botanic Garden, followed by Blenheim Palace.

The University of Oxford Botanic Garden is Britain's oldest, founded in 1612. It was initially used to cultivate plants for medicinal research.

Today, it holds one of the most diverse collections of plants in the world, with some 8,000 species representing over 90% of higher plant families. The collection is spread over 1.8 hectares (4.5 acres) of scenic grounds.

Blenheim Palace is the principal residence of the Dukes of Marlborough. It is the only non-royal, non-Episcopal house in England to hold the title of palace. In 1987, UNESCO granted it World Heritage status. The palace preserves the short-lived English-baroque style, and is also notable as the birthplace and childhood home of Sir Winston Churchill. The gardens and grounds were designed by Capability Brown. During his ten-year tenure, he created the Great Lake, and successfully engineered a landscape that appears entirely natural.

Dinner will be provided this evening.

Accommodation:

Overnight Royal Oxford Hotel or similar

Day 12

Locations: Oxford

Overview:

Today, we visit Ascott House and its elegant gardens. It was originally built as a farm house during the reign of James I. It was acquired by Baron Mayer de Rothschild in 1873, and then given to his nephew Leopold de Rothschild. It was under the junior Rothschild's patronage that the buildings and grounds were transformed. The gardens were designed by Sir Harry Veitch as a birthday present from Leopold to his wife.

Nearby is Waddesdon Manor. This property was also owned by the Rothschild family. It was built for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild as a weekend house, in the neo-Renaissance style of a French chateau. The garden was designed to entertain weekend party guests. Beautiful garden sculptures and an aviary feature in these elaborate grounds.

Accommodation:

Overnight Royal Oxford Hotel or similar

Day 13

Locations: Oxford

Overview:

Today the tour commences with a tour of Stowe.

The Landscape Garden at Stowe was created in three main phases, showing the development of garden design in 18th-century England (this is the only garden where all three designers worked):

From 1711 to c.1735 Charles Bridgeman was the garden designer[29] and John Vanbrugh the architect.

In 1731 William Kent. Kent's architectural work was in the newly fashionable Palladian style.

In 1741, Capability Brown was appointed head gardener. He worked with Gibbs until 1749 and with Kent until the latter's death in 1748.

Brown departed in the autumn of 1751 to start his independent career

as a garden designer[34].

Stowe are today a significant example of the English garden style.

At Stowe gardens we can pause for tea and a bite to eat and admire the view before returning to our accommodation.

Afternoon at your leisure.

Accommodation:

Overnight Royal Oxford Hotel or similar

Day 14

Locations: London

Overview:

Today, we visit Wrest Park for a talk on English houses and Capability Brown. The remainder of the day will be spent at leisure, before we meet again in the evening for a group dinner.

Accommodation:

Overnight London Lodge Hotel or similar

Day 15

Locations: London

Overview:

Today is set aside for your leisure.

Accommodation:

Overnight London Lodge Hotel or similar

Day 16

Locations: London

Overview:

Today, we visit Edenbridge, Kent. We meet leading garden designer Roger Platts at his very own private garden 'Leydens'. Platts has established an international reputation for his garden consultancy work. At the time of writing, he holds 8 RHS gold medals, and is working on a

second book to follow his first publication, *Traditional Gardens*.

In the afternoon, we visit nearby Hever Castle, which is set in 124 acres of stunning, award-winning grounds. The English Rose Garden boasts 4000 fragrant rose bushes. Enjoy the plantings along the beloved Pompeiian Wall, marvel at the giant topiary chess set, and stroll through the Tudor Garden. The attractions are too many to name at the Hever Castle garden. You will simply have to see for yourself on our walking tour.

Accommodation:

Overnight London Lodge Hotel or similar

Day 17

Locations: London

Overview:

We make our way to Sissinghurst Castle, the gardens of which are a monument to love. Poet Vita Sackville West and Harold Nicolson fell for crumbling Sissinghurst Castle in 1930. At that stage, the grounds were mostly used by resident farm workers for growing vegetables and crops. Inspired by Gertrude Jekyll, the couple undertook a decade-long labour of love, planting to outdoor 'rooms' that each have a distinct character. Sackville-West and Nicolson were the last private owners of Sissinghurst Castle, before it passed to the care of the National Trust in 1967.

In the afternoon we pay a quick visit to Bayham Old Abbey, on the Kent-Sussex border. The sandstone ruins tell of the 13th to 15th centuries. They now sit within a landscape designed by Humphry Repton, the prolific successor to Capability Brown.

We enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant tonight.

Accommodation:

Overnight London Lodge Hotel or similar

Day 18

Locations: London

Overview:

Our tour concludes after breakfast.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 17 nights accommodation.
- Meals as indicated on the itinerary.
- All field trips and associated entry fees as per the itinerary.
- All travel is in modern, air-conditioned coaches.
- Services of a tour leader for the duration of tour.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.

What's not included in our Tour

- International airfares.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.