



From  
**\$18,294** NZD

Single Room  
 \$22,192 NZD

Twin Room  
 \$18,294 NZD

Prices valid until  
 30th December 2024

**16 days**  
 Duration

**England, Scotland**  
 Destination

**Level 2 - Moderate**  
 Activity

# British Gardens Small Group Tour including Chatsworth RHS show

Jun 06 2025 to Jun 21 2025

## British Gardens | Small Group Tour

A 19-day small group tour of British gardens. This tour includes a day at the Royal Horticultural Society show in Chatsworth, or RHS Chatsworth.

For the last few years, Odyssey has offered a tour to the Chelsea flower show and surrounding areas. Thanks to the high level of interest in gardens and garden design, Odyssey is now offering this small group



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<https://www.odysseytraveller.com>

27-Jul-2024



tour of British gardens, including RHS Chatsworth, for you to enjoy with like-minded people.

## The itinerary for the British Gardens small group tour

The small group tour of British gardens visits sites in Scotland and England. At each location, we meet with some of the best horticultural and garden design guides in Britain. During our visit, they will share their stories of the history of gardens from Capability Brown, Britain's most famous landscape designer to contemporary garden design today.

As with many of Odyssey's tours, the small group tour of British Gardens has an educational focus. By the tour's conclusion, we return with a greater understanding of three centuries of garden design in Britain. In addition, an even greater appreciation for this enduring form of expression.

The small group tour of British gardens commences with three nights in amazing Edinburgh. We make our way south-east to Alnwick, then on to Buxton – our base for four nights and the location of RHS Chatsworth. From Buxton, we travel to Chester, and then Stratford Upon Avon. Three nights in Oxford will follow, before our group arrives in London. We will spend four nights in London before the conclusion of our tour.

On the small group tour of British gardens we have chosen the best gardens across the UK. The majority of those visited are today under the stewardship of the National Trust. If you would like to read more about Britain's National Trust, this article may be of special interest. The gardens selected have received critical acclaim and are recognised as among the world's best. During our tour, we learn about the work of key historical figures including Capability Brown, Humphry Repton and Gertrude Jekyll. Our garden tour moves from grand landscape designs to the finesse of planting achieved by the Nicholson's at Sissinghurst.



## The History of Britain's Gardens

Britain is famous all over the world for its gardens and many of them have strong and proud historical backgrounds. This small group tour has been designed for garden lovers. We will visit gardens both great and small, and enjoy the expertise of our local guides, as well as special talks from the gardeners themselves. The diversity of gardens in Britain is striking. From classical to contemporary, boldly baroque or Italian-style, each garden has a unique history. Our British Gardens small group tour will bring these histories to life.

The small group tour of British gardens is just one of a number of garden tours offered each year by Odyssey Travellers. This small group tour is designed especially for senior or mature travellers, and we welcome both couples and solo travellers.

If you'd like to learn more about Britain, England or Scotland, visit Odyssey's country profiles where all other tour departures are listed as well. For more details on this tour, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the 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](#)

British Gardens Small Group Tour including Chatsworth RHS show

<https://www.odysseytraveller.com>





- [Gargoyles and Grotesques; an understanding.](#)
- [Victorian Country life](#)
- [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. Spend a day at Wisley RHS gardens
3. Experience the sights and delights of the RHS Chatsworth Flower Show
4. Take in the remarkable baroque garden at Powis Castle, the last word in formal horticultural style.
5. Visit gardens and landscapes by Humphry Repton, Capability Brown & Gertrude Jekyll

## Itinerary

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## 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 Craggside 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[33]. 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:**

This morning, we enjoy a Wisley (Royal Horticultural Society) RHS garden tour.. Wisley is a large and diverse garden. Among its varied features is a series of small scale "model gardens", designed to inspire and teach visitors what they might achieve in their own gardens. Additionally, new cultivars of species are assessed here in the trial



fields.

The afternoon 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 Pompeian 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.