



From
£8,360 GBP

Single Room

£9,614 GBP

Twin Room

£8,360 GBP

Prices valid until
30th December 2024

17 days

Duration

England

Destination

Level 2 - Moderate

Activity

Devon and Cornwall, England

Sep 09 2024 to Sep 25 2024

Small group Tour of Devon and Cornwall, England

Join Odyssey Traveller on our small group tours Devon and Cornwall in England. This is a small group tour for up to 16 travellers for mature and senior travellers who are travelling with their partner or as a solo traveller. A journey filled with medieval treasures, charming fishing villages in the north Cornish coast, stunning cliff-top coastal views of the blue Atlantic, and atmospheric destinations traditionally linked to the



Devon and Cornwall, England

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05-May-2024

legends of King Arthur.

Our 15-day small group tour for mature-aged and senior travellers begins and ends in Bristol, situated on the River Avon in South West England, once a medieval trade centre and a busy maritime port for explorations into the New World. Bristol is a great first stop for our own adventure as we travel west and south, even venturing beyond the Cornish coast and across the Atlantic to the Isles of Scilly.

We will spend nights in Exeter, Paignton, St Austell, Penzance, Hugh Town, Newquay, and Lynton, exploring top attractions in the British mainland dating from the medieval and industrial ages: from the medieval stronghold believed to be where King Arthur was conceived (**Tintagel Castle** in Tintagel) to the last castle constructed in England (**Castle Drogo**); from the highest and steepest water powered railway in the world (**Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway**) to the longest passenger ship of its time that once travelled from Bristol to New York (**SS Great Britain**).

About Devon and Cornwall

Located on a peninsula winding southwest into The Atlantic Ocean, Devon and Cornwall are among England's most culturally and geographically distinct regions. The scenery here is spectacular and varied, ranging from windswept moors to England's best (and warmest) beaches, craggy cliffs to verdant subtropical gardens. Our tour also delves into the history of the region, finding a land weighted with myth and legend, with a fascinating and surprisingly cosmopolitan past.

Cornwall:

At the southern and western most tip of Great Britain, Cornwall (*Kernow*) is a world apart. A powerful Brythonic Celtic Kingdom in the early Middle Ages, Celtic traditions have held on here. Cornwall is recognised as one of the six Celtic nations, along with Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Brittany, and the Isle of Man. The Cornish language was widely spoken here until the English Reformation, and even today, you'll see Cornish place names on the map, and hear Cornish phrases spoken. (A good

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one to know is '*Kernow bys vyken!*' – Cornwall forever!).

Since ancient times, Cornwall has been closely linked to the outside world, thanks to the export of tin. Historians suggest that Cornish tin powered the advancements of the Bronze Age, as tin was necessary to the smelting of bronze. In the Classical Era, tin from Cornwall reached the Mediterranean, while the Early Middle Ages saw tin exchanged for luxury goods from North Africa and the Middle East. In the 19th century, tin mining expanded rapidly, as the Industrial Revolution allowed for mining deep under the ground. Cornwall and Devon's mines are today listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Cornwall was also closely associated with pirates in the Early Modern Period, inspiring *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Devon:

Devon, also known as Devonshire, is a cultural bridge between Cornwall and 'up country' (as the locals call England). In the Early Middle Ages, it was part of the Kingdom of Dumnonia, but unlike Cornwall, it was assimilated into Anglo-Saxon culture during the reign of Æthelstan (924 – 939), who set the border between Anglo-Saxon Wessex and Celtic Cornwall at the River Tamar, even today the border between Cornwall and Devon.

Devon is home to some of Great Britain's most stunning scenery. Unique among English counties, it has two coastlines: south to the English Channel and north to the Bristol Channel and Celtic Sea. **Exmoor** and **Dartmoor**, in North Devon, offer southern England's wildest scenery; while the cliffs of Devon's northern coast are the remotest coastline in England, at points inaccessible by land or sea.

Devon is perhaps most famous for giving the world Devonshire tea, known locally as a 'cream tea'. However, this seemingly innocuous tradition is the subject of fierce debate in the West Country, with Devon and Cornwall strongly disputing both which county originated the tea, and how best to serve it: Devonians place the clotted cream directly onto the scone, before topping it with jam, while the Cornish place jam first, then cream.

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Tour Highlights

Legends of King Arthur

Our tour of Devon and Cornwall is steeped in legends and myths. Beneath **Tintagel Castle** is **Merlin's Cave**, named after the legendary wizard of Camelot, who was believed to have once lived here.

In addition to Tintagel Castle, we will also be visiting **Glastonbury Tor**, a hill believed to be the "Avalon" mentioned in Arthurian legend and the location of the Holy Grail. A Celtic story also says the hill, which is topped by a roofless tower, is said to hide an entrance into the fairy realm.

Coastal Walks

We will appreciate the natural beauty of the destinations we will visit through scenic walks. We will enjoy a stroll through **Dartmoor National Park** and a walking tour of the **Valley of Rocks**, a dry valley that runs parallel to the sea, and is famous for its wild goats that roam freely around the valley, even on its cliff edges!

We will also enjoy the magnificent ocean views on a coastal walk from **Godrevy Beach to Hell's Mouth**, following a cliff-top pathway along the Cornish coastline.

Gardens

In addition to natural scenery we will also explore spectacular man-made environments. We will visit the **Hestercombe House and Gardens**, which covers 50 acres and spans three centuries of garden history and design.

This small group tour also visits Coleton Fishacre house and gardens. Built by Rupert D'Oyly Carter and his wife Dorothy in the 1920's a blend of Art deco and arts and craft but wrapped in history of the 1920's. D'Oyly Carter family was instrumental in bringing Gilbert & Sullivan and so much more to the middle classes in Britain and America, as well as links to scandals of the day from Oscar Wilde and murders at the Savoy hotel

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that the family owned. It is a fascinating house and garden with an amazing back story.

We will have a guided tour of the **Lost Gardens of Heligan**, a thriving estate in the 19th century that was neglected for decades as its workforce left to fight in World War I, with many dying in the trenches or unable to return. The gardens would not be restored until its rediscovery in 1990.

We will also visit the **Eden Project**, a reclaimed china clay pit that is now home to the largest indoor rainforest in the world, complete with a walkway and a waterfall. The Project's co-founder, Sir Tim Smit KBE, was also involved in the rediscovery and restoration of the Lost Gardens of Heligan.

Isles

We will sail from the mainland to St Mary's Island, where we will visit **Hugh Town**. Hugh Town is the capital of the Isles of Scilly, sitting on a sandy peninsula in southwestern St Mary's with only a thousand or so residents.

We will visit **St Michael's Mount**, a tidal island in Mount's Bay, Cornwall, which may remind some of Normandy's Mont-Saint-Michel.

Tresco Island is one of the five inhabited islands of the Scilly Isles and measures only two and a half miles long and a mile wide. In this car-free island, visitors can explore on foot or by hiring bikes. Here we will visit the subtropical **Tresco Abbey Gardens**, with flora that would not survive in the mainland but thrive here.

Farthest Points

We will visit two of mainland Britain's farthest points. **The Lizard** is a peninsula in southern Cornwall, with the Lizard Point marking the most southerly point in mainland Britain. It is famous for its serpentine stone, a unique, dark-green-veined metamorphic rock. We will continue to **Land's End**, the westernmost point of mainland Britain and where we



will stand between the English Channel and the Celtic Sea.

For more details, 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.

Other Odyssey Tours

This tour of Devon and Cornwall is only one of many [tours of Britain](#) for mature-aged and senior travellers offered by Odyssey Traveller. Click through [to see our other offerings departing in 2020](#).

Articles published by Odyssey Traveller to assist you on your visit to Britain

The following list of articles published by Odyssey Traveller for mature aged and senior travellers to maximise their knowledge and enjoyment of Britain when visiting:

- [Why Join a Small Group Tour?](#)
- [Ten Things We Never Knew About London](#)
- [Exploring Newcastle upon Tyne](#)
- [Traveller's Guide to Medieval England](#)
- [Life in the Medieval British Village](#)
- [Victorian England Rural Life](#)
- [Queen Victoria's Britain](#)
- [New Discoveries About Britain's Stone Circles](#)
- [Dry Stone Walls: An Alternative History of the British Isles](#)
- [British Village Icons: Pubs and Cottages](#)
- [Roman Roads in Britain](#)

Click here to see [our other articles of the British Isles](#).

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External Articles to assist you on your visit to Britain

- [Getting Around Devon](#)
- [Travel Devon](#)
- [10 Must Visit Beaches in Devon](#)
- [Visiting the Beautiful Cornwall Region of England](#)
- [48 hours in. . . Cornwall, an insider guide to England's wild west](#)
- [Ten books about Walking in Britain from the Guardian](#)
- [UNESCO World Heritage sites of Britain](#)
- [Neolithic Britain](#) (British Museum)
- [Guide to Neolithic Britain](#) (Country File)
- [History: Middle Ages](#) (BBC)
- [An Introduction to Medieval England](#) (English Heritage)
- [The top 9 UK countryside breaks for 2018](#) (Country Living)
- [21 Most Beautiful Villages in the UK](#) (Travel Away)
- [These are the top 10 most picturesque towns, villages and cities in England](#) (House Beautiful)

Odyssey Traveller has more information on [England](#).

Highlights

1. Enter the SS Great Britain, a former passenger steamship designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and the longest passenger ship in the world from 1845 to 1854.
2. Experience a guided tour of the beautiful Lost Gardens of Heligan, neglected for decades due to the Great War, and rediscovered in 1990.

3. Visit the medieval stronghold, Tintagel, believed to be where King Arthur was conceived, and Merlin's Cave beneath the castle.
4. Take a scenic ferry ride to St Mary's Island and visit Hugh Town, the capital of the Isles of Scilly.
5. Travel to mainland Britain's farthest points: The Lizard in the south, and Land's End in the west.

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Bristol

Overview:

We arrive in Bristol and make our own way to our hotel. In the evening we will meet together as a group for our welcome dinner with the Odyssey Program Leader at a local restaurant. (D)

Accommodation:

Bristol Hotel or similar

Day 2

Locations: Bristol

Overview:

Following breakfast in our hotel, we will go on a sightseeing tour of Bristol with a local guide. Bristol on the River Avon in South West England was once a medieval trade centre, and maritime port for explorations into the New World.

Among the places we will visit today are:

- **Clifton Suspension Bridge**, which spans the Avon Gorge and the symbol of the city of Bristol
- **Observatory**, once a mill and now offers great views of the city
- **Wills Memorial Building**, in the University of Bristol (external visit)

- **SS Great Britain**, a former passenger steamship designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and the longest passenger ship in the world from 1845 to 1854, travelling from Bristol to New York

(B)

Accommodation:

Bristol Hotel or similar

Day 3

Locations: Bristol - Glastonbury

Overview:

Today we will be departing from Bristol and heading to Exeter. Along the way, we will have stopovers at Glastonbury and Taunton.

In Glastonbury, we will visit the **Glastonbury Abbey**, a monastery founded in the 7th century, and the **Glastonbury Tor**, a hill overlooking Somerset, and is believed to be the “Avalon” mentioned in Arthurian legend. Other mythic stories say the hill, which is topped by a roofless tower, is said to hide an entrance into the fairy realm, and is the location of the Holy Grail.

We continue on to Taunton where we will visit the **Hestercombe House and Gardens**, which covers 50 acres and offers sights from three centuries of garden history and design.

(B)

Accommodation:

Mercure Exeter Rougemont or similar

Day 4

Locations: Exeter

Overview:

We will enjoy a half-day tour of Exeter, exploring the main sights including the **Exeter Cathedral**, a beautiful example of the Gothic

Decorated style of church architecture.

The afternoon can be spent at our leisure.

(B)

Accommodation:

Mercure Exeter Rougemont or similar

Day 5

Locations: Exeter - Dartmoor - Paignton

Overview:

From Exeter, we will travel to Dartmoor, where we will enjoy a full-day tour with a local guide. Our tour includes a short walk in **Dartmoor National Park**, a vast moorland with prehistoric ruins dating back to the late Neolithic Age, and entrance to **Castle Drogo**, constructed in the early 20th century and the last castle to be constructed in England.

After a full day of sightseeing on the Moor, we transfer to the seaside resort of Paignton for the night.

(B)

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 6

Locations: Paignton-St Austell

Overview:

Today we have a tour of Coleton Fishacre, built by Rupert and Dorothy D' Oily Carter in the 1920's. The architect Oswald Milne was a protege of Sir Edward Lutyens who set up spending the money of the owner of the Savoy group of hotels for this home which ultimately had two owners before being passed onto the National trust. We explore the house, learn about the owners and and explore the gardens today.

After lunch, we visit Agatha Christie's home Greenway. This small group tour then travels onto to Plymouth for a walking tour in the afternoon of

the historic centre before travelling onto St Austell for the evening.

Accommodation:

Llawnroc Hotel or similar

Day 7

Locations: St Austell - Megavissey - Bodelva - St Austell

Overview:

Today we will be visiting two incredible gardens.

From St Austell we travel to Megavissey for a guided tour of the **Lost Gardens of Heligan**. Once a thriving estate in the 19th century, it was neglected for decades as its workforce left to fight in World War I, with many dying in the trenches or unable to return. The gardens would not be restored until its rediscovery in 1990.

In Bodelva, we will visit the **Eden Project**, a reclaimed china clay pit that is now home to the largest indoor rainforest in the world, complete with a walkway and a waterfall. The Project's co-founder, Sir Tim Smit KBE, was also involved in the rediscovery and restoration of the Lost Gardens of Heligan. (B)

Accommodation:

Llawnroc Hotel or similar

Day 8

Locations: St Austell - Lizard - Land's End - Penzance

Overview:

Today we will push on to [Penzance](#), but en route we will visit two of mainland Britain's furthest points. **The Lizard** is a peninsula in southern Cornwall, with the Lizard Point marking the most southerly point in mainland Britain. It is famous for its serpentine stone, a unique, dark-green-veined metamorphic rock. It has also been the sight of several maritime disasters due to its treacherous coastline.

Land's End is the westernmost point of mainland Britain, located in western Cornwall. To the east of Land's End is the English Channel,

while to the west is the Celtic Sea.

Between these points we will also visit [St Michael's Mount](#), a tidal island in Mount's Bay, Cornwall, before heading to Penzance. St Michael's Mount may remind some of Normandy's Mont-Saint-Michel.

(B)

Accommodation:

The Longboat Inn or similar

Day 9

Locations: Penzance - Hugh Town

Overview:

Today we will travel to the port of Penzance to begin a three-hour panoramic ferry ride along the Cornish coast, ending on St Mary's Island where we will visit **Hugh Town**. Hugh Town is the capital of the [Isles of Scilly](#), sitting on a sandy peninsula in southwestern St Mary's. Hugh Town only has a thousand or so residents, and has an economy centred on fishing and tourism. While the freehold land of the rest of the Isles of Scilly belong to the Duchy of Cornwall (the current duke is Charles, Prince of Wales), freehold land in Hugh Town belong to its inhabitants.

We will be staying in Hugh Town for the night. The afternoon will be spent at our leisure.

(B)

Accommodation:

St Mary's Hall Hotel or similar

Day 10

Locations: Hugh Town - Tresco - Hugh Town

Overview:

Today we will venture out by boat from Hugh Town to **Tresco Island**. Tresco is one of the five inhabited islands of the Isles of Scilly and measures only two and a half miles long and a mile wide. In this car-free island, visitors can explore on foot or by hiring bikes. Here we will visit the subtropical **Tresco Abbey Gardens**, with flora that would not

survive in the mainland but thrive here.

We return to Hugh Town, with the remainder of the day to be spent at our leisure. (B)

Accommodation:

St Mary's Hall Hotel or similar

Day 11

Locations: Hugh Town - Penzance

Overview:

After breakfast, we will again enjoy some free time, which we can spend by sleeping in or preparing for our departure. In the afternoon, we take the ferry back to Penzance. (B)

Accommodation:

The Longboat Inn or similar

Day 12

Locations: Penzance - St Ives - Godrevy - Newquay

Overview:

Today we will travel to St Ives, where we will visit the **Tate St Ives Gallery**, a gallery of modern art which overlooks the Atlantic Ocean.

We continue to enjoy the glorious ocean views as we proceed to our coastal walk from **Godrevy Beach to Hell's Mouth**, following a scenic cliff-top pathway. From Hell's Mouth we will transfer to [Newquay](#), where we will stay for the night.

(B)

Accommodation:

Great Western or similar

Day 13

Locations: Newquay

Overview:

The day is free to spend at our leisure. Newquay is a small seaside town, with plenty of beautiful beaches and parks to explore.

(B)

Accommodation:

Great Western or similar

Day 14

Locations: Newquay - Padstow - Port Isaac - Lynton

Overview:

Today we will be exploring several fishing villages on the north coast of the Cornish peninsula. We will visit **Padstow** and **Port Isaac**. In [Tintagel](#), we will stop to enter **Tintagel Castle**, including **Merlin's Cave**.

Tintagel was the stronghold of the kings of Cornwall, and is associated with Arthurian legends, believed to be the place of the legendary king's conception. The legend inspired Richard, the Earl of Cornwall, to build his cliff-top castle here in the 13th century. Beneath Tintagel Castle is Merlin's Cave, named after the legendary wizard who was believed to have once lived here.

In Clovelly, we will visit **Clovelly Village**, a working fishing village and tourist attraction perched on a sea cliff. This charming village, owned by the Hamlyn family since the 18th century, has had no motorised vehicle access since the 1920's, with the locals using donkeys and sledges.

From Clovelly we will transfer to [Lynton](#) for the night. (B)

Accommodation:

Kentisbury Grange or similar

Day 15

Locations: Lynton - Valley of Rocks - Bristol

Overview:

Today we will be exploring the **Valley of Rocks**, west of Lynton. This dry valley runs parallel to the sea, and is famous for its wild goats that roam freely around the valley, even on its cliff edges!

Upon our return to Lynton village, we will ride the **Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway**, the highest and steepest (gradient of 57%) water powered railway in the world. Opened in 1890, the railway connects the twin towns of Lynton and Lynmouth, and offers fantastic views of the coast.

After our day of adventure, we return to Bristol, where we will sit down for our farewell dinner.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Bristol Hotel or similar

Day 16

Locations: Bristol

Overview:

Our tour and services end after breakfast.

(B)

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 16 nights of hotel accommodation.
- 16 breakfasts and 7 dinners.
- Transport in comfortable and modern coaches.
- Cruise and rail services as indicated.

- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Services of a tour leader for the duration of tour.

What's not included in our Tour

- International airfares and departure taxes.
- 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.