

# The Best of Britain & Ireland

15 Day Tour from London to London

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## Vacation Overview

On this Best of Britain & Ireland tour, see Britain's and Ireland's highlights—from the bustling cities to the small towns and from the breathtaking scenery to the ancient ruins. Traveling through the lands of queens, kings, and leprechauns, begin and end in London and pass through England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

On this Britain and Ireland tour, stop in some historic towns and cities, including Oxford, home to some of England's most famous colleges; York, England's most complete medieval city with its cobbled streets and the magnificent York Minster, England's largest Gothic cathedral; Stratford-upon-Avon, birthplace of Shakespeare; Chester, where a walking tour highlights its Roman remains and black and white half-timbered buildings; Adare, founded in medieval times and known today as one of Ireland's prettiest villages; and Bath, known for the excavations of Roman baths used for bathing and socializing 2,000 years ago. Britain and Ireland are known for their green countryside and stunning scenery, and on this Britain and Ireland tour, you'll witness some of their gorgeous landscapes.

Travel through the incomparable landscapes of Snowdonia National Park in Wales, with picturesque villages, mountains, and lakes. Follow Ireland's Ring of Kerry, a 100-mile panoramic drive with sparkling seascapes, brightly colored farmhouses, and the breathtaking panorama of the Lakes of Killarney. Visit the spectacular 668-foot Cliffs of Moher, with breathtaking views of rugged cliffs dropping into the ocean. Drive through the Cotswolds, with the rolling hills and picturesque villages, Northumberland National Park, with its wide-open spaces, and the serene Lake District, England's largest natural park.

All of this and more—including time in Dublin and Edinburgh—await you on this marvelous vacation!

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## Itinerary

### Day 1 **ARRIVE IN LONDON, ENGLAND**

Check into your hotel. In the afternoon, there's time to rest or start exploring the lively British capital. Uniformed hosts are available to help you make the most of your stay.

### Day 2 **LONDON**


Today is free for exploring on your own or enjoying our exciting program of optional activities. You may choose to join a Local Guide for an optional morning sightseeing tour of the city's famous landmarks: the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, Whitehall's mounted horseguards and the Prime Minister's Downing Street residence, Piccadilly Circus, and Buckingham Palace. The highlight is a visit to St. Paul's Cathedral, Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece built between 1675 and 1708. Later, maybe visit Windsor Castle or the Tower of London with its spectacular Crown Jewels. Tonight, we recommend our optional Taste of London excursion with dinner, followed by a guided illumination cruise on the Thames River.

 Breakfast

### Day 3 **LONDON-OXFORD-STRATFORD-UPON-AVON-WETHERBY**

Meet your Tour Director and traveling companions and depart at 8 am for Oxford. A walking tour takes in the colleges where Britain's elite receive their outstanding education. Then, travel through the lovely Cotswold Hills to Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon. Take photos of Anne Hathaway's Cottage and explore the town at your own pace. Your overnight destination is Wetherby.

Today's Distance: 255 mi/ 410 km

 Breakfast  Dinner

#### Day 4 **WETHERBY–YORK–THIRSK–NEWCASTLE**

This morning, head north to York. Stand in front of the great structure of York Minster, then follow your Tour Director through a maze of quaint streets, including the narrow Shambles. Leaving York, head north to the charming market town of Thirsk famous for its association with James Herriot. After free time savor spectacular views of the North Yorkshire Moors before arriving in Newcastle.

Today's Distance: 105 mi/ 169 km

 Breakfast

#### Day 5 **NEWCASTLE–JEDBURGH, SCOTLAND–EDINBURGH**

See a section of Hadrian's Wall, then motor through wild Northumberland National Park to the Scottish border. Stop for photos at Jedburgh before arriving in Edinburgh. Here, sightseeing with a Local Guide introduces you to the 200-year-old "New Town." In the "Old Town," visit Edinburgh Castle to admire Scotland's Crown Jewels. A suggestion for this evening: a traditional Scottish night out with Highland dancers, bagpipers, and, of course, the Ceremony of the Haggis.

Today's Distance: 117 mi/ 188 km

 Breakfast

#### Day 6 **EDINBURGH**

Your choice today: an optional morning excursion to Rosslyn Chapel, made world-famous by Dan Brown's Da Vinci Code, and also one of Scotland's most remarkable buildings. You will have ample time to visit the 15th-century medieval chapel and the visitor center, and to take photographs of the ruins of Rosslyn Castle. Later, another unique optional opportunity: board the former Royal Yacht Britannia, which was once the perfect royal residence for glittering state visits and family holidays. Tour five decks and see how the Royal Family and crew of 240 lived and worked on board. Dinner rounds off this optional evening. For departures August 1 and August 15, tickets are included for tonight's performance of the world-renowned Military Tattoo.

 Breakfast

#### Day 7 **EDINBURGH–GRETNA GREEN–LAKE DISTRICT, ENGLAND–CHESTER–WREXHAM, WALES**

South through the history-steeped Lowland Hills and a visit to Gretna Green, where the blacksmith used to wed runaway couples. Drive through beautiful scenery in the Lake District, considered to be the finest of England's national parks and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In Chester, the historic county town on the Dee River, your walking tour takes in the Roman remains, black and white half-timbered buildings, and the two-tiered shopping arcades called the "Rows."

Today's Distance: 268 mi/ 431 km

 Breakfast  Dinner

#### Day 8 **WREXHAM–BETWS-Y-COED–DUBLIN, IRELAND**

A scenic North Wales drive through the incomparable landscapes of Snowdonia National Park brings you to lovely Betws-y-Coed. Then, head over spectacular Llanberis Pass and, finally, across Britannia Bridge to the Isle of Anglesey. Take your photos at tongue-twisting

Llanfairpwllgwyngyll; and at Holyhead, board the ferry for the Irish Sea crossing to Dublin.

Today's Distance: 162 mi/ 260 km

 Breakfast

### Day 9 **DUBLIN**

A day in the "Fair City" starts off with an orientation drive through Eire's capital and includes statue-lined O'Connell Street, elegant Georgian squares, and St. Patrick's Cathedral. The rest of the day is free for you to enjoy Dublin at leisure. Why not join an optional dinner evening at the Guinness Storehouse?

 Breakfast

### Day 10 **DUBLIN–GALWAY–CLIFFS OF MOHER–ENNIS**

Head for dairy-farm country in the center of the "Emerald Isle." Stop in Galway, a popular seaside destination and a buzzing cosmopolitan center with colorful shops and a busy café and bar culture. Then, cross the limestone plateau of The Burren to visit the spectacular 668-foot Cliffs of Moher before heading for Ennis, county town of Clare. Tonight's optional opportunity: a medieval banquet at a historic castle.

Today's Distance: 214 mi/ 344 km

 Breakfast

### Day 11 **ENNIS–ADARE–RING OF KERRY–KILLARNEY**

Stop for photos in Adare, a village known for its prize-winning thatched cottages and monastic ruins. In County Kerry, join the road known as the Ring of Kerry for a 100-mile coastal panoramic drive. Focus your camera on sparkling seascapes, mountains dotted with brightly colored farmhouses, winding lanes, and views of the Lakes of Killarney from Ladies View. Later, in Killarney, discover why this is such a popular resort.

Today's Distance: 189 mi/ 304 km

 Breakfast  Dinner

### Day 12 **KILLARNEY–BLARNEY–DUNGARVAN–TRAMORE**

Cross the Kerry Mountains and through County Cork to Blarney, famous for its magical Stone of Eloquence. Time to see the castle, and shop for Irish crafts and handmade crystal. Drive past Cork, the country's second-largest city, and via Dungarvan to Tramore. Why not join an optional pub tour before dinner at your hotel?

Today's Distance: 131 mi/ 210 km

 Breakfast  Dinner

### Day 13 **TRAMORE–CARDIFF, WALES**

An early start for the short drive to Rosslare. In just under four hours, you cross St. George's Channel by ferry to South Wales. Continue through rich dairy farmland to Cardiff, where an orientation drive introduces you to the capital's major attractions: Cardiff Castle, Cathays Park, Millennium Stadium, and the stately civic buildings. Tonight, why not join an evening of Welsh entertainment and dinner?


Today's Distance: 159 mi/ 257 km

 Breakfast

### Day 14 **CARDIFF–BATH, ENGLAND–STONEHENGE–LONDON**

A day packed with highlights begins as you cross the spectacular Severn Bridge into England. Stop in the elegant Georgian city of Bath, famous for its Roman relics, before visiting Stonehenge, still an intriguing mystery. Explore the visitor center with its imaginative exhibitions, then admire the magnificence of the monument up close. After returning to London around 3:30 pm, how about celebrating the success of your tour with a night out on the town?

Today's Distance: 171 mi/ 275 km

 Breakfast

Day 15 **LONDON**

Your vacation ends with breakfast this morning.

 Breakfast