

DESTINATION WESSEX

WESSEX HERITAGE – Seven Day Specimen Tour

Day 1

Leave London for the city of **Winchester**, the ancient capital of Wessex in the time of the legendary Alfred the Great. Check into your hotel, relax and perhaps take the **Keats Walk** which inspired John Keats to write “To Autumn”.

After lunch, there will be a guided tour of the historic centre of the city, including a viewing of King Arthur’s famous **Round Table** and a visit to **Jane Austen’s House**. This will end with a special tour of the magnificent 900 year old cathedral where Jane Austen is buried.

There will be a welcome reception and dinner in the evening.

Day 2.

The morning tour begins with a short drive to the attractive town of Romsey and a visit to the 12th century **Romsey Abbey** which shows Norman and Early English architecture at its best. On then to the nearby garden at **Mottisfont Abbey** which contains the national collection of old roses.

The next stop is **Salisbury** where you can check into your hotel -3 nights - and relax before lunch. In the afternoon, a guided visit to **Salisbury Cathedral** which has the highest spire in England and a visit to the **cathedral close** including the 14th century **Memorial Hall** where there will be a **presentation** on Salisbury history.

Day 3.

This morning, the first stop will be at the delightful garden of **Heale House** where the head gardener will show you around. Then on to **Stonehenge**, one of Wessex’s four World Heritage Sites and perhaps its best known landmark. After a guided tour of Stonehenge, the tour will head west to **Stourhead**, one of Britain’s most beautiful gardens.

After lunch and a talk on the garden, there will be time to take a leisurely stroll around the lake and to enjoy the stunning views.

Then, it will be back towards Salisbury through serene **Wessex countryside** and its picturesque villages. On the way, you will visit **Wilton House**, for 450 years the home of the Earls of Pembroke. It was also a focal point in the planning of the D-day offensive in the Second World War. Return to the Salisbury Hotel.

Day 4

Leave for the historic town of **Sherborne**. Stroll down the narrow High Street with its small shops so full of character. Visit **Sherborne Abbey**, once described as “the most important architectural monument in the country”. **Sherborne “New” Castle** will be the next stop. This is the house of Sir Walter Raleigh who built it in 1594. Its gardens were designed by **Capability Brown**.

Lunch will be taken in the charming village of Montacute. After lunch, we cross the road and visit **Montacute House**. This outstanding Elizabethan house was built in 1588 for Sir Edward Phelps, the Speaker of Parliament.

Before returning to Salisbury, a visit to **Tintinhull Garden** which was created around a 17th century manor house. Its present design owes much to the work of Penelope Hobhouse.



Day 5

Leave for Longleat. Set in 900 acres of **Capability Brown** designed parkland, **Longleat House** is widely regarded as the best example of Elizabethan architecture. A special tour will be arranged for your visit. We will then take you to a historic inn for lunch.

After lunch, a short drive to **Bath** and check into your hotel (2 nights). Following a brief city orientation tour, including the **Royal Crescent** and a stop for afternoon tea, there will be free time for you to **explore the centre** of Bath.

Day 6

This morning, the focus will be on Roman Bath and more specifically on the almost 2000 year old **Roman Baths** themselves. The tour will be followed by a cup of tea in the famous **Pump Room** and a walk across the square to the magnificent 15th century Bath Abbey

After an early lunch, we will head **south to Glastonbury and Wells**. **Glastonbury Abbey** is thought by many to be the oldest Christian site in Britain. The legend is that Joseph of Aramethea brought the Holy Grail to Glastonbury and that King Arthur was buried in the Abbey.

The city of **Wells** grew up around its **12th century cathedral** that has been described as “the jewel in the crown of English cathedrals”. Return to Bath after the cathedral tour.

Day 7

The morning will be free for you to **explore more of Bath**, perhaps to do some shopping. Departure for London will be after lunch.

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