

DESTINATION WESSEX



HISTORIC HOUSES OF WESSEX – Five Day Specimen Tour

Day 1.

Leave London for the cathedral city of **Salisbury**. Today's tour will feature the medieval period. When you check into your hotel, you will find that it has been serving its customers for over 700 years. Your first visit will be to **one of England's finest cathedrals** that has the highest spire in England. Next will be the 13th century **Medieval Hall** in the **cathedral close** and a presentation on medieval Salisbury. Before leaving the close, a stop will be made at the **Wardrobe**, built in 1254 for the Bishop of Salisbury. There will then be the opportunity for you to explore the heart of this city and perhaps visit some of the places mentioned in the presentation.

There will be a **welcome reception** in the evening.

Day 2.

The day will start with a visit to the 14th century **Palace House of Beaulieu**, a place with monastic origins and since 1538, the ancestral home of the **Montagues**. The return journey will pass through the **New Forest** which was set aside for hunting 900 years ago by William the Conqueror. A stop will be made for lunch in an old inn.

In the afternoon, you will visit **Breamore House**, a fine example of the Elizabethan Manor house. After the visit, return to the **Salisbury hotel**.

Day 3.

Today, two very grand houses and an outstanding garden will be visited. First will be **Wilton House**, for 450 years the home of the Earls of Pembroke. Much of the Tudor building was destroyed by fire in 1647. **Inigo Jones** and **John Webb** then rebuild the house in the Palladian style. The house has magnificent 17th century state rooms and a very fine art collection. Leave for **Stourhead**, one of England's most beautiful landscape gardens for a visit to the garden, followed by lunch.

After lunch, it will be on to **Longleat**, one of the very best examples of Elizabethan architecture, set in 900 acres of **Capability Brown** designed parkland. It was completed in 1580 and has been the home of the same family ever since, the **Marquesses of Bath**. Here again, there is a fine art collection. The day concludes at your **Bath hotel** where you will stay for two nights.

Day 4.

This will begin with a visit to the **Building of Bath Museum** and a presentation on the creation of **Georgian Bath**. After that, a tour of the city that will include a walk from the **Royal Crescent** down through the Circus to Queen Square. Featured will be No.1 Royal Crescent, a carefully restored Georgian house, **the Georgian Garden**, the **Jane Austen Centre**, the Assembly Rooms and, of course, a cup of tea in the **Pump Room**. And then, to conclude, a visit to the famous **Roman Baths**.

Day 5.

The morning will be given over to a visit to **Tyntesfield**, the spectacular Victorian country house acquired in 2002 by the National Trust. It has been described as "an extraordinary Gothic revival extravaganza". The house survives with its Victorian interior virtually intact. It is set in a 500 acre estate of gardens, park and farmland.

After lunch, there will be free time to **explore parts of Bath** that you have not seen or that you may wish to see again or, if you wish, to do **some shopping**.

Departure for London will be in the late afternoon.