



Highlights of Britain 2026

Do you know where you're most likely to encounter a cursed gravestone, a fat rascal and Europe's longest place name? On this Great British adventure, of course! Delve into centuries of spellbinding stories and bewitching historical quirks as we roam the rich landscapes of England, Scotland and Wales. Slow down and soak it all up with us. We guarantee you'll have more than a few tales to tell when your journey comes to an end...





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Wellington by Blue Orchid @ 18:00

71 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PA

Malmaison Edinburgh City @ 18:00

22 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, EH2 1AY

Worth noting

Considering a September tour? Note that selected departures will visit York Minster instead of Worcester Cathedral. And if you're travelling on selected dates in March, April and July, you'll explore Kiplin Hall instead of Castle Howard.



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Tour highlights

- ✓ Explore the scenic back roads of Britain's most spectacular regions including the Cotswolds, Snowdonia National Park, the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District
- ✓ Step into a real-life medieval saga whilst wandering the Shambles and Snickelways of York
- ✓ Immerse yourself in the 17th-century grandeur and opulence of Castle Howard
- ✓ Tap your toes along to the iconic tunes of the Fab Four at The Beatles Story Museum

More inclusions

- ✓ 10 breakfasts, 5 dinners
- ✓ 10 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- ✓ Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use

- England - GBP
- Wales - GBP
- Scotland - GBP



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Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.



Your itinerary

Day 1 | London (England)

Palaces dripping in historical intrigue. Streets thronged with iconic red buses. A bustling pub on every corner. London couldn't be a more fitting place to embark on our tour of Britain! Begin by greeting your expert Tour Leader and the rest of your small group before we dig into our very first meal together. Uncover each other's back stories over the dinner table and say cheers to the adventure ahead!

Included today



Accommodation

Wellington Hotel by Blue
Orchid (or similar)



Meals

+ Dinner

Day 2 | London – Oxford – Cotswolds

After an energy-boosting breakfast with your group, we'll wave goodbye to the Big Smoke as we start our journey north. Our next stop's skyline is equally as impressive as the capital's – with twisting spires, majestic domes and more than a few grinning gargoyles.

Did you know that Oxford University is the second oldest university in the world? Or that the city served as the official capital for four years during the English Civil War? We'll uncover plenty more historical nuggets as we walk in the footsteps of the colleges' illustrious alumni – think Oscar Wilde and Lewis Carroll – on an orientation tour with our clued-up Tour Leader.

After a little free time to wander and grab some lunch (the city's historic Covered Market is our top pick!), we'll continue our journey west. Our path will take us through several of the idyllic old-world villages of the Cotswolds. Marvel at their honey-hued cottages forged from yellow limestone and soak up vistas of the undulating wolds. Then, a free evening awaits in Mickleton, where you'll find a choice of charming local pubs to dine in.

Included today



Accommodation

Three Ways House Hotel (or
similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 3 | Cotswolds – Stratford-Upon-Avon – Cotswolds

All the world's a stage, and all men and women merely players! Today, our stage will be the storied streets of Stratford-Upon-Avon: the esteemed birthplace of William Shakespeare. Revel in remarkable tales of his life, loves and losses on a walking tour with your Tour Leader. If there's time, we'll pay homage to the playwright with a visit to his grave. Make sure you spare a minute to peruse the epitaph which is supposedly a curse written by Shakespeare himself...

This afternoon, there's more exploring to be done in the delightful Cotswolds. We'll weave effortlessly along the region's narrow lanes, stopping off at a few of your Tour Leader's favourite villages. Broadway, often called the prettiest village in England, will likely be one of them. If the weather's dry, stretch your legs with a walk through its unusually long high street, stopping for coffee and cake breaks along the way.

Included today



Accommodation

Three Ways House Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

Day 4 | Cotswolds – Worcester – Denbighshire (Wales)

Thrilling tales of the crusades fought by saints and kings are on the agenda today as we leave the Cotswolds behind for Worcester. Gaze up in awe at Worcester Cathedral's intricately painted ceiling and feel the temperature drop as we venture down into its Norman-era Crypt of St Wulfstan: the Bishop of Worcester during the 11th century.

Following our medieval history fix, we'll begin our scenic journey to Denbighshire – rolling through the serene Shropshire Hills where we'll make two memorable stops en route. Uncover an Olympic connection in the unassuming village of Much Wenlock and stand in the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution in the UNESCO World Heritage Ironbridge Valley.

Wales's Denbighshire region is known for its tiny, twisting country lanes – but we'll make short work of them in our minicoach. When we do arrive at tonight's hotel, you can expect a very warm welcome from the inn's characterful owner who loves to personally greet every one of his guests.

Included today



Accommodation

The Mulberry Inn (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Dinner



Day 5 | Denbighshire – Snowdonia National Park – Denbighshire

Warning: not much will prepare you for the jaw-dropping beauty of Snowdonia National Park. This 823-square-mile tapestry of rugged peaks, shimmering lakes (known locally as llynns) and windswept coastline is the setting for today's adventure – and you can expect plenty of imagination-stirring encounters.

Your Tour Leader will decide the specific route you'll take but you can expect it to be steeped in local history and outstanding natural beauty. Cast your eyes across soaring summits in the charming mountain town of Betws-Y-Coed. Challenge yourself to a tongue twister in Llanfairpwllgwyngyll – a village on the lovely Isle of Anglesey that's famed for having Europe's longest place name.

You might also feel your heart race a little while walking across the Pontcysyllte (pronounced Pont – ker – sulth – tay) Aqueduct – a UNESCO World Heritage site that's suspended 40 metres above the tumbling rapids of the River Dee. Then, we'll retrace our steps back to the hotel for another sumptuous group meal and an after-dinner surprise...

Included today



Accommodation

The Mulberry Inn (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Dinner



Day 6 | Denbighshire – Liverpool (England) – York

We'll get a little help from our friends at The Beatles Story Museum today as we swap the picture-perfect Welsh countryside for the hustle and bustle of Liverpool. Get into the Beatlemania spirit while touring the museum's musical displays, including stepping foot in a recreation of the iconic Abbey Road Studios.

Afterwards, there'll be free time to explore Liverpool's Grade I-listed Royal Albert Docks. Once one of the UK's busiest dock complexes during Victorian times, it's now a hub of culture and cuisine – complete with its very own Tate art gallery.

This afternoon, our route takes us east to York. But before we immerse ourselves in fearsome Viking tales, we'll sweep through the wild moors and rippling hills of the Pennines. Close your eyes and picture the Brontë sisters sipping tea in the parlour of the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth. And admire a remarkable feat of 18th-century engineering at Bingley Five Rise Locks, where we'll (hopefully!) glimpse a canal boat manoeuvring between its connecting locks.

Included today



Accommodation

The Churchill Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

Day 7 | York

Treat yourself to a full English breakfast this morning – you'll need the extra energy for a busy day of exploring extraordinary York. History echoes off every cobblestone of this incredible city. Soak up stirring stories of old during an orientation walk with your Tour Leader, slipping down enchantingly narrow Snickleways, past the crooked 13th-century cottages of the Shambles and emerging in the shadow of the monumental York Minster.

The rest of the day is free for you to dive further into the city's many allures. Experience Viking tales come to life in the interactive Jorvik Centre museum. Walk in the footsteps of medieval sentries on the impeccably preserved York City Walls. Or sink your teeth into a fat rascal – a traditional scone bursting with juicy currants and zesty citrus – at the quintessentially Yorkshire tearoom, Bettys.

Our final night in York is yours to do with as you wish. The city has a fantastic independent food scene – just ask your Tour Leader for suggestions for tonight's dinner.

Included today



Accommodation

The Churchill Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

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Day 8 | York – Castle Howard – Lake District

We'll leave medieval York behind this morning and jump forward a few hundred years at Castle Howard. This glorious 17th-century English estate has some serious curb appeal, with its Baroque-style frontage embellished with exquisitely carved coronets, cyphers and cherubs a true feast for the eyes.

Wander the castle's grand rooms and gaze up at the whimsically painted ceiling of its 70-foot dome before riding the free road train through the splendid grounds. Keep your eyes peeled for the tinkling Atlas Fountain and the Temple of the Four Winds – a hilltop folly originally built as a reading and writing nook.

Next, our path will take us through the Yorkshire Dales National Park, winding us past tumbling rivers, through lush valleys and into tiny villages that appear trapped in time. Cricket fans will strike lucky with a stop in Thirsk – the birthplace of Thomas Lord, founder of Lord's Cricket Ground. And if there's time, we'll also make a small detour to the Ribble Valley to witness the Grade II Ribblehead Viaduct snaking its way across the heather-dusted moors.

The final chapter of today's adventure sees us entering the legendary Lake District. Marvel at the verdant scenery as we glide effortlessly down twisting country lanes towards our hotel. Tonight, we'll settle in for a delicious group dinner with a lovely view of Lake Windermere – England's largest lake.

Included today



Accommodation

Low Wood Bay Resort & Spa
(or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Dinner

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Day 9 | Lake District

Rugged mountain fells, tarns that sparkle in the sun and forests that hum with birdsong...it's no surprise that this spectacular region has been a muse for so many literary geniuses over the centuries!

With that in mind, it's only fitting to start our day at Hill Top – the idyllic former holiday home of Beatrix Potter. Feel your inner child squeal with delight in the flower-filled gardens where miniature scenes from some of her most famous books nestle amongst the greenery. You can even flick through a few books (or buy some as souvenirs) in the house's second-hand book nook.

More inspiring vistas await us this afternoon as we explore the heart of the Lake District – allowing your Tour Leader to personalise the route with their most beloved stops. Finally, we'll end the day soaring across Windermere on a tranquil boat cruise. Soak up the serenity of the region as dusk settles over the soaring peaks, casting fantastical shadows on the water. Is this “the loveliest spot that man hath found” as William Wordsworth wrote? We certainly think so.

Included today



Accommodation

Low Wood Bay Resort & Spa
(or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 10 | Lake District – Scottish Borders (Scotland)

We'll hit the road early this morning – heading north through Northumbria towards Bonnie Scotland. Before we cross the border though, it's time to hunt for treasure in The Bowes Museum. This palatial art gallery sits on the fringes of Barnard Castle and its halls are stuffed with an eclectic collection of priceless art and antiques. And its crowning glory? A life-size silver clockwork swan that you won't believe dates to the 18th century!

As we creep ever closer to Scotland, we'll stumble across one of the most northerly frontiers of the mighty Roman empire: Hadrian's Wall. Hop off the minicoach at Birdoswald Roman Fort, which sprawls on the longest remaining stretch of the wall, to unearth stories of the brave soldiers who once lived within its ruins.

Then, one last group dinner awaits at our hotel in the rugged Scottish Borders. On tonight's menu? A traditional Scottish feast of haggis, neeps and tatties, of course! Before you tuck in, your ears will be treated to the moving notes of the bagpipes – a fitting end to our very British romp.

Included today



Accommodation

Friars Carse Country House
Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Dinner



Day 11 | Scottish Borders – Abbotsford House and Rosslyn Chapel – Edinburgh

We've got two more highlights in store for you before we round off our tour in the history-rich Scottish capital. First up is Abbotsford House that's perched upon a stunning section of the River Tweed near Melrose. Countless literary masterpieces were penned within its walls by Sir Walter Scott – it's former owner during the 19th century.

With our creative juices flowing, we'll move onto the intriguing Rosslyn Chapel. The eagle eyed among you might recognise it from the *Da Vinci Code* (both the novel and the film). We'll inspect its intricately carved interiors, whose mysterious patterns and symbols have long baffled historians, before we board our luxury minicoach one last time.

Edinburgh might be our tour's final stop – but where will your journey take you next? You could continue your Gaelic chapter on our Scottish Journey tour. Or why not unlock more unexpected British experiences on our Enchanting Eastern England escape?

Included today

Meals

- + Breakfast



Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).



Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Sun hat | ✓ Long-sleeved tops | ✓ Light jacket |
| ✓ Sunglasses | ✓ Short-sleeved tops | ✓ Waterproof jacket |
| ✓ Sleepwear | ✓ Shorts/skirts | ✓ Trousers |
| ✓ Warm jacket | ✓ Socks | ✓ Swimwear |
| ✓ Underwear | ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ✓ Multi-use adapter plug | ✓ Toiletries | ✓ Camera |
| ✓ Batteries | ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Towel |
| ✓ Umbrella | ✓ Reusable water bottle | ✓ Insect repellent |
| ✓ Any personal medication | ✓ Basic medical kit (paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) | |

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How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

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FAQs

What's the weather like?

The UK's weather can be unpredictable (even in summer!), so we suggest packing plenty of layers and bringing a trusty raincoat.

Can you do this tour in reverse?

This specific tour is a one-way journey. However, you could hop on our Enchanting Eastern England tour which begins in Edinburgh and ends in London. Or why not combine the two to see even more of the UK?

What is a good tour to combine with this tour?

If you don't want your UK story to end, you could combine it with one of three other tours: Enchanting Eastern England, Corners of Cornwall and A Scottish Journey.

What villages do we visit in the Cotswolds?

The locations you'll explore in the charming Cotswolds are entirely up to your Tour Leader and will depend on a few factors – including the weather and the traffic conditions. But rest assured, you'll get to soak up the storybook-perfect cottages and cobbled lanes of at least a few of its bucolic villages.

That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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