Itinerary

13 Day England & Scotland Explorer Small Group Tour

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.**

Day 1: London ~ Stratford-upon-Avon ~ Shrewsbury

Welcome to England! Make your own way to meet your driver-guide and the rest of your group at the pick-up location before departing departing London at 09:00. Travel to Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare, often regarded as England's national poet, Shakespeare remains one of the country's most celebrated literary figures. Travel through the picturesque Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, known for its rolling chalk hills, charming historic villages, beautiful countryside and rich biodiversity. Arrive in Stratford-upon-Avon and enjoy free time to explore this charming town and have lunch at one of its many restaurants, cafés or riverside pubs. Discover the town's iconic timber-framed buildings and historic landmarks, or perhaps visit Shakespeare's birthplace, Anne Hathaway's Cottage or Holy Trinity Church, where Shakespeare and his wife, Anne Hathaway, are buried.

Continue your journey to Ironbridge, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to the world's first bridge constructed entirely from iron. Built during the Industrial Revolution, the iconic Iron Bridge offers a fascinating insight into Britain's industrial heritage. Continue to the historic county town of Shrewsbury, beautifully situated within a loop of the River Severn. Famous as the birthplace of Charles Darwin, Shrewsbury is renowned for its charming medieval streets, historic market town atmosphere and distinctive black-and-white Tudor buildings. Arrive at your hotel and spend the remainder of the evening at leisure, with time to relax or explore the historic town centre at your own pace.

PICK-UP LOCATION: London Pick Up, Stance 3 Greenline Coach Terminal, Bulleid Way, Victoria, London, SW1W 9SH. Boarding starts at 9:00 and closes at 9:15

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 4 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Nil

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B, Shrewsbury

Day 2: Shrewsbury ~ Wales Day Tour

After breakfast, journey into the heart of North Wales, a land of dramatic landscapes, ancient castles and fascinating Welsh heritage. With its distinctive language and spectacular scenery, Wales offers a wonderful blend of history, culture and natural beauty. Your first stop is the picturesque harbour town of Conwy, home to its impressive medieval castle perched by the sea. Enjoy free time to explore the historic

town, and perhaps enjoy lunch at one of the local restaurants or traditional eateries.

Following lunch, continue into the spectacular Eryri National Park (Snowdonia), travelling through its mountains and valleys, historic slate quarries and the beautiful Llanberis Pass, with views towards Yr Wyddfa (Mount Snowdon), the highest peak in Wales. Continue to the charming village of Betws-y-Coed, surrounded by forests and rugged mountains. Take a stroll through the village and visit the ancient Pont-y-Pair stone bridge, known for its picturesque views of the river.

In the late afternoon, cross back into England and return to Shrewsbury. Enjoy another free evening to explore at your leisure, perhaps taking a stroll along the River Severn followed by dining at a traditional restaurant.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 4-5 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B , Shrewsbury

Day 3: Shrewsbury ~ Chatsworth House ~ York

This morning journey to the Peak District National Park, travelling through a spectacular landscape of rugged moorlands, rolling hills, wooded valleys and charming villages. Continue to the elegant spa town of Buxton, which has attracted visitors to its natural thermal springs since Roman times. Take some time to explore the town and perhaps fill your bottle with crystal-clear water from the famous natural spring.

Continue to Chatsworth House, the magnificent stately home of the Duke of Devonshire. Enjoy several hours of free time to explore the beautiful estate and gardens, or discover its impressive art collection featuring works by renowned artists including Rembrandt, Reynolds and Veronese. There are also several cafés and restaurants where you can enjoy lunch or a refreshing break.

Later, continue north through the historic industrial heartlands of northern England before arriving in the ancient walled city of York. Check into your hotel and enjoy a free evening to explore at your own pace. Wander through the atmospheric cobbled streets of The Shambles, relax in a traditional pub or take an evening stroll along York’s medieval city walls.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 4 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B, York

Day 4: York Free Day / Optional Knaresborough Half-Day Tour

After breakfast, enjoy a free day to explore the historic city of York at your own pace, or join an optional half-day excursion through the beautiful Yorkshire Dales to the charming market town of Knaresborough. York offers a fascinating blend of Roman, Viking and medieval history, with plenty to discover throughout its ancient streets.

If joining the excursion, travel to Knaresborough, where winding streets, picturesque houses and the spectacular stone viaduct spanning the River Nidd create a truly enchanting setting. Explore the market town, discover the remains of its historic castle and enjoy beautiful views across the river before continuing through the Yorkshire Dales to the delightful village of Pateley Bridge. Nestled in Nidderdale, this picturesque village is known for its historic streets, riverside scenery and the famous Oldest Sweet Shop in England.

This marks the end of the first leg of your journey, so you will leave your group and driver-guide upon arriving in York. Spend the rest of the day exploring York independently, you might wish to visit the magnificent York Minster, discover the city's Viking heritage, visit a chocolate museum or just take a stroll along the ancient city walls.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 4 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B, York

Day 5: York Free Day / Optional Robin Hood

Today you will enjoy free time to independently explore York at your own pace.

Alternatively, meet your new driver-guide and group to join an optional half-day excursion into the spectacular North York Moors National Park. Continue to the historic fishing port of Whitby, famous for its connection to Bram Stoker's Dracula. Enjoy free time to explore the town, take in the harbour views and perhaps enjoy lunch before travelling to the picturesque fishing village of Robin Hood's Bay. Wander through its narrow streets and historic cottages, admire the beautiful North Sea coastline and discover the village's fascinating stories of smugglers and seafaring.

Return to York in the early evening and enjoy the remainder of the evening at leisure.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 4 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B, York

Day 6: York ~ Keswick

This morning meet your new driver-guide and the rest of the group, if you did not join the optional tour on day 5. Journey west into the beautiful Yorkshire Dales National Park, renowned for its spectacular scenery, rich cultural heritage and abundant wildlife. Explore some of the park's hidden gems, including the romantic ruins of Jervaulx Abbey, before continuing to the dramatic Aysgarth Falls. Enjoy an optional walk to the three cascading waterfalls, which famously featured in the film Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, while taking in the surrounding Yorkshire Dales scenery.

Continue to the charming town of Hawes, the home of Wensleydale cheese, where you can enjoy lunch and perhaps visit the Wensleydale Creamery to learn about traditional cheese-making and sample some local produce. Travel through the picturesque countryside, stopping for photos along the way, before reaching the historic market town of Appleby-in-Westmorland, known for its sandstone cottages and impressive Appleby Castle.

Continue into the Lake District National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site celebrated for its dramatic mountains, peaceful lakes and landscapes that inspired the famous Lake Poets. Arrive in the vibrant market town of Keswick, beautifully situated beside Derwentwater, and enjoy the remainder of the evening at leisure. Take a stroll along the lake, enjoy the sunset, catch a show at Theatre by the Lake or relax with dinner at one of the town's restaurants or traditional pubs.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 3 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B, Keswick

Day 7: Keswick Day Tour

After breakfast, begin the day at the mysterious Castlerigg Stone Circle, believed to date back more than 5,000 years. Continue into the beautiful Lake District with an optional woodland walk to Aira Force, a spectacular 65-foot waterfall surrounded by peaceful forests and stunning scenery Travel along scenic country lanes through charming villages and dramatic mountain landscapes to Lake Windermere and the picturesque village of Bowness-on-Windermere. Enjoy free time for lunch and to explore the lakeside at your own pace. Perhaps take a relaxing cruise on the lake or visit the Beatrix Potter attraction, celebrating the life and work of the much-loved author and conservationist.

Continue to the charming village of Hawkshead, where William Wordsworth attended school. Explore its cobbled streets, whitewashed cottages and quaint shops before travelling to Grasmere, famously described by Wordsworth as "the loveliest spot that man hath found." Enjoy free time to visit Dove Cottage, sample the village's famous gingerbread or relax in the Wordsworth Daffodil Garden.

Return to Keswick in the early evening and enjoy your second evening at leisure. Relax with dinner at one of the town's welcoming pubs or restaurants, many offering locally sourced produce and craft ales.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 3 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B , Keswick

Day 8: Keswick ~ Edinburgh

p>Today you will bid farewell to the Lake District and journey north through the dramatic landscapes of the North Pennines, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty known for its rugged moorlands and peaceful valleys. Continue to Hadrian's Wall and stop at Steel Rigg, where you can walk alongside this remarkable Roman frontier and take in the surrounding scenery. Your guide will also highlight some of the most interesting sites along the wall.

Continue to Vindolanda, an important Roman archaeological site, where you can enjoy free time to explore the remarkably preserved remains and discover fascinating artefacts uncovered during years of excavation. After lunch, travel north across the border into Scotland, stopping at Carter Bar on the edge of the Cheviot Hills. Continue through the scenic Scottish Borders to Jedburgh, home to the impressive 12th-century Jedburgh Abbey.

Continue north through the rolling landscapes of the Scottish Borders before arriving in Edinburgh at around 7pm. Today you will need to make your own way from the drop-off location to the B&B. Rest of the evening is free at leisure.

DROP-OFF LOCATION:7.00pm (approx.) Edinburgh Bus Station Drop Off, George St / St. Andrews Square area, (Within 5 mins of Edinburgh Bus Station), Edinburgh. You will need to make your own way to the B&B from the drop-off location.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 5 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B , Keswick

Day 9: Edinburg ~ West Highlands ~ Oban

This morning make your own way from the hotel to the pick-up location to meet your new driver-guide and the rest of you group. At 09:00 you will depart Edinburgh and travel through the gentle Lowlands, passing Stirling Castle before crossing the ancient geological fault line into the majestic Scottish Highlands, where rugged peaks and forest-filled glens define Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. Explore Scotland's first national park and stop beside one of the shimmering lochs to enjoy the peaceful surroundings and fresh Highland air before continuing through the dramatic Arrochar Alps, with their steep-sided mountains. Pause at the famous Rest and Be Thankful viewpoint before travelling onwards to Inveraray.

You will stop around lunch time in Inveraray, a picturesque town on the shores of Loch Fyne, where you can sample local seafood and admire views of the loch and surrounding hills. Afterwards, continue towards Oban, with possible sightseeing stops depending on the weather and your group's interests. Discover Kilmartin Glen, home to over 350 ancient monuments, including standing stones, stone circles and burial cairns dating back more than 5,000 years, or visit Loch Awe to admire the romantic ruins of Kilchurn Castle, dramatically set against the surrounding mountains and tranquil waters. Arrive in Oban in the early evening. Known as the "Gateway to the Isles", this charming port town was once home to powerful feuding Highland clans. Settle in for a two-night stay and enjoy your evening at leisure, with the option to savour fresh seafood or traditional Scottish cuisine at a local restaurant before strolling along the waterfront to take in the beautiful sunset views over the harbour.

PICK-UP LOCATION: Gate J And Gate K, Inside Edinburgh Bus Station, St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, EH1 3DQ. Boarding starts at 8:45 and closes at 9:00

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 4 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Nil

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B, Oban

Day 10: Mull & Iona Day Tour

After breakfast, travel to the ferry terminal in Oban and board the ferry to the Isle of Mull, one of the largest islands in the Inner Hebrides, known for its rugged landscapes, wildlife and traditional villages. During the crossing, look out for Duart Castle, which stands on a rocky headland overlooking the sea. Arrive at Craignure and travel across the island through green pastures, woodlands and open moorland towards Fionnphort, where you can choose between different sightseeing options.

From Fionnphort, take the passenger ferry to the Isle of Iona, an important centre of early Christianity in Scotland and the historic burial place of several Scottish kings. Enjoy free time to explore the island, including Iona Abbey, famous for its history and carved stone crosses, or take a walk along its coastal paths, sandy beaches and peaceful coves. Alternatively, you can choose to join an optional excursion to the Isle of Staffa (not included), famous for its striking basalt columns and Fingal's Cave, a remarkable sea cave that inspired composer Felix Mendelssohn. After exploring Iona and Staffa, return to Mull and travel back across the island towards Craignure. Enjoy the changing scenery along the way, with views of the island's mountains, lochs and open countryside, before boarding the ferry back to Oban.

Arrive in Oban in the early evening and enjoy your second evening at leisure. You may wish to visit McCaig's Tower, a distinctive circular stone structure overlooking the town, offering panoramic views across Oban Harbour and the surrounding islands. Alternatively, relax at one of the local pubs and enjoy a traditional Scottish whisky before returning to your accommodation for the night.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 3 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B, Oban

Day 11: Oban ~ Glencoe ~ Plockton

Leave Oban behind and travel north along the shores of Loch Linnhe, passing through some of the beautiful landscapes of the western Highlands. This region is rich in Scottish history, with stories of powerful clans, historic battles and local legends adding to the character of the surrounding countryside.

As you travel along the coast, stop at a viewpoint overlooking Castle Stalker, an impressive 14th-century tower castle set on a small island near Appin. Once a stronghold of Clan MacDougall and later held by the Stewarts of Appin, the castle has a fascinating history connected to Scotland's famous clan rivalries. Take some time to admire the setting and capture photographs before continuing towards Glencoe, one of Scotland's most famous Highland valleys. Known for its rugged mountains and dramatic scenery, Glencoe has featured in several films and is also the site of the tragic Massacre of Glencoe in 1692. Here, you will have time to enjoy the scenery, take photographs or go for a short walk while learning more about this important chapter in Scottish history.

Next, travel along Loch Linnhe to Fort William, a popular Highland town situated at the foot of Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain. Stop here for lunch and enjoy some free time to explore the town centre, browse the local shops or relax at one of the cafés or restaurants. Afterwards, continue through the Great Glen, a remarkable natural fault line that stretches across the Scottish Highlands. Travel alongside peaceful lochs and through mountain scenery, passing the impressive Five Sisters of Kintail, a striking mountain range with five distinctive peaks. Continue towards Eilean Donan Castle, one of Scotland's most recognisable landmarks, beautifully positioned on a small island where three sea lochs meet. Take time to admire the castle and its spectacular surroundings, with opportunities for photographs and short stops along the way.

Arrive in Plocktona charming Highland village known for its sheltered harbour, waterfront cottages and views across Loch Carron. Check in to your accommodation and enjoy the remainder of the evening at leisure.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 3-4 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B, Plockton

Day 12: Isle of Skye Day Tour

Leave Plockton and travel towards the Skye Bridge, crossing over to the Isle of Skye, often known as the Misty Isle. Famous for its dramatic mountain scenery, rugged coastline and remarkable rock formations, Skye is one of Scotland's most spectacular islands. Today, your driver-guide will make the most of the available time and weather conditions to explore some of the island's highlights and discover its beautiful landscapes.

Exploring Skye feels like stepping into a dream, with countless places to explore. You may head north towards the Trotternish Ridge, discover the Old Man of Storr, an impressive rock pinnacle rising above the surrounding landscape, and Kilt Rock, a striking coastal cliff with distinctive vertical rock formations and a waterfall cascading into the sea. You may also visit the Quiraing, a dramatic mountain pass known for its unusual rock formations, steep cliffs and sweeping views across the island. Take time to explore the area, enjoy the scenery and capture photographs of these remarkable natural attractions. After a morning of exploring, stop in one of the island's towns or villages for lunch, with time to relax and enjoy some local food before continuing your sightseeing. In the afternoon, your driver-guide may take you to Dunvegan Castle, the historic ancestral home of the Clan MacLeod and one of the oldest continuously inhabited castles in Scotland. Learn about the history, traditions and legends of the Highland clans, or discover another of Skye's lesser-known attractions depending on the weather and the interests of the group.

In the late afternoon, leave Skye behind and travel back across the Skye Bridge to Plockton. Return to your accommodation and enjoy another relaxing evening at leisure.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 3 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B, Plockton

Day 13: Plockton ~ Loch Ness ~ Edinburgh

Leave Plockton behind and travel south towards Eilean Donan Castle, one of Scotland's most iconic landmarks. Set on a small island surrounded by beautiful Highland scenery, the castle has become famous as a filming location and has many fascinating stories to tell. Take a stroll along the shoreline to admire the views, or explore the castle's historic rooms and discover a collection of artefacts belonging to the MacKenzie and MacRae clans.

After your visit, continue through the Highland countryside to Fort Augustus, a charming village nestled on the banks of Loch Ness. Stop here for lunch and enjoy some free time to explore the village, stroll along the shores of the mysterious loch or perhaps catch a glimpse of the legendary Loch Ness Monster.

Continue south and take a final refreshment break in the gorgeous cathedral town of Dunkeld situated on the banks of the River Tay. Continue through the rolling hills and fertile farmlands of the Kingdom of Fife. Your last highlight is the view of the iconic UNESCO-listed Forth Rail Bridge on your way to Edinburgh.

You return to Edinburgh at approximately 7pm.

DROP-OFF LOCATION: 7.00pm (approx.) Edinburgh Bus Station Drop Off, George St / St. Andrews Square area, (Within 5 mins of Edinburgh Bus Station), Edinburgh

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME: Approximately 4 hours total driving time, excluding stops along the way.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Traditional B&B, Iverness