

HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



JOURNEY THROUGH BRITAIN

MAY 12–25, 2025

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Travel from city to country and back again—from gracious Edinburgh to England’s legendary Lake District, spectacular Snowdonia to the rural Cotswolds and Roman Bath, and ending in cosmopolitan London.

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner

MONDAY, MAY 12

DEPART FROM HOME CITY

Depart your home city for Edinburgh.

TUESDAY, MAY 13

ARRIVE ENDINBURGH

Arrive in the Scottish capital today and transfer to your hotel.

As guests’ arrival times may vary greatly, there are no group activities planned during the day.

After checking in to your hotel at 2:30 p.m. local time, the afternoon is at leisure to rest and relax, or to begin exploring the area around your well-located accommodations in central Edinburgh, one of Europe’s great walking cities.

Tonight, gather at the hotel with your tour director for a briefing on the journey ahead, followed by a welcome dinner.

Overnight: *Apex Waterloo Place Hotel*(D)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

EDINBURGH

The Scottish capital since the 15th century, Edinburgh boasts a rich architectural heritage centered on two distinct districts: the 18th-century Georgian “New Town” and the

medieval “Old Town,” featuring Edinburgh Castle and the lively Royal Mile. Explore both areas—together, a UNESCO World Heritage site—on this morning’s tour.

A masterpiece of urban planning, the New Town retains many of its original Georgian and neo-classical architecture dating from about 1765 to 1850, when the streets and townhouses were planned and constructed as ensembles rather than piecemeal. Historic architectural highlights seen here include the National Gallery of Scotland, the Royal Scottish Academy, the Assembly Rooms, Waverly Station, and the Scott Monument. The New Town also boasts Edinburgh’s main shopping areas on Princes and George streets.

With its warren of tiny medieval streets and “closes” (narrow alleyways), the Old Town presents a contrast to the more orderly New Town. The district stretches along the Royal Mile from the medieval fortress of Edinburgh Castle, Scotland’s symbolic heart set high above the city, to Holyrood Palace, the official residence of the British monarch in Scotland. Restored 16th- and 17th-century homes and “tenements” (medieval apartment buildings) line the nearby streets. Architectural standouts in the Old Town include Parliament, the Royal Museum of Scotland, and the University of Edinburgh.

Pay an inside visit to Edinburgh Castle, whose highlights include the Great Hall, with its original hammerbeam roof; the Honours (crown jewels) of Scotland; the Scottish National War Memorial; and the Royal Palace, the one-time apartments of the Scottish royals in the castle.

The afternoon is at leisure to discover Edinburgh as you wish; museums, galleries, and shops abound.

Lunch and dinner today are on your own. Edinburgh's culinary scene offers a variety of restaurants, from small pubs to five-star eateries.

Overnight: *Apex Waterloo Place Hotel* (B)

THURSDAY, MAY 15

EDINBURGH

In the morning, take a guided tour of the Royal Mile, composed of five streets running down the center of the Old Town from Edinburgh Castle to the Palace of Holyrood House.

Visit Holyrood (as it is called) and see where British royalty schemed and slept as you tour the State Apartments. Built on the site of the ruined 12th-century Holyrood Abbey, the palace took shape over the centuries until it was completed in its current form in 1678. Mary, Queen of Scots was married twice here and lived at the palace from her return to Scotland in 1561 to her forced abdication in 1567.

After lunch at a local restaurant, the remainder of the day is free to discover more of Scotland's vibrant capital on your own. Options include the National Museum of Scotland and the Royal Botanical Gardens, which both offer fascinating looks at the living history of Great Britain. There is also time to take the uphill path to the top of Arthur's Seat, the 800-foot hill on the edge of the city, for breathtaking views of greater Edinburgh and the Firth of Forth.

Overnight: *Apex Waterloo Place Hotel* (B, L)

FRIDAY, MAY 16

EDINBURGH/ LAKE DISTRICT

Departing Edinburgh this morning, head for the beautiful and beloved Lake District of northwest England.

The most-visited national park in the United Kingdom, the Lake District comprises a diverse landscape of lakes, rivers, ancient woodlands, and small towns and villages. Both

England's highest peak (Scafell Pike) and its deepest lake (Wast Water) lie within this region, and some of England's most celebrated literary figures called this corner of the country their home, including William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Beatrix Potter.

Along the drive, stop at midday for lunch together, then continue the journey through this breathtaking scenery.

Early in the afternoon, stop at Dove Cottage, an early 17th-century inn which was converted into a private home, and where Wordsworth lived for eight years and penned some of his most memorable lines. The cottage is a Grade 1 listed building in the United Kingdom, meaning it is of "exceptional interest," and its interior remains largely unchanged from Wordsworth's day.

Arrive at your hotel in the late afternoon on the shores of one of England's most idyllic lakes. Dine tonight at the hotel.

Overnight: *Low Wood Bay Resort & Spa* (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, MAY 17

LAKE DISTRICT

Today's excursion begins with a relaxing boat ride on picturesque Lake Windermere, England's largest lake at over 10 miles long.

Next, visit the village of Hawkshead, home to less than 600 people but bursting with character, with cobbled streets winding through tightly packed, whitewashed homes.

After lunch on your own, visit the Hawkshead Grammar School, which was founded in 1585. Several notable thinkers were educated there, including the poet, William Wordsworth. The school now functions as a museum where you can even see the desk into which Wordsworth carved his name some two centuries ago.

Also visit the Beatrix Potter Gallery, showcasing the original artwork of the author who lived nearby in the early 1900s and won world renown with her famous work, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*.

Return to the hotel for dinner.

Overnight: *Low Wood Bay Resort & Spa* (B, D)

SUNDAY, MAY 18

LAKE DISTRICT / NORTH WALES

Today, embark on a comfortable coach ride through the splendid British countryside—a landscape which English author Ben Aaronovitch described as being “so photogenically rural that I half expected to meet Bilbo Baggins [of *The Hobbit*] around the next corner.”

Along the way, stop at Bodnant Garden, a historic horticultural gem located in North Wales. With its lovely hillside setting, the 80 acres of gardens here are ever changing and encompass everything from manicured lawns and flower-filled terraces to meadows of wildflowers.

Have time to wander the paths and smell the flowers, then continue to the seaside resort town of Llandudno.

Dine together at the hotel.

Overnight: *Llandudno Bay Hotel* (B, D)

MONDAY, MAY 19

NORTH WALES / SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK

Known as both the “land of castles” and the “land of song,” Wales is also a land of fierce natural beauty, as demonstrated on this morning’s visit to Snowdonia National Park.

Named for Snowdon, at 3,560 feet the tallest mountain in England and Wales, the park comprises some 840 square miles of unspoiled wooded valleys, mountains, moorlands, lakes, and rivers. The park was officially created in 1951, making it Wales’s first national park, and covers more than 10% of the land area of the country.

Visit Snowdonia in style, riding aboard either the Welsh Highland Railway or the Ffestiniog Railway. Both lines are pulled by steam locomotives and provide a scenic ride through dramatic Snowdonia National Park.

Head to the port town of Conwy for a visit to 13th-century Conwy Castle, a medieval fortress whose brute appearance symbolized English domination over the Welsh. Strategically set at the mouth of its namesake

river as it empties into Menai Strait, the castle was built starting in 1283 by King Edward I of England. This UNESCO World Heritage site ranks as one of the finest pieces of 13th century military architecture remaining in Europe, with some of the U.K.’s best-preserved medieval chambers in store for us once we enter the castle.

In the mid-afternoon, return to Llandudno, dubbed “Queen of the Welsh Resorts,” for dinner together.

Overnight: *Llandudno Bay Hotel* (B, D)

TUESDAY, MAY 20

NORTH WALES / STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Today’s transfer from Wales to Stratford-upon-Avon is long but progresses through one gorgeous British landscape after another.

Arrive midday in Stratford-upon-Avon, the market town famed for its native son, one of the finest craftsmen of the English language, William Shakespeare.

Touring here includes Anne Hathaway’s Cottage & Gardens, the thatched farmhouse of Shakespeare’s bride that still contains some original furnishings. (“Cottage” is a bit of a misnomer, as this 12-room home has three chimneys and is set among extensive and well-manicured gardens).

Have time for lunch on your own before continuing to Shakespeare’s Birthplace, the restored 16th-century half-timbered house where the bard is believed to have been born in 1564. The building has been restored to appear as it would have in Shakespeare’s time, complete with period furnishings; Shakespeare’s father’s glove-making workshop; and a walled garden behind the house containing varieties of flowers and herbs which grew in the 16th century.

Check in at your hotel this afternoon and dine there together tonight.

Overnight: *The Adren Hotel* (B, D)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON/ THE COTSWOLDS/ BATH

Today, set out for the postcard-perfect Cotswolds. England's south-central region of gently rolling hills dotted with villages of honey-colored limestone, market towns, and unspoiled countryside, the Cotswolds looks much as it did 300 years ago. The region is unique in England, as a rift of golden subterranean limestone bedrock created a series of grassy plains and served as the main building stone for the many hamlets in the area. Though not a National Park, the Cotswolds (which measures roughly 25 miles across by 90 miles long) has been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty by the government of the United Kingdom and is the largest such region in all of England and Wales.

Stop for lunch in one of the region's charming villages, then continue south to the historic town of Bath.

After checking in at your hotel late this afternoon, have the remainder of the day and evening at leisure.

Overnight: *The Francis Hotel Bath* (B, L)

THURSDAY, MAY 22

BATH

The area where the city of Bath now stands shows evidence of habitation from before recorded time, but it is best known as the location where, in 60 CE, the Romans built baths and first "took the waters" at England's only hot springs.

Learn about this historic site on this morning's visit to the Roman Baths Museum—a complex of buildings which includes the original, Roman-era baths and temple.

Also explore 7th-century Bath Abbey, a majestic Anglican church noted for its intricate, fan-vaulted ceiling and for hosting the coronation of King Edgar of England in 973.

Other sites along the way include the Circus, a circle of Roman-inspired townhouses; the Royal Crescent, a semicircular row of terraced

houses lauded as one of the greatest examples of Georgian architecture in the United Kingdom; and the 18th-century Assembly Rooms, a collection of ballrooms and gathering halls frequented by nobles and luminaries such as Jane Austen and Charles Dickens.

After lunch on your own, the remainder of the day is free to explore as you wish. From the Jane Austen Centre to the Costume Museum, and from charming tearooms to stately Georgian architecture, Bath offers a bounty of worthy sites and attractions.

Gather at the hotel this evening for dinner together.

Overnight: *The Francis Hotel Bath* (B, D)

FRIDAY, MAY 23

BATH / STONEHENGE/ WINDSOR/ LONDON

Leave the pastoral land behind as you travel to London, one of the world's great cities.

En route, stop to see Stonehenge, the Neolithic monument that remains something of a mystery today. Archaeologists believe that the massive stones here were erected sometime between 3,000 and 2,000 BCE, and that the site is part of a much larger complex of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments in this part of England. That the prehistoric circle of stones is a masterpiece of engineering and building is undisputed; exactly why it was created is less certain, although many experts now believe the site was used as a burial ground.

Pick up a quick lunch at Stonehenge before visiting Windsor for an inside visit to British royalty's famed Windsor Castle. Originally built in the 11th Century after William the Conqueror invaded England, the sprawling stone fortification has been expanded in later centuries to become one of the country's most impressive sites.

Also tour St. George's Chapel, burial place of six of the last eight British monarchs.

Continue to London, arriving at your well-located hotel early this evening.

Dinner tonight is on your own in this cosmopolitan capital city.

Overnight: *The Clermont, Charing Cross* (B)

SATURDAY, MAY 24

LONDON

Today, explore London, a city that fits nearly every descriptor available: historic yet modern, artistic yet financial, sprawling yet walkable, cluttered yet beautiful.

Since its inception nearly two millennia ago when the Roman settlement of Londinium, England's capital has grown into one of the world's leading cities in every major discipline: arts, commerce, education, entertainment, fashion, finance... the list goes on.

Your panoramic city tour passes a succession of celebrated London landmarks including the infamous Tower of London, the thousand-year-old castle which has served as everything from a prison to a royal residence; grand Parliament and Big Ben, perhaps the world's most famous clock tower; royal Buckingham Palace, for more than 170 years the residence of British monarchs; Westminster Abbey, site of royal weddings and nearly every English coronation since 1066; and lovely Hyde Park.

After lunch on your own, have the afternoon at your leisure to explore this wondrous city as you wish. From theaters, museums, and parks to a boat ride on the Thames, London offers an embarrassment of riches from which to choose.

Tonight, celebrate your journey through Britain at a farewell dinner.

Overnight: *The Clermont, Charing Cross* (B, D)

SUNDAY, MAY 25

DEPART FOR U.S.

Transfer this morning to Heathrow Airport for flights home. (B)

Please note: This trip involves considerable walking up hills or stairs, and on uneven or cobblestone streets. You should be in good physical condition to enjoy the tour to its fullest.