

The Best of Latitude 56: Scottish Gardens, Highlands and Castles

**With three additional nights in London including the Chelsea Flower Show
May 23-June 2, 2010**

Join us as we explore this hidden treasure in the picturesque highlands of Scotland. We will visit public and private gardens, while surrounded by the majestic highlands, mysterious Lochs, and historic castles and estates. We will start the tour with three nights in London touring three wonderful gardens Wisley, Sissinghurst and Great Dixter. We will also spend a day at the world's largest flower show, the Chelsea Flower Show.

Why Scotland ...

At the time when many Scottish estates were developing their gardens, foreign exploration was also very lucrative for plant collectors. Many Scottish plant collectors were bringing back to Scotland a tremendous wealth of plant material from around the world, a lot of which was from as far as Chile, the Himalayas, New Zealand and Australia. Many of these specimen plants are hundreds of years old, thriving in Scotland, far away from their native habitat. The plant collections throughout Scotland are some of the most magnificent in the United Kingdom with some of the largest and rarest trees located in Scotland.

Scotland's climate is also unique, which makes this a plant lover's haven. The Gulf Stream brings warm water from the tropics to the coastal shoreline of Scotland, providing a temperate to sub tropical environment enabling plants to survive and thrive at an incredible northern latitude of 56 to 59 degrees. This climate also provides ample moisture in which plants thrive. Soils never freeze in the winter, yet the summer temperatures rarely reach beyond 80 degrees.

The only difficulty with making up a tour of Scotland's gardens is deciding which ones to leave out. Our itinerary has been designed to include a wide-ranging selection of private and public properties in both the west and the east of the country, to leave the visitor with a lasting impression of glorious gardens, fantastic scenery and warm hospitality.

Combined with classic English gardens; the Royal Horticultural Society's showpiece and the Chelsea Flower show, this unique tour truly offers some of the very best of Britain's gardens.

Itinerary

Departure - May 22, 2010

Depart from USA – flight under own arrangement.

Day 1 - May 23, 2010

D

Upon early morning arrival** at Heathrow Airport we will be met by our coach and transfer to the magnificently manicured gardens of Sissinghurst. This famous garden was created by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson from 1930 onwards and became the most admired English Garden of its time. Sissinghurst is surely as close to gardening perfection as you can get, and it continues to be one of the most copied flower gardens in the world. We continue to another classic English Country Garden – Great Dixter. The distinguished garden writer Christopher Lloyd (who died in January 2006 at the aged of 84) was the genius behind Great Dixter, with its timbered 15th century house. Restored by Edwin Lutyens who also planned the garden, Mr. Lloyd has firmly put his lively stamp on it. We then continue to our hotel in the London area to enjoy dinner together this evening.

**If you are handling your own flight arrangements, please plan to arrive at London Heathrow before 9:00 a.m.

Day 2 - May 24, 2010

B

We will spend most of the day today at Wisley Garden, a showcase garden of the Royal Horticultural Society. Here the highest standards of practical horticulture are deployed in a splendid historical setting. We return to the hotel late afternoon, and you are on your own to explore London for dinner.

Day 3 - May 25, 2010 ***B***

Today we will visit the Chelsea Flower Show. The Chelsea Flower Show holds a rare position as a great British tradition and an exciting source of inspiration and advice. One of the highlights of the show is the collection of over 20 full-sized show gardens. The bus will pick up the group at noon to allow time in the afternoon to explore London. Those that desire more time at the Chelsea Flower Show may depart at their leisure as taxis are readily available. You are on your own for the last time for dinner. In Scotland, all properties are rural, and dinners will be together at the lodges each evening.

Day 4 - May 26, 2010 ***B, D***

We check out of our hotel after breakfast this morning and transfer to Heathrow Airport for our flight to Edinburgh. On arrival we will be met by our coach and travel north to Perth, where we visit Branklyn Gardens, a haven of peace and color. From here we travel the short distance to our accommodation. Dinner is served in the evening.

Day 5 - May 27, 2010 ***B, D***

Today we travel north into deepest Perthshire amongst the rolling hills of this beautiful part of Scotland. We begin at the private garden of Cluny House, near Aberfeldy, a wonderful, wild woodland garden. Afterward, we will have time to roam in nearby Pitlochry. We return to our hotel in time for dinner.

Day 6 - May 28, 2010 ***B, D***

We will spend the full day in Scotland's historical capital city Edinburgh, with its fine buildings, dramatic vistas and a skyline to rival any city in the world. In the morning we will visit the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Established in 1670, the garden is acknowledged as one of the finest in the world with an extensive collection of unusual and beautiful plants. The afternoon will be free to explore the delights of the city (no entrances are included). We return to the hotel in time for dinner.

Day 7 - May 29, 2010 ***B, D***

Today we travel into the Kingdom of Fife where we visit a couple of regal gardens. We begin at Falkland Palace, the only Royal Palace in the care of the National Trust for Scotland. Falkland Palace is an impressive Renaissance building set in the heart of the town at the foot of the Lomond Hills. Built by James IV and James V between 1450 and 1541, the Palace was a country residence of the Stuart monarchs for over 200 years, and a young and carefree Mary, Queen of Scots spent some of the happiest times of her life here. We continue to Kellie Castle, home to the Earls of Kellie, which was restored by the Lorimer family in 1878. The oldest tower, dating back to 1360, is said to be haunted, but today the castle is a tranquil spot. We conclude today with some free time in the historic town of St Andrews, famous for its ancient University and as the "home of golf". The sacred turf of the Old Course will be familiar to all golf fans and has been graced by countless golf legends. We return to the hotel in time for dinner.

Day 8 - May 30, 2010 ***B, D***

After checking out of the hotel this morning we travel west and visit Drummond Castle, Scotland's most important formal gardens. First laid out in the early 17th century by John Drummond, 2nd Earl of Perth, the gardens we see today were renewed in the 1950s by Phyllis Astor, Countess of Ancaster. Drummond is an eclectic garden and also rooted firmly in the Italian style with its fountains, terracing, urns and statuary. From here we continue to our hotel in The Trossachs, an area of outstanding natural beauty with National Park status. Dinner will be served this evening.

Day 9 - May 31, 2010 ***B, D***

Today we will travel round the shores of Loch Lomond and over the mountain pass known as the 'Rest and Be Thankful' to the shores of Loch Fyne. Our first visit will be to Crarae Gardens, recently rescued by the National Trust for Scotland. At the very centre of it lies a romantic wooded glen, stuffed like a good plum pudding with plenty of rich fruit; the great Asiatic flowering shrubs - azaleas, camellias and magnolias. After free time in the picturesque village of Inveraray, we visit Benmore Botanic Gardens. This is the country annex of the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. You are free to explore this splendid garden, with its magnificent mountain backdrop. We then take a ferry crossing across the Firth of Clyde from Dunoon to Gourock and return, via the Erskine Bridge, to the hotel in time for dinner.

Day 10 - June 1, 2010 ***B, D***

Following breakfast this morning we drive the short distance to Duntreath Castle, where we will visit the private garden of Sir Archibald and Lady Edmonstone. These extensive gardens feature mature and new plantings, with a landscaped lake, water and bog gardens, a formal garden, rhododendrons and a woodland walk. The afternoon will be open to explore the town of Sterling. We return to the hotel in time for dinner.

Day 11 – June 2, 2010

We will need to check out of the hotel by 6:00 a.m. for our transfer to Glasgow Airport for our flight to London Heathrow Airport in time for our return flight to USA. We will arrive at London Heathrow between 10:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., so please try not to book departure from London back to the states before 12:30 p.m.

Included in the price

- 10 nights four star hotel accommodations on bed and breakfast basis
- Flights from London Heathrow to Edinburgh and from Glasgow to London Heathrow
- Comfortable coaching throughout
- Ferry crossing Dunoon-Gourock
- Entrance to the gardens and the Chelsea Flower Show
- Portage of one piece of luggage at all hotels

Tour Price

Land Only Standard Hotel Room Double Occupancy	\$4,295** (airfare from USA to UK not included)
Land Only Superior Hotel Room Double Occupancy	\$4,595
Land Only Single Occupancy Price	\$4,995

*****Tour price will be discounted by 10% for those signing up for this tour by February 28, 2010.***

Accommodations for this tour

Crowne Plaza London St James- www.london.crowneplaza.com

This is a traditional, Victorian-built deluxe 4 star hotel in central London, close to Buckingham Palace, The Houses of Parliament, the London Eye and Victoria Station.

Hilton Dunkeld House Hotel- www.hilton.co.uk/dunkeld

12 miles north of Perth and a pleasant stroll from the historic and attractive little cathedral town of Dunkeld, this traditional Scottish country house hotel enjoys an idyllic location amidst 280 acres of superb Highland scenery. The River Tay is within reach of a fishing line cast from the oak-panelled Garden Bar's terrace; the Garden Restaurant serves excellent British and local cuisine.

Macdonald Forest Hills Hotel, Aberfoyle- ww.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/foresthills

This exclusive, 4 star country retreat nestles in the heart of the Trossachs between the wooded mountains of the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park and lovely Loch Ard, about four miles from Aberfoyle.

Registration Form

The Best of Latitude 56: Scottish Gardens, Highlands and Castles

Departure May 23, 2010

Passenger Information

Please record information exactly as it appears on your passport and attach a copy to this registration form. Passport photocopy may be sent later if you have yet to obtain a passport.

Name as on passport _____ Name as on passport _____

Passport # _____ Passport # _____

Passport Exp. Date _____ Passport Exp. Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home and or cell) _____ Email _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone _____

Please mark your preferred travel arrangements

I will make my own airline reservation/arrangements

I would like Hidden Treasures Botanical Tours to arrange airline reservations from my nearest airport

Double Occupancy Standard (trip price \$4,295) _____

Double Occupancy Superior Lodging (\$4,595) _____

Single Occupancy (trip price \$4,995)** _____

** (cannot be guaranteed, and if none available, you will be responsible for single supplement)

Payment Information (deposit \$1,000 per person)

If paying by check: make payable to Hidden Treasures Botanical Tours, L.L.C.

Amount \$ _____ check no. _____

If paying by credit card (we can accept only VISA or MasterCard)

Credit Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Amount to be charged _____ Three-digit security code from back of the card _____

Signature _____

Mail this form and direct inquiries to:

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