

ENGLAND
WALKING THROUGH HISTORY IN THE GLORIOUS SOUTHWEST
Sept. 8th – 16th, 2015

ARRIVAL DAY:-

Our journey starts in the countryside near the famous cities of Bath and Bristol. We meet you at either Bath Railway Station or from your hotel in Bath if you have decided to stay there first (we recommend The Royal Crescent Hotel, The Bath Priory and The Queensberry Hotel) or from Bristol Airport (reasonable services from Dublin and other European hubs – not from London.) Pick up is at 2:30 p.m. from the airport and 3 p.m. from the train.

We highly recommend your taking the train from Paddington Station in London to Bath; a highlight in itself! It is a very easy connection on the Heathrow Express train which runs every 15 minutes from Heathrow to Paddington and takes 15 minutes. One can also take a bus or taxi into Paddington.

Our first 3 nights find us at the Burghope Manor, a lovely medieval manor in a peaceful, quintessentially English setting near Bradford-on-Avon, with its rare Saxon church.

DAY TWO:-

On our first day out together we explore the beautiful countryside of western Wiltshire and Avon and the town of Bradford-on-Avon, a “Bath in miniature” with its own variety of glorious golden stone and buildings from the Middle Ages. A short drive south, we visit Stourhead, a gracious Palladian country house with magnificent gardens maintained by the National Trust. We pass by Maiden Castle, a foretaste of the next day, and one of the largest iron-age hill forts in England.

DAY THREE:-

The next day we travel east to the area of Wiltshire dominated by extraordinary Neolithic monuments, including the world-famous Stonehenge, the great Avebury stone circle, Silbury Hill and West Kennet Long Barrow. We walk on the Ridgeway, possibly the oldest road in Europe, across the chalk hills, arriving at Avebury in the most dramatic fashion the landscape affords away from modern roads. Recent advances in Archaeology, in particular underground radar and state-of-the-art magnetometers, have revealed many new structures and lines of stones without the need of elaborate digging, such that we have learned as much about these great monuments in the last four years as in the previous century. The whole area has a very distinctive atmosphere of age-old mystery, and we can experiment ourselves with the ancient skill of dowsing, not for water but for lines in the Earth's magnetic field and resonances in the

huge stones transported and placed carefully in their hundreds all over the area.

DAY FOUR & FIVE:-

The next morning we travel west through the country of Kings Alfred and Arthur, via the magical Glastonbury Tor and legends of Joseph of Arimathea to the North Devon coast, and the picturesque towns of Lynton and Lynmouth. In the latter we stay at the Rising Sun, a 14th century thatched smugglers' inn overlooking a tiny fishing harbor for two nights, giving us ample time to explore the beautiful coastline and part of its long-distance coastal path, one of the loveliest hikes in this part of the country. If time and the weather allow, we may also strike inland to Exmoor National Park with its high heathland and literary associations with Lorna Doone.

DAY SIX & SEVEN:-

Our final foray west is into Cornwall, the Celtic stronghold at the extremity of England. We drive to Tintagel, a prime candidate for being the original Camelot of King Arthur, a dramatically situated castle on the rocky Atlantic coast. We stay two nights at the nearby Camelot Castle Hotel, right on cliffs overlooking the ancient castle. Here there is plenty of time to explore the coast on foot and perhaps also venture inland to the fascinating Bodmin moor, with its long history of mining and remote peoples.

DAY EIGHT:-

On our last day we drive back East to the fascinating city of Wells, one of the smallest cities in Britain, with its wonderful cathedral, medieval streets and country atmosphere.

We stay in Beryl's luxury guest house— a gothic-revival mansion with its own parkland, a short walk outside the city center. Our farewell dinner is at one of Well's leading restaurants.

DAY NINE:-

The next morning we return you to Bristol Airport or Bath Railway Station by 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. respectively.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO DOUBLE CHECK YOUR TRAVEL ITINERARY SEVERAL DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR DEPARTURE AND DO LET US KNOW HOW WE ARE TO MEET YOU

THE HOTELS

(To call any of the hotels from North America you would dial 011 44 and then the number minus the 0)

DAY 1, 2 & 3

The Burghope Manor
Winsley, Bradford-On-Avon
Wiltshire, BA15 2LA
Tel: (01225) 720 216
e mail: burghopemanor@btinternet.com
www.burghopemanor.com

DAY 4 & 5

The Rising Sun Hotel
Harbourside
Lynmouth, N. Devon EX35 6EG
Tel: (1598) 753223 Fax: (1598) 753480
e mail: reception@risingsunlynmouth.co.uk
www.risingsunlynmouth.co.uk/

DAY 6 & 7

Camelot Castle
Tintagel
Cornwall PL34 0DQ
Tel: (01840) 770202 Fax: (01840) 770978
e mail: enquiries@camelotcastle.com
www.camelotcastle.com

DAY 8

Beryl Luxury Guest House
Top of Hawkers Lane
Wells, Somerset BA5 3JP
Tel: (01749) 678738 Fax: (01749) 670508
e mail: stay@beryl-wells.co.uk
www.beryl-wells.co.uk

WALKING THROUGH HISTORY - INTRODUCTION

These trips are designed to take you to many of the fascinating and sometimes relatively remote destinations which we have treasured on our hiking trips, and to stay at many of the wonderful inns and hotels which are such a feature of the experience we offer, without the longer and more strenuous hiking options of our traditional format.

“Walking” on these trips, as opposed to hiking, implies leisurely enjoyment and exploration of beautiful countryside and interesting, historic places without the demands of lengthy, rigorous exercise. On a visit to a fascinating village or town in Europe, you will be given a guided tour for half your time, and then given an hour or two to explore on your own. We like to treat our guests as independent adults ! You will not be given choices of ten-mile mountain traverses, but nor will you be on a bus trip, delivered to the very door of your restaurant, castle or church.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY:-

Our walking usually will not exceed four or five miles a day. Ascents will generally be easy or moderate: occasionally an option of a steeper, short climb will be offered if the goal is particularly alluring. As with most of our regular hiking trip days, there will sometimes be a carefully explained choice of activities, so that our guests will be able to judge whether some of the more active walking alternatives are for them. There will be many opportunities to wander and savor at one’s own pace. Walkers should remember, however, that many of the places we visit have steps, paths which are not smooth and sometimes positively rough, and that visiting a medieval castle or a beautiful look-out point usually involves walking uphill. Our trips, therefore, cannot cater to those who rapidly become out of breath climbing a flight of steps, or who find walking on uneven surfaces troublesome. Travel itself can also be tiring, especially for the relatively inexperienced. We urge you to assess yourself, to seek medical advice if you suffer from any condition which might impair your enjoyment of an active vacation, and not to undertake a trip if you are not used to daily exercise. We want those who come with us to enjoy themselves wholeheartedly, and without anxiety. Our guides will always take a conservative view of your abilities, and will not hesitate to advise you accordingly, and we urge you to be realistic about yourself at this planning stage.

GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET

FLIGHTS

The most reasonable fares are those scheduled well in advance in which the dates do not change. As there are penalties in changing dates it is a very good idea to take out travel insurance .

TRAVEL SERVICE

We work with a travel service that is very familiar with our French tour and can help you with all your travel plans. They are: BETTER TRAVEL of Waitsfield, VT. Please call: (800) 331-6996 or e-mail: bettravl@madriver.com .

PASSPORTS

If you don't already have a current passport, please remember to allow enough time for one to be processed.

CURRENCY

By far the easiest way to pay for things in England is simply to use an international credit card or debit card. Visa and Master Card can be used all over England. American Express cards and other international cards are used by some but not all small vendors.. Sometimes there are situations in which paying with plastic is not an option, visitors to England therefore need to have some Pounds-Sterling on hand to pay for items in which vendors do not accept credit cards.

In this case the simplest solution is to use your debit card with pin number. You can withdraw money from cash-dispensers (ATMs) in England in exactly the same way as you would at home - except that you will be asked to select the sum in Pounds-Sterling. Your card company or bank will automatically debit your account in your usual currency, having converted the sum at the day's exchange rate.

However, please make sure you tell your bank or card operator that you are going to England before your departure; ask about fees incurred and daily limits for cash withdrawals, as you may well be withdrawing more in cash than you would normally need. It is also advisable to forego small frequent withdrawals, as you will probably pay a fixed commission on each withdrawal, over and above the conversion rate margin that your financial institution will take. In percentage terms, the smaller the withdrawals, the higher the commission.. So it generally makes sense to withdraw larger sums and to do so less frequently.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Our "Walking Through History" tours, are active, outdoor vacations. Most of our days are spent in the open air and you should, therefore, be prepared for many different weather conditions. In the following section you will find our recommendations for clothing and footwear. The most important thing is to bring layers so that you can adjust to whatever weather conditions are present!

WEATHER

South-west England in September should have mild days and cool evenings.

Average highs are in the high 60s to 70s with an average of 68 and lows in the mid-50s, so layering is important for comfort, as well as good sun protection.

It is a very good idea to check online with one of the many weather sites for current forecast a few days prior to your trip departure.

WALKING

Our walks are generally between 2 and 4 miles a day. We do have 2 guides on the trip, which often allows us to provide a choice of pace. On some days, however, one guide may be visiting an historical site while one guide is leading the walk. Even though these trips are less strenuous than our regular hikes, it is still very important that you be in good physical condition to get the most out of the trip. We recommend that you prepare for the trip by doing some form of physical activity regularly. There will also be a few options of a short but steeper path with terrain that will involve uphill walking (often involving steps, especially when visiting the castles and fortresses) and we do suggest that if your only form of exercise is walking that you do try to find more hilly routes or, if you live in a flat region, that you increase your walking speed. Some of our walking is also along trails that wind through forests and parks and you should be aware that the footing often includes rocks and roots as well as smooth sections. If you have any questions about the walks please don't hesitate to contact us.

WHAT TO BRING

Note: On longer trips when we move from inn to inn we do ask that you pack light as we will be packing and unpacking several times!

Required: Shorts, skirts, leggings and shirts for trails with layers just in case we get some early morning cool spells. Nylon, hiking pants or sweatpants are more comfortable than jeans. Wind-jacket and rain gear, a fast moving occasional shower is not completely unheard of in the summer months.

SHOES

We strongly recommend comfortable, worn-in hiking/walking shoes. There are now many very good, moderately priced, light-weight hiking/walking shoes on the market. Running and walking shoes tend to have flat soles without adequate grip. It is very important that your shoes have good tread and if you have any problems with your ankles that you do wear shoes/boots that come over your ankles.

SOCKS

One pair of medium hiking/walking socks per day (avoid cotton). Socks that wick away moisture are best and an extra pair of shoelaces is not a bad idea.

OTHER ITEMS

Water bottle (1 per person). Small day pack (at least 1 between 2 people - 1 each if you could choose different activities.) Sun protection

DINNING OF AN EVENING

Evening wear in the inns is mostly casual - smart casual is recommended for both men and women. Long pants and collared shirts for men and slacks, dresses or skirts for women, for both men and women shorts and sometimes jeans are considered inappropriate for dinner. Note: European inns tend to be slightly more formal than those in the US .

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Sunglasses, camera, swimsuit, toiletries and any over-the-counter medications you may be taking (some items you are familiar with in the US may not always be available.) Any and all doctor prescriptions filled with the amount needed for your travel time.

*Just a reminder to place any daily medication in your carry-on luggage, on the off chance your checked baggage arrives later than you do.

MEALS

Most inns offer a selection of entrees to choose from. It does help us, however, if you let us know of any dietary allergies, restrictions or foods that you cannot eat, as some of the inns that are smaller may have set menus and innkeepers who are also the chefs. In general inns/hotels and restaurants offer coffee and tea as part of the meal; occasionally we will be given complimentary wine with our meal, but otherwise you will be asked to pay for your own alcoholic and bottled drinks. Your guides will drink tap water, and regard it as safe. Unless you are directed to drink bottled water because of particular local conditions, buying water is at your discretion.

PAYMENT

We do require full payment 60 days in advance of the trip date. After that time there can be no refund of monies paid unless we are able to fill the space, in which case, we may be able to issue you a credit towards a future trip. Again, we recommend trip cancellation insurance.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Refunds are given less a 10% cancellation fee provided that written cancellation is received at least 60 days before the trip departure date. After that time any monies paid are forfeited.

INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you take out trip cancellation, baggage and accident insurance. In your confirmation package, or as an attachment, you will have received a cover letter and brochure from us from Travel Insurance Services including a description of benefits or if you prefer you should contact your local travel/insurance agent.

Please note that if you are planning on using Travel Insurance Services you should do so as soon as possible, as they will waive their pre-existing exclusion on the Plus and Elite options if the insurance application is postmarked within 14 days of our receipt of your deposit.

For additional information please call Travel Insurance Services at 1-800-937-1387 (Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. EST) or visit www.travelinsuranceselect.com

RELEASE FORM

When you arrive we will ask you to sign a release form stating that you assume the risk of the upcoming hiking holiday.

GRATUITIES

All taxes and gratuities on lodging and meals are included in the trip cost. You only need tip on any drinks that you buy at the inns/hotels. Many of you have asked for some guidance regarding tipping of our guides, so with that in mind, a tip of around 4 to 5% of trip cost (total, not per guide) would be customary for excellent guiding, though this remains at your discretion.

N.E.H.H. reserves the right to make any changes to the schedule if necessary.

New England Hiking Holidays 1 800 869 0949