



TOURS WITH A THEME – EXAMPLE ONE

LET'S FIND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT KING ARTHUR AND CAMELOT

A Godlike mythical hero, King Arthur and his legendary tales have endured the centuries but no one is sure whether or not he actually existed. Glastonbury's claim to be the 'Isle of Avalon' where Excalibur was forged, and his sister Morgan le Fay lived is also contentious.

After a fire devastated the monastery a band of monks found the remains of King Arthur's grave in the grounds. Streams of pilgrims brought significant wealth to the ruined Abbey for its reconstruction. The stories of Joseph of Arimathea, the Holy Grail, the Healing Well Waters and the Causeway to Cadbury Castle, thought to be Camelot, all support Glastonbury's claim to be the 'Isle of Avalon'. Whether early spin or historical truth, no one knows. Either way the town and its sacred sites hold a mystical pull that is difficult to ignore.



This is a 3-day tour from London.

Day 1: Stonehenge, Lacock and Bath, Hotel: Royal Crescent Hotel Bath

Day 2: On the trail of King Arthur, Hotel: Charlton House Somerset

Sherborne

Once the capital of Wessex Sherborne was a cathedral city until 1075. With its medieval Abbey, museum and Palladian mansion, Sherborne is now a charming and sleepy place. Its famous old castle granted to Sir Walter Raleigh by Queen Elizabeth I, still stands despite its onslaught in 1645 by Cromwell's troops.

Montacute House

One of Britain's finest examples of an Elizabethan mansion, Montacute was built in 1590 for Sir Edward Phelps a lawyer, famous for his opening speech in the prosecution of Guy Fawkes. The grand staterooms house an incredible collection of Tudor and Elizabethan portraits on permanent loan from the National Portrait Gallery. This beautiful house made the ideal location for the filming of Sense and Sensibility.



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Somerton

Dating back to the seventh century Somerton was the capital of Wessex until Alfred the Great established Winchester as the county's seat of government. Today it is a mellow town with a seventeenth century square, Town Hall, elegant houses and quiet inns.

Glastonbury

Now more famous for its music festival Glastonbury lies at the cross point of England's most powerful ley lines. Joseph of Arimathea, a kinsman of Christ, allegedly founded the once majestic Glastonbury Abbey. He arrived at this very spot with The Holy Grail and planted his staff in the ground where it sprouted a thorn bush, which prompted him to bring Christianity to England. Officially the Abbey evolved in the fourth and fifth century and grew into a very wealthy Benedictine Abbey after the bodies of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere were 'found' in the grounds. A truly mystical place.



Day 3

Cheddar Caves And Wookey Hole

Carved over millions of years these magnificent underground chambers and subterranean lakes come alive with dramatic light and sound effects.



Wells

One of the earliest examples of an English Gothic cathedral with an incredible three hundred figures on the restored west front and its astronomical clock of 1392. In the cathedral close sits "Vicars Close" which is the oldest continuously inhabited street in Europe.

Mells

This gorgeous village is a cluster of thatched listed buildings. Its fourteenth century manor house was the seat of the Horner family who gave rise to the childhood rhyme Little Jack Horner after finding the missing deeds to their property hidden in a pie.



Cadbury Castle

The largest hill fort in Somerset was first occupied five thousand years ago but is most famous for its connection to King Arthur. Many believe that this is the site of the legendary Camelot. The raised causeway called King Arthur's Track links this site directly to Glastonbury and adds credence to the legend. Finish approx 7pm, back to London 9pm or optional overnight at Babington House. Back to London following morning.

TOURS WITH A THEME – EXAMPLE TWO



FOLLOWING THE ROMAN FOOTPRINTS

The Palaces built by nobility and the wealthy elite have dominated the Sussex landscape from Roman times to present day. This is an area of open rolling countryside stretching to the unspoilt coastal regions of golden sand.

This is a 1-day tour from London.



Chichester

This once important Roman coastal settlement is now dominated by its Gothic cathedral which is visible from the sea. Within its ancient city walls you'll find the Tudor Market Cross and many architectural gems including the famous Pallent House art collection.

Fishbourne Roman Palace

The ruins of this spectacular Roman villa were accidentally uncovered in 1960. With a vivid audio/visual display you are transported into this lavish palace of oil-tycoon wealth and proportions. There are beautiful mosaics and under floor heating systems leaving us in no doubt as to the Romans' sophisticated technological capabilities.



Bosham

This pretty waterside village is the first recorded place of Christian worship in Sussex. In the seventh century an Irish monk named Dicul began his preaching. The small cell he lived and slept in still exists in the Saxon church. The church dates back to King Canute who lived in Bosham and it was here that he ordered the sea to retreat.

Goodwood

The magnificent regency interior of this beautiful mansion provide the perfect setting for the outstanding art collection of Canelettos, Stubbs, Van Dyke and Reynolds. The famous Goodwood motor racing circuit is now used for classic car grand gatherings and the new Rolls Royce factory, (visits can be arranged) is close by camouflaged by its turf roof.



Petworth House And Park

This seventeenth century mansion was originally screened from the locals by a ten-mile circular wall. The extensive grounds and deer park were sculpted by Capability Brown and painted most famously by Turner. Inside the mansion is the National Trust's largest and most significant art collection with carvings by Grinling Gibbons and Roman and Greek sculptures dating back to the fourth century BC.



Bignor Roman Villa

It contains the largest surviving Roman mosaic in Britain measuring approximately eighty feet. The beautifully rendered classical scenes include gladiatorial battles, Venus and Cupid and the elegant Medusa and they adorn what was once a Roman bathhouse.

Finish approx 6pm (drive 3 hours). Optional overnight at Amberley Castle.