

Queen Victoria 200: Regal Splendour & an Island Getaway

31 March to 9 April, 2019 \$6,584 (AUD) pp double occupancy

2019 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Queen Victoria, Britain's second longest serving monarch. Victoria's reign marked a period of great cultural, industrial and political change and a great expansion of the British Empire. This tour takes in some of the famous palaces, castles and country houses frequented by the Queen throughout her reign and offers a very real insight into her life and the people closest to her.



Westminster Abbey



Windsor Castle



Hughenden Gardens

Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Guided walking tour of Windsor
- ◆ Guided tour of Dimbola Lodge
- ◆ Guided tour of Nunwell House
- ◆ Guided tour and lunch at Avington Park
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

Ten Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to the **Macdonald Windsor Hotel** where we stay for the next four nights. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: Windsor and Windsor Castle

We begin our day with a guided walking tour of **Windsor**, a Royal Borough in the South East of England, situated on the River Thames. A statue of Queen Victoria was erected here in 1887 to celebrate her Golden Jubilee, with the Queen herself in attendance at the unveiling.

We then visit **Windsor Castle**, the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world which is still one of the official residences of Queen Elizabeth II today. Established in the 11th century by William the Conqueror, it has been remodelled by successive kings and queens and is regularly used for ceremonial and state occasions. During Queen Victoria's reign, Windsor Castle was the primary palace for the British monarchy, and the Queen spent the larger part of every year residing here. The magnificent State Apartments are furnished with some of the finest works of art for you to admire.

Tonight we enjoy dinner together at a restaurant in Windsor.

Tuesday: Hughenden and Cliveden Gardens

Today we head first to the stunning **Hughenden**, previously home to an unlikely Victorian Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, from 1848 to 1881. This impressive manor provides a fascinating insight into the world of this colourful former-parliamentarian, who is described as Queen Victoria's 'favourite Prime Minister'.

Next we visit **Cliveden Gardens**, which have uniquely captured the grandeur of a bygone era. In 1837, Cliveden was purchased by Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland, to be used as a home away from London, near to her friend Queen Victoria. Victoria frequented Cliveden on at least eight occasions and with expansive views, these gardens set elevated above the River Thames have a special charm.

This evening we enjoy dinner at the hotel followed by a fascinating themed talk from a guest speaker.

Wednesday: Kensington Palace, Westminster Abbey and St James' Palace Chapel

Kensington Palace has been a home to the royal family since the 17th century, and today we are able to explore this stunning Jacobean building. Built in 1605, Princess Victoria was later born here on 24 May 1819. The Palace was Queen Victoria's childhood home and is

now the London residence of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry.

Next we venture to **Westminster Abbey**, which since the 11th century has been the coronation church of the British monarchy. Queen Victoria's coronation took place here on 28 June 1838 when she was just 19 years of age, and the event lasted five hours. There are around 3,300 people buried or commemorated at this iconic Abbey, many of whom are hugely significant figures in history.

We then head to **St James' Palace Chapel**. Also described as the Chapel Royal and originally constructed by King Henry VIII, this was the venue of the marriage of Queen Victoria to Prince Albert in 1840.

The evening is free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.

Thursday: Arundel Castle

Arundel Castle is one of the longest inhabited country houses in England, having been the seat of the Dukes of Norfolk and their ancestors since 1067. Although restored and remodelled in the 19th century, many of the original features remain such as the Norman keep and gatehouse, while the finely preserved interiors are home to priceless works of art. Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert visited the castle for several days in 1846.

After enjoying lunch together in Arundel, we take the ferry to the Isle of Wight, and check



Osborne House



The Needles

in to **The Royal Hotel**, our base for the next four nights. This evening we enjoy dinner at the hotel.

Friday: Osborne House and Cowes

Today we have the chance to explore **Osborne House**, purchased by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1845 as a seaside retreat away from London and Windsor. The Italianate palace boasts spectacular views across the Solent. We take an intimate glimpse of royal family life as we wander through the magnificent Royal Apartments as well as the walled gardens and grounds where we find the charming Swiss Cottage, used by the royal children to learn household management.

Afterwards we have some time at leisure in **Cowes**, home to the world-famous regatta that swells the local population each August. Many of the town's ornate buildings date from Queen Victoria's time, in the style popularised by her consort Prince Albert. As well as some upmarket shops, Cowes also has numerous art galleries.

This evening we enjoy dinner at the hotel.

Saturday: The Needles, Farringford House Gardens, Dimbola Lodge, Mottistone Gardens and St Lawrence Parish Church

We take a scenic drive via **The Needles** with some impressive views of Alum Bay, before heading for a brief visit to **Farringford House Gardens**, surrounding the home of famous poet and friend of Queen Victoria, Alfred Lord Tennyson. Tennyson lived here from 1853 until his death in 1892.

We then continue on to **Dimbola Lodge**, home of the celebrated Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, where we enjoy a guided tour. The house is now a Museum and Gallery dedicated to her life and work whilst also showcasing contemporary exhibitions from photographers around the globe.

Next we venture to **Mottistone Gardens**, one of the most peaceful and magical gardens on the island, surrounding an attractive Elizabethan manor house. Established in the early 20th century, the garden is set in a sheltered valley and is rich in colourful herbaceous borders, shrub-filled banks and grassy terraces.

Finally we visit the Victorian parish church, **St Lawrence**, which was designed by the architect Sir George Gilbert Scott in the 19th century.

Tonight we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

Sunday: Nunwell House, North Court Gardens and Godshill

This morning we enjoy a guided tour of **Nunwell House**, a beautiful family home since 1522, set in five acres of tranquil gardens with stunning views across the Solent. The parlour chamber of this historic house is where the ill-fated Charles I spent his last night of freedom.

We then head on to the **North Court Gardens**, which boasts 15 acres of beautiful gardens, with a large variety of plants and exotic palms that enjoy the special varying microclimates of the grounds.

We also spend a short while in the pretty inland village of **Godshill** with its charming thatched-roofed cottages, delightful medieval church, tearooms and gift shops.

This evening we enjoy dinner at the hotel.

Monday: Avington Park

After breakfast we leave the Isle of Wight behind as we take the ferry back to the mainland and then journey to **Avington Park** for a private guided tour and lunch. This stunning Georgian manor was once the property of Winchester Cathedral and sits in an idyllic location beside the River Itchen.

Afterwards, we return to the **Macdonald Windsor Hotel**, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together at the hotel.

Tuesday: Departure

After breakfast, a private transfer will take you back to Heathrow airport for your return flight home.



Godshill

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 5 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 4 nights at the Royal Hotel, Isle of Wight
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 6 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ 1 dinner at a restaurant in Windsor
- ◆ 1 dinner at a restaurant on the Isle of Wight
- ◆ 2 lunches
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ Return ferry to the Isle of Wight
- ◆ All entrance costs
- ◆ Portorage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

Nights One to Four, and Nine Macdonald Windsor Hotel

The Macdonald Windsor Hotel is situated in the heart of the historic town of Windsor, opposite the famous Windsor Castle. The classic interiors, with a contemporary edge, fit perfectly with the Georgian elegance of this townhouse hotel. The luxury bedrooms are individually-designed and the hotel also offers a stylish bar and restaurant.

Nights Five to Eight The Royal Hotel, Isle of Wight

Founded in 1832, the Royal Hotel is one of the oldest hotels on the Isle of Wight. Set in subtropical gardens overlooking Ventnor Bay, the hotel offers a bar, restaurant and outdoor swimming pool.

Single Supplement – AU\$998



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