

ON THE TRAIL OF CHARLES DICKENS

DECEMBER 1ST - 9TH 2021

It's almost impossible to find a corner of London that hasn't been immortalized by Charles Dickens, one of Great Britain's consummate storytellers. And what a treat for those of historical or literary persuasion, as we delve into the nooks and crannies of the legendary writer's city, and then follow the Dickensian thread through the rolling countryside of Kent to the world-famous Dickens Christmas festivities in Rochester, the medieval magnificence of Canterbury, and the seaside beauty of Broadstairs.

From the glory of Rochester and Canterbury to vibrant London itself, this "Dickensian Feast" takes you behind the usual tourist facade. London is a living history book, inhabited by the ghosts of Pip, Bob Cratchit, Oliver Twist, and David Copperfield.

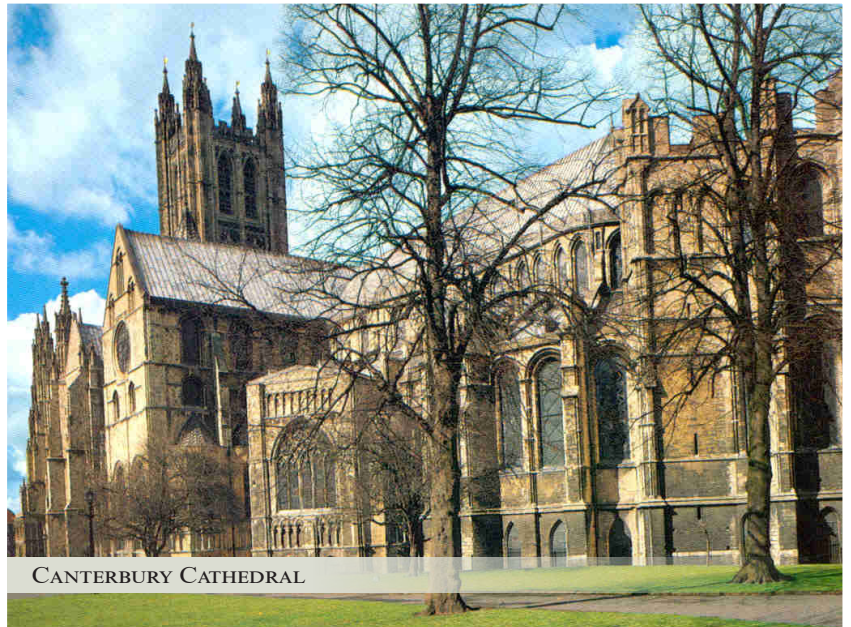
We begin our adventure with several days in this lively capital, exploring Dickensian haunts and other historical locations, from Westminster Abbey to St. Paul's Cathedral. We'll also enjoy a special guided tour of the Dickens House Museum with Lucinda Hawksley, Charles Dickens' great-great-great-granddaughter.

Following in the writer's footsteps, we then travel through Kent, with its pretty landscapes and cozy villages, toward the ancient city of Rochester, a favorite Dickensian haunt. Here, a weekend of Christmas festivities celebrates the legacy of Dickens with unbridled enthusiasm. We'll also visit Canterbury and its magnificent, grandly Gothic Cathedral, as well as Knole House and a captivating assortment of castles, cathedrals, and grand old houses.

With a marvelous balance of guided touring and time to explore on your own, Discover Europe invites you to join us on an unforgettable, one-of-a-kind journey into the very heart of Dickensian England.



ROCHESTER'S DICKENS FESTIVAL



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED):	\$4290
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:	\$ 950

Airfares are available from many U.S. cities. Please call for details.

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

HOTELS:	7 nights' accommodation in first-class hotels, including all hotel taxes and service charges
COACHING:	All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
MEALS:	Breakfast daily, 4 dinners
GUIDES:	Discover Europe tour guide throughout. Local guide for Canterbury. Special guided tour of the Dickens House Museum with Lucinda Hawksley, Charles Dickens' great-great-great-granddaughter
BAGGAGE:	Porterage of one large suitcase per person
ENTRANCES:	Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour. Insurance information will be mailed to each registration on receipt of deposit.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1ST - Departure from your chosen US gateway city to London. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2ND - Morning arrival at Heathrow Airport, where you will be met and transported to your city center hotel. There will be time to unpack and explore the neighborhood before we meet for a relaxing welcome dinner at the hotel. **(D) OVERNIGHT: LONDON**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3RD - The day begins with a panoramic tour of London. We'll start in Westminster where our guide introduces us to 1,000 years of English history, and visit the Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey, where Dickens is buried. Continuing on, we'll view many of the city's major monuments, from St. Paul's to Trafalgar Square. The rest of the day and evening are free to explore and to amble one of London's great restaurants. **(B) OVERNIGHT: LONDON**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4TH - Our first stop today will be The Charles Dickens Museum, where we'll have a special guided tour of the Dickens House Museum with Lucinda Hawksley, Charles Dickens' great-great-granddaughter. The only surviving London home (1837-1839) of Dickens, with four floors of paintings, rare editions, manuscripts, and original furniture, it is where he completed *The Pickwick Papers* and *Oliver Twist*. It's a short drive through the Kent countryside to the city of Rochester, home of the annual Dickens Christmas Festival. Along the way, we'll stop at Knole House, the magnificent country home of the Sackville family since 1600. Once in Rochester, we'll enter into a full-blown Dickensian Christmas celebration! (Dickens' name became so synonymous with Christmas that a child who heard of the death of the writer said, "Mr. Dickens is dead? Does that mean Father Christmas will die too?") For the next two days, music, crafts fairs, guided tours, Victorian costumes, and a multitude of festivities will enliven the streets. Tonight we gather together at our hotel for dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: ROCHESTER**



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5TH - A free day to continue the festivities or explore Rochester. Many locations in the city, now marked with plaques, are mentioned in Dickens' novels, and he often revisited the haunts of his childhood from his home in nearby Gad's Hill. The important Restoration House is featured in *Great Expectations* as Miss Havisham's house, while the chalet at Eastgate House once stood on the grounds of Gad's Hill, and was used as his study. Alternatively, you may explore Rochester Castle, one of the earliest masonry castles in England, with the tallest keep in the country, or the cathedral, a fine Norman structure. A free evening to try a local restaurant. **(B) OVERNIGHT: ROCHESTER**

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6TH - Bidding farewell to Rochester, we drive to Canterbury, which features largely in *David Copperfield*, here we check into our hotel. This afternoon, we take a walking tour of the ancient city, rich in atmosphere and dominated by its remarkable cathedral, the final destination on the Pilgrims' Way and infamous scene of Thomas Becket's demise. We'll view its mysterious crypt and marvelous medieval stained glass; investigate the dramatic ruins of St. Augustine's Abbey, founded in 597; and explore the vestiges of St. Pancras church, a one-time pagan temple. With literary allusion and inspiration all around us (let's not forget Chaucer!), we'll meet for dinner at the hotel. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: CANTERBURY**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7TH - A morning excursion to Broadstairs on the far northeast tip of Kent, Dickens' favorite summer resort from 1837-1851. We'll visit the Dickens House Museum, former home of Mary Strong (model for Betsey Trotwood in *David Copperfield*), and its wonderful collection of memorabilia. Further down Harbour Street is the Tartar Frigate, which Dickens described as, "the coziest little sailor's inn . . . that is to be met around the coast." And on your walk through town, you'll catch glimpses of the sentinel-like Bleak House perched high on the edge of the cliff, which was Dickens' favorite holiday retreat, and is no longer open to the public, recently having been sold for nearly \$7 million. We'll return to Canterbury for a free afternoon and evening. **(B) OVERNIGHT: CANTERBURY**



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8TH - This morning we pack and return to London, where a free day stretches ahead of you. You may decide to further explore old Dickensian haunts, including Furnival's Inn, Blackfriars Bridge (a 12-year-old Dickens frequently crossed this bridge while working at Warren's Blacking Factory to visit his father in the Marshalsea prison); or the Roman Bath, where he played and bathed as a child. Or visit the former home of actress Frances Ternan whose daughter, Ellen, became involved with Dickens in 1857. Possibly the inspiration for Estella in *Great Expectations*, her relationship with the writer was one of Victorian London's most closely guarded secrets. In the evening, we'll gather for a final farewell dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: LONDON**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9TH - Morning transport to the airport for returning flights to the U.S. **(B)**

Key to included meals: **B** - breakfast, **D** - dinner