

Somerset and Devon

13 – 16 June 2026

From £675 per person (based on min 40 paying guests)

Itinerary

Day 1 – Saturday 13 June 2026

We depart from our local pick-up points and travel first to **Hestercombe Gardens**, near Taunton, one of Gertrude Jekyll and Edwin Lutyen's greatest masterpieces. The garden is home to a round pool in a round walled garden filled with wintersweet and roses, a Dutch garden of lamb's ears, lavender and the most beautiful orangery of the 20th century. Everywhere there are details of design and planting from which any gardener can learn. A guided tour is included.



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We continue our journey to our comfortable accommodation at the 3-star **Best Western Walnut Tree Hotel, North Petherton**. Dinner will be served on arrival.

Day 2 – Sunday 14 June 2026



Following breakfast this morning, we have a real treat when we visit one of the Royal Horticultural Society's great treasures, the beautiful garden of **Rosemoor**, near Great Torrington in the heart of rural Devon. There are two gardens here, the first an intimate woodland garden dating from the 1960s, which has an excellent collection of trees and shrubs which relish the acid soil – dogwoods, eucryphias, maples, pieris, rhododendrons and vacciniums. The other is a more ambitious affair, which has been developed since the RHS

became the owner in 1988, with rose gardens and giant borders, a lake and stream garden and a Mediterranean garden. A guided tour is included.

Day 2 – Sunday 14 June 2026 (continued...)

In the afternoon we will enjoy a tour of **Dartington Crystal factory** who have been shaping glass into iconic British designs since 1967 and are the UK's only remaining crystal factory still producing by hand. During our visit we will have the opportunity to go behind the scenes of this traditional glassmaking and watch a skilled artisan at work transforming molten crystal into stunning works of art right before our eyes. We will learn about the 50 years of Dartington heritage in the interactive exhibits and have an opportunity to browse the extensive range of crystal glassware in the factory outlet store. ***Please note the factory experience does include stairs, as this is a working factory for your own safety you must stay on the marked walkways and wear sensible footwear.***

We return to the hotel in time for dinner.

Day 3 – Monday 15 June 2026

After breakfast today we visit **Kilver Court** at Shepton Mallet. The Gardens were first created by Ernest Jardine as a recreational space for factory workers of Kilver Court in the 1800s and were known as Jardine's Park and Vegetable Gardens. In the 1960s, they were restored and developed by the Showering family of Babycham fame, who commissioned Charles Whiteleg to recreate his Gold medal winning Chelsea Flower Show rockery garden within the setting. At the time, the garden was a bold and modern design statement, yet remained a hidden secret for 25 years. The Gardens feature a millpond and boating lake as well as rolling laws, parterre and herbaceous borders, set against an unusual and highly impressive backdrop – a vast Grade II listed viaduct built for the Somerset and Dorset railway. A plant shop provides an opportunity for the perfect souvenir.



Following our visit we continue **Wells**, England's smallest city, where we have a guided tour of **Wells Cathedral**, which has been inspiring visitors and pilgrims for nearly 850 years. The 13th-century West Front has one of the most impressive collections of medieval sculpture in the western world. We continue to nearby **Bishop's Palace**, a stunning mediaeval palace which has been home to the Bishops of Bath and Wells for 800 years. There are 14 acres of gardens to explore, including the beautiful well pools from which the city takes its name. We return to our hotel, where dinner is served in the evening.

Day 4 – Tuesday 16 June 2026

After breakfast we check out of the hotel and depart for our final visit to **Forde Abbey**, which is home to the stunning Mortlake tapestries, woven from the internationally famous Raphael cartoons, now housed in the V&A, the Abbey has a rich and varied history spanning 900 years. We can walk in the actual footsteps of the monks, and explore the exquisite interior featured in a Hollywood adaptation of 'Far From the Madding Crowd.' The highest-powered fountain in the country is a highlight for many in 30 acres of the award-winning gardens which include topiary-lined vistas, colourful herbaceous borders, a giant-sized labyrinth in the arboretum and swathes of early spring bulbs and camellias to provide all year-round interest. A guided tour of the house is included.



Following our visit, we depart for home where we expect to arrive in the evening.

Included in the price

- Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the 3-star Walnut Tree, North Petherton
- Comfortable coaching throughout
- Visit to Forde Abbey, Wells Cathedral, Bishop's Palace, Kilver Court, RHS Rosemoor, Hestercombe Gardens and a tour of Dartington Crystal Factory

Not included (per person)

- Single room supplement £75.00